City Of Janesville

Safe Kids, Fit Kids:

A Safe Routes to School Plan for Elementary and Middle Schools in Janesville, Wisconsin

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Safe Routes to School Program in Janesville aims to safeguard children while encouraging them to walk and bicycle to school. Like other communities, Janesville struggles with motor vehicles clogging roads, motor vehicle emissions polluting the environment, fewer children walking to school, and more children engaging in less physical activity overall and growing overweight.

The SRTS Plan encourages physical activity as an integral part of a child's daily routine. Safe Routes to School initiatives assume that teaching children the importance and pleasure of walking and bicycling to and from school may help to increase the likelihood that they will engage in other forms of physical activity.

Safe Routes to School accomplishes goals through policy development, improvements to streets and sidewalks, education and encouragement of children and parents, and increased enforcement of traffic laws.

Programs can include:

- Walking and biking audits to determine the safety of streets around schools
- Programs to improve sidewalk conditions near schools
- Use of traffic calming devices to slow traffic and give pedestrians priority
- Programs that educate children on walking and biking safely, and challenge them to walk or bike often
- "Walking school buses" in which one or two parents or volunteers escort a group of children on the walk to school
- Increased traffic enforcement around schools
- School construction that includes renovation and improvement of existing schools, and locating new schools to reduce walking hazards and avoid major traffic threats
- Cooperation among school officials, law enforcement officials, and transportation planners.

Existing Conditions

Janesville is a typical American city in terms of low rates of walking and biking and a high rate of personal vehicle use. In a 2001 national survey, 16% of children walked to and from school. Data collected during the spring of 2009 revealed 18% of Janesville elementary and middle school children walked to and from school. Janesville has a relatively good network of sidewalks, on and off-road bicycle facilities, and transit. Many plans exist to improve the travel environment.

Identifying Safety Issues

A survey of all parents conducted in the spring of 2009 identified barriers to allowing children to walk or bike to school. Respondents most often chose distance (54%). Other popular choices were speed of traffic (49%), volume of traffic (48%), crossings and intersections (51%) and weather (49%). Not surprisingly, Janesville residents are more concerned with harsh weather conditions. Average temperatures are below 30F degrees for three months each school year.[i]

Janesville parents are much more concerned with crime (43%) than the rest of the nation (12%). This fear was often communicated in the comments section of the parent survey and crime was also a topic during public meetings. Parents are worried about "stranger danger" as well as bullying from older kids. Blog comments on a news article and informal poll by the Janesville Gazette reflected a fear of crime.

Recommendations

Recommendations will focus on creating a stronger sense of community and safety. The Walking School Bus Program will be developed in a way to address the heightened fear in the community. Infrastructure improvements include supporting the existing sidewalk plan and focusing on high priority connections, focusing on off-street paved trails that complete the existing network, and evaluating high speed and high traffic roads for the feasibility of traffic calming devices.

Action Plan

The City and School District will work in partnership with the PTA, school principles, business community, trail user groups, and at large community to execute the recommendations of the plan.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Janesville, Wisconsin, is a community with a population of approximately 63,500. It is the regional center of south central Wisconsin and is known for its parks and high quality of life.

The Janesville Area Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Task Force was formed in the winter of 2008. The Task Force consists of representatives from a variety of entities including the Janesville School District, law enforcement, a representative from the health profession, parents, bicycling advocates, and representatives from the City of Janesville.

Introduction to SRTS

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program is a Federal funding program that provides $612M nationwide to: "(1) enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school; (2) make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and (3) facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools."

However, Safe Routes to School is not a new concept. Safe Routes to School started as a grass roots organization in Denmark in the 1970s as an effort to reduce the number of traffic-related fatalities. Within 10 years, school-related traffic injuries and fatalities were reduced by over 80%. Today more than 40 countries participate in Safe Routes to School activities.

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

Over the past two to three decades, there has been an incredible rise in obesity and physical inactivity in kids and adults. The impact on health and health-care costs is high and will continue to rise dramatically.[ii] In 1969, roughly half of all kids walked or biked to school. Now, it is about 15 percent. For school trips less than one mile, 29 percent walk or bike. [iii]

The United States has seen a decrease in the number of children who are physically active and an increase in the number of children who are overweight. Over the past 30 years the percent of overweight children aged 6 to 11 years has more than doubled.[iv]

Nearly half of young people aged 12-21 years in the United States are not vigorously active on a regular basis.[v]About 14% of young people report no recent physical activity.[vi]

While more research is needed to understand all of the implications of being an overweight or inactive child, we do know that obesity and its health risk factors tend to persist. Overweight children are more likely to become obese adults. Overweight and obese adults are at increased risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes, some types of cancer and gall bladder disease.[vii] Within children, regular physical activity has the potential to:[viii]

- Builds and maintains healthy bones, muscles, and joints.
- Helps control weight, build lean muscle and reduce fat.
- Improve their sense of self-image and autonomy.
- Foster healthy social and emotional development.

In addition, preliminary data show that physical activity may improve academic performance and alertness in youth.[ix]

Air quality and traffic congestion around schools has also become an issue. Each year, automobiles emit millions of tons of pollutants into the air and auto emissions have risen in many parts of the country as a result of the doubling of miles traveled over the past two decades.[x] Air pollutants can be especially harmful to children because their respiratory systems are still developing. Air pollution can exacerbate chronic respiratory conditions, such as asthma. [xi]

The increases in rates of asthma in this country are alarming: Over the last 25 years, among children ages 5 to 14, there has been a 74 percent increase, and a 160 percent increase in children up to age 4.[xii] In addition, 14 million days of school are missed every year due to asthma.[xiii]

As much as 26 percent of morning traffic can be school-related.[xiv] Traffic can lead to even less walking or biking. As more children are driven, more parents become convinced that traffic conditions make it unsafe for walking or bicycling and they join the line of cars at the school.

Roosevelt Elementary at the end of the day. Source: Terry Nolan

If more children walked or biked to school, it would reduce the number of cars near the school at pick-up and drop-off times making it safer for walkers and bicyclists and reducing traffic congestion.

Schools placed in neighborhoods near residential areas with a good street and sidewalk network have more students arriving by bicycle and on foot. Air quality is measurably better at such locations.[xv]

The SRTS Plan encourages physical activity as an integral part of a child's daily routine. It does this through policy development, improvements to streets and sidewalks, education and encouragement of children and parents, and increased enforcement of traffic laws.

The implications of SRTS can be far-reaching. Safe Routes programs can improve safety not just for children, but for a community of pedestrians and bicyclists. They provide opportunities for people to become more physically active and to rely less on their cars. Programs benefit the environment and a community's quality of life by reducing traffic congestion and motor vehicle emissions

SRTS Planning Process

In 2007, the City of Janesville worked with the Janesville School District to successfully apply for a Safe Routes to School Planning Grant from WisDOT for the 15 public K-8 schools in the City. The goal of the Plan is to reverse the 30 year decline in the numbers of children walking to school and reintroduce opportunities for regular physical activity.

The Plan recommends infrastructure and non-infrastructure improvements in 4 areas: encouragement, enforcement, education, and engineering strategies. The Plan provides a time schedule for each part of these strategies; a map of the area(s) covered by the plan; and an explanation of how the program will be evaluated. The completed Plan makes the School District and the City of Janesville eligible to apply for additional Safe Routes to School Funds, as well as other federal/state funds, which can then be used to implement the strategies identified within the Plan.

To complete the Plan, a Task Force of interested community members, school representatives, and local experts was created to guide and review the document. An audit of environmental conditions (social, built and natural) within a ¼ mile of each school that affect walking and bicycling was completed, along with an assessment of each school. Surveys were administered to students and parents to gauge their habits and perceptions regarding bicycling and walking to school and identify additional barriers. A strategy was developed to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented Plan recommendations.

The SRTS planning process began in the winter of 2008 with the assistance of the Janesville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). In developing the Plan, the MPO worked to include the entire community. The following outlines the general process followed to develop the plan.

Table 1: SRTS Planning Timeline

2007	City and School District of Janesville work together to receive SRTS planning grant
Winter 2008	Task Force formed Meetings with principals to introduce SRTS
2008/2009	Data collection begins-- mapping of schools, city wide policies, other background information
April 2009	Kick off public meeting-- introduction, tasks
Spring/Summer 2009	data collection-- student surveys, parent surveys, area audits, school assessments
Fall	data collected and analyzed information distributed
October 2009	2nd public meeting-- issue identification recommendations
Winter 2009/2010	Task Force formulates recommendations plan written, approved

Slogan, Vision and Goals

At the April 15th kickoff meeting, meeting participants strongly supported a slogan suggested by Ms. Catherine Grant, principal of Adams Elementary School. The Janesville Safe Routes to School Program will be called **"Safe Kids, Fit Kids"**.

The vision and goals were developed by the task force to address general concerns and safety issues.

Janesville's vision is:

To promote the safety and wellness of children by providing a safe environment for kids to walk or bike to school through encouragement, education, enforcement, and engineering programs.

Janesville's goals are to:

- *Provide safe and adequate routes leading to schools so that more students are able to safely walk or bike to school.*
- *Encourage community members and children to participate in walking and biking activities as alternatives to driving.*

CHAPTER 2: EXISTING CONDITIONS

This chapter provides a current conditions inventory of the School District, City, and school sites in order to provide a baseline for analysis. To develop this starting point, the infrastructure and policy environment was evaluated. The background information in this chapter has the potential to influence and shape the recommendations presented in Chapter 4.

General Regional Context

The City of Janesville, estimated 2009 population of 63,500, is located in the center of Rock County where it is the County seat. Janesville is located 45 miles southeast of the City of Madison, 20 miles southwest of Whitewater, and north of the City of Beloit (12 miles) and Rockford, Illinois (35 miles). Janesville is bordered by the Town of Harmony on the northeast, Town of Janesville to the northwest, the Town of Rock to the southwest and the Town of La Prairie to the southeast. The City of Milton is located to the northeast of Janesville – with the City limits nearly meeting on Janesville's northeast side. In a broader regional context – the City is located roughly 75 miles southwest of Milwaukee, and 110 miles northwest of Chicago.

Janesville School District

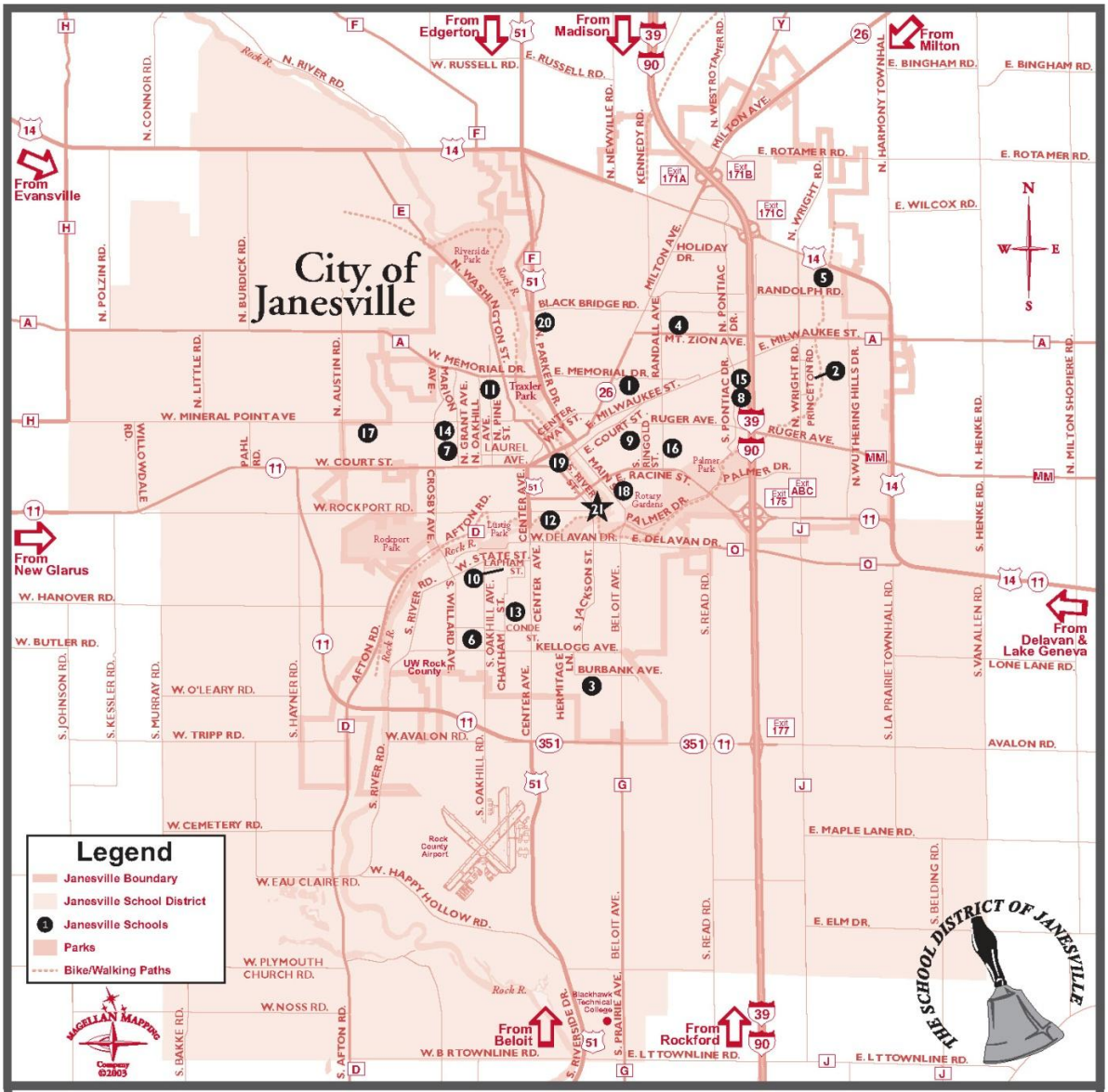
The School District of Janesville, as shown in Map 1, covers approximately 85 square miles, including portions of the City of Janesville, the Town of Janesville, Town of Rock, Town of Harmony and Town of LaPrairie. The District contains 12 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 2 high schools, and 5 charter schools. The District serves approximately 10,429 students and employs about 1,400 full time staff. All elementary and middle schools within the district, listed in Table 2, are included in the SRTS Plan. There are also several parochial schools in the city which are not included in the SRTS Plan.

Table 2: K-8 School Enrollment 2009

School Name	Avg. Enrollment
Edison Middle	730
Franklin Middle	580
Marshall Middle	890
Adams Elementary	415
Harrison Elementary	300
Jackson Elementary	320
Jefferson Elementary	350
Kennedy Elementary	310
Lincoln Elementary	400
Madison Elementary	385
Monroe Elementary	400
Roosevelt Elementary	370
Van Buren Elementary	370
Washington Elementary	435
Wilson Elementary	335
Total	6,590

The school year typically starts in September and runs into June. The core elementary school day is from 8:20 AM – 3:00 PM. There is adult supervision available on the elementary school playgrounds after 8:05 AM. Students in a before or after school program may be at the school outside of these core hours. The core middle school day is from 8:00 AM – 3:15 PM. Students enrolled in extracurricular activities at both the elementary and middle school level may be at school outside of the core hours.

Map 1: Janesville School District Enrollment Boundaries



Elementary Schools

1	Adams Elementary School	1138 E. Memorial Dr.	743-6300
2	Harrison Elementary School	760 Princeton Rd.	743-6400
3	Jackson Elementary School	441 W. Burbank Ave.	743-6500
4	Jefferson Elementary School	1831 Mt. Zion Ave.	743-6600
5	Kennedy Elementary School	3901 Randolph Rd.	743-7500
6	Lincoln Elementary School	1821 Conde St.	743-6700
7	Madison Elementary School	331 N. Grant Ave.	743-6800
8	Monroe Elementary School	55 S. Pontiac Dr.	743-6900
9	Roosevelt Elementary School	316 S. Ringold St.	743-7000
10	Van Buren Elementary School	1515 Lapham St.	743-7100
11	Washington Elementary School	811 N. Pine St.	743-7200
12	Wilson Elementary School	465 Rockport Rd.	743-7300

Educational Services Center
527 S. Franklin St. 743-5000

Middle Schools

13	Edison Middle School	1649 S. Chatham St.	743-5900
14	Franklin Middle School	450 N. Crosby Ave.	743-6000
15	Marshall Middle School	25 S. Pontiac Dr.	743-6200

High Schools

16	Craig High School	401 S. Randall Ave.	743-5200
17	Parker High School	3125 Mineral Point Ave.	743-5600

Charter Schools

18	Community Education Recovery Service - CRES -	518 S. Main St.	314-8718
19	Rock River Charter School	31 W. Milwaukee St.	752-8273
19	Janesville Academy For International Studies	31 W. Milwaukee St.	314-1180
20	Tailoring Academics to Guide Our Students - TAGOS -	1350 N. Parker Dr.	931-8434
4	Janesville Virtual Academy	1831 Mt. Zion Ave.	743-6654

Directions to Educational Services Center: From I-90 Exit 175A to East Racine St. Go through three stop lights. Go across bridge (Rock River) take first left onto South River St. Turn right into parking lot.

Review of Existing Plans & Studies

A critical step in the planning process is an examination of related planning efforts that have already occurred in the District and City. A comprehensive understanding of historic and existing efforts that influence biking and walking to school establishes guidelines and a starting point for this Plan's recommendations. A review of existing plans helps ensure consistency between this Plan and the City and District's ongoing goals, objectives, and policies. Analysis of related planning efforts helps provide coordination between this Plan and others, including those of overlapping jurisdictions.

Historic Safe Routes to School Plans

In 1984, the City of Janesville worked with the Janesville School District to identify preferred walking and biking routes for the elementary schools in the district. In 2000/2001 some of the elementary schools updated their routes. These historic plans aimed to suggest "safe routes" between school and residential areas within each elementary school's attendance boundary. The goal of the plan was to create a coordinated plan of crosswalk controls that would guide children away from hazardous crossings or intersections, provide effective and efficient usage of protective measures, and further promote safety by creating familiar situations. Historic Safe Routes to School Plans are located in Appendix E.

Traffic Safety Committee

In 2006, a committee of school district officials and city staff worked to identify safety issues and make improvements in the vicinity of Janesville schools. Committee members visited each school and evaluated traffic and parking issues. Many of the recommendations were instituted as a result of the extensive work of the committee. Recommendations of the Traffic Safety Committee are located in Appendix D.

Janesville Urban Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

The Janesville Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, prepared as part of the Janesville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2005-2035 Long Range Transportation Plan, serves as a long-range action plan for development and construction of on-street and off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the urban area. The Plan proposes extensions to the linear trail system established along the Rock River and throughout several greenbelts. The Plan also initiates a recognizable on-street system designed to promote bicycle use and safety for cyclists traveling on arterial streets. These recommendations are incorporated into the Safe Routes to School Plan.

City of Janesville Pedestrian Transportation Corridor Plan

In 2008, the City of Janesville created a Pedestrian Transportation Corridor Plan. It identifies all existing sidewalks, and identifies gaps in the sidewalk network. The City's goal is to fill in the identified gaps and create a comprehensive sidewalk network by 2018.

City of Janesville Comprehensive Plan

Janesville's Comprehensive Plan provides a strategic long-term vision and basic goals, objectives, policies and recommendations that help guide the city's future growth and development in an orderly and efficient manner. The Plan makes recommendations in the areas of land use, transportation, economic development, parks and open space, historical and cultural resources, housing, community facilities, agricultural and natural resources, utilities and intergovernmental cooperation. The Comprehensive Plan is a primary tool used by City Council, the Plan Commission, city departments and policy makers to guide decisions related to locating land uses, locating community facilities, meeting transportation needs, prioritizing public investment resources and extending public services. The Janesville Comprehensive Plan is located on the City's website at: www.ci.janesville.wi.us

Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020

In 1998, WisDOT completed the Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020. It encourages planning for bicyclists at the local level and provides guidelines for accommodating bicycles in new roadway construction as well as in reconstruction.

Wisconsin Bicycle Planning Guidance and Wisconsin Rural Bicycle Planning Guide

In 2003 and 2006, WisDOT published these guides to support the planning and development of bicycle facilities in urban and rural areas with a focus on utilitarian/transportation aspects beyond recreational use.

Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020

The Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020, created by WisDOT in 2002, outlines local measures to increase walking and to promote pedestrian safety. It provides a vision and a policy framework for pedestrian travel, clarifying WisDOT's role in addressing pedestrian issues and meeting pedestrians' needs. It establishes actions and policies for better integrating pedestrian travel into the transportation system over the next 20 years.

While this policy primarily aims to minimize barriers to pedestrian traffic flow from state trunk highway expansions and improvements, it also provides guidance to local communities on how to encourage pedestrian travel. This policy suggests the creation of pedestrian plans, increasing enforcement of pedestrian laws, adopting and implementing sidewalk ordinances, and addressing pedestrian issues through public participation.

Travel Environment

In order to better assess the multifaceted travel environment, this section of the Plan evaluates the city-wide facilities and data, and policies that impact walking and biking to school.

City-Wide Facilities and Data

The following provides an overview of facilities that serve all of Janesville.

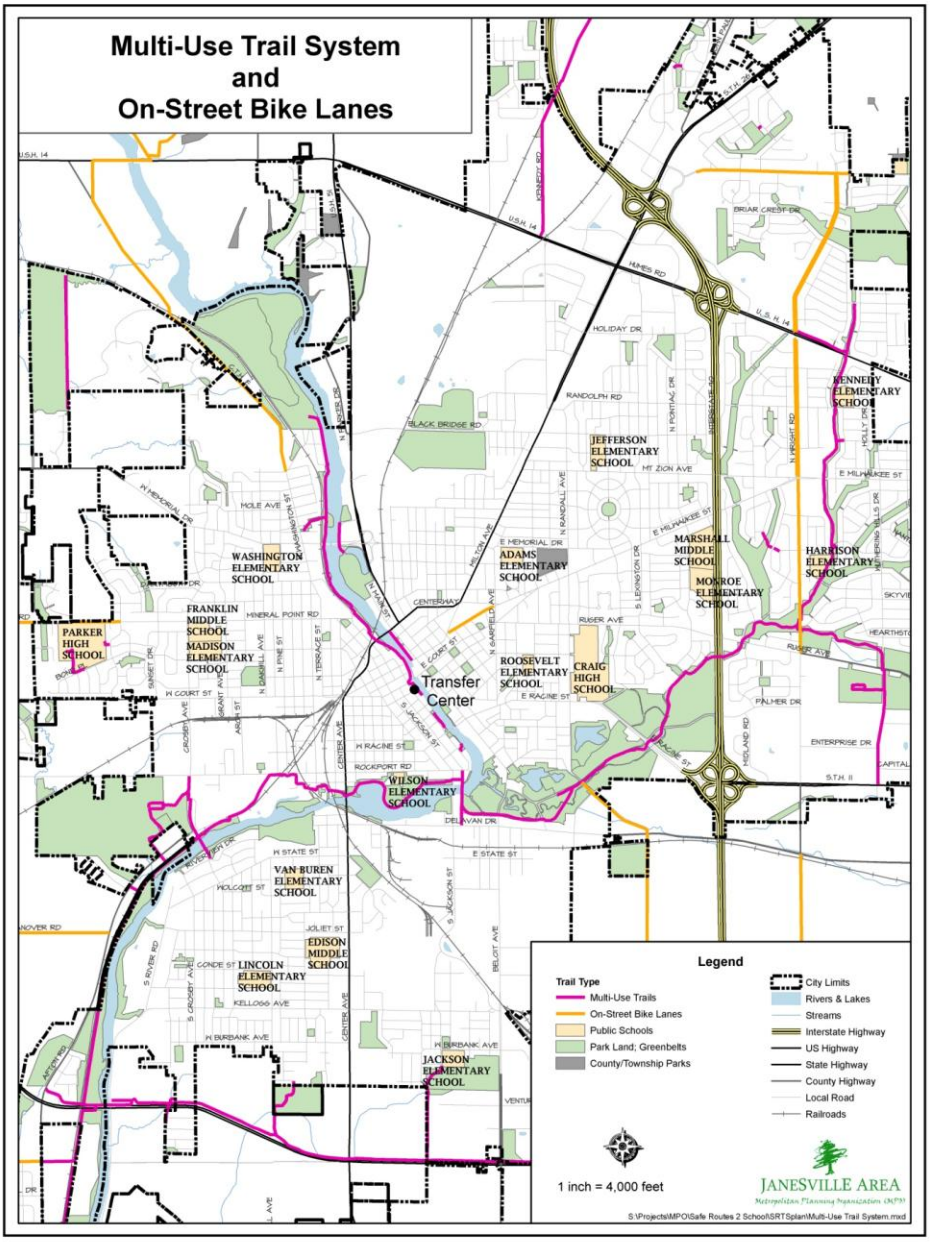
Multi-use trails

The 25+ miles of continuous multi-use trails is one of the City's most-used recreation amenities. It is heavily utilized by walkers, joggers, bikers, and inline skaters. This system consists of off-road paved trails situated primarily within natural areas; thus, separating trail users from motor vehicles. The trails provide linkages between residents and major destinations, including schools. The City's multi-use trail system is depicted in Map 2.

On-Street Bike Lanes

Recently, the City has begun to install on-street bike lanes. As the City expands these facilities to create a comprehensive network, it may be appropriate for some children to incorporate the use of bike lanes into their journey to school. The existing on-street bike lanes are depicted in Map 2.

Map 2: Multi-Use Trail System & On-Street Bike Lanes

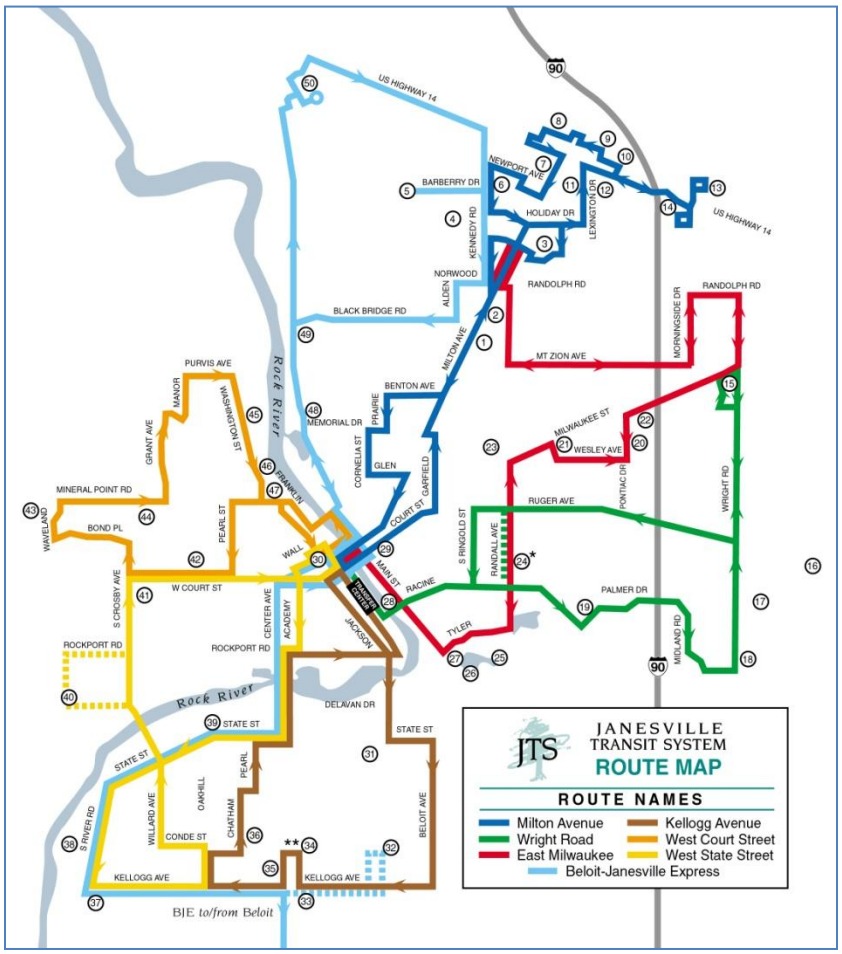


Transit (Bus) Routes

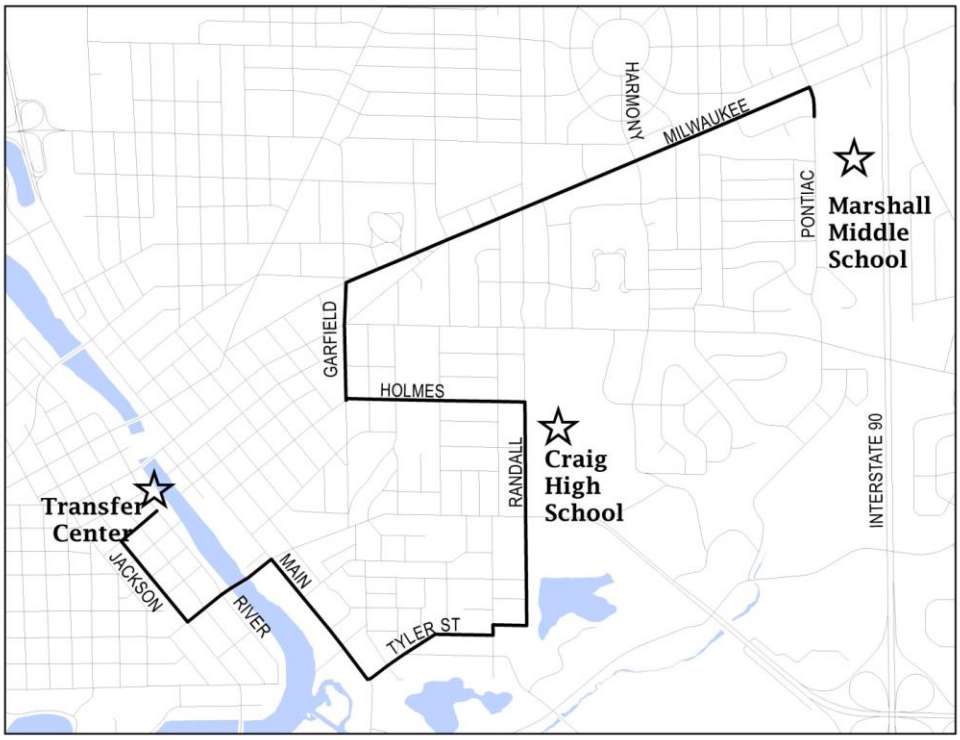
The Janesville Transit System (JTS) provides bus service to the majority of students in the Janesville District. Inside Janesville, JTS operates extra bus service during the school year with routes and times coordinated with the school schedule. These buses follow a published schedule, are open to the public, and charge the regular fare. Certain students qualify for fare assistance or bus passes provided by the School District. Extra Service Schedules are available at all secondary schools, the School District Office, and JTS schedule outlets. See Map 3 for regular service routes and Maps 4 and 5 for extra service routes.

The Janesville School District provides or subsidizes "yellow school bus service" to students living in areas not served by JTS, and the rural areas (less than 500 people per square mile) of the Janesville School District. The District also provides "hazardous route" busing to students within specified "hazard areas". These students may be within walking/bicycle distance of a school, but face serious safety hazards along their route. For example, students who must cross streets with high vehicle speeds and/or volumes, or railroad tracks, etc. are bused to school.

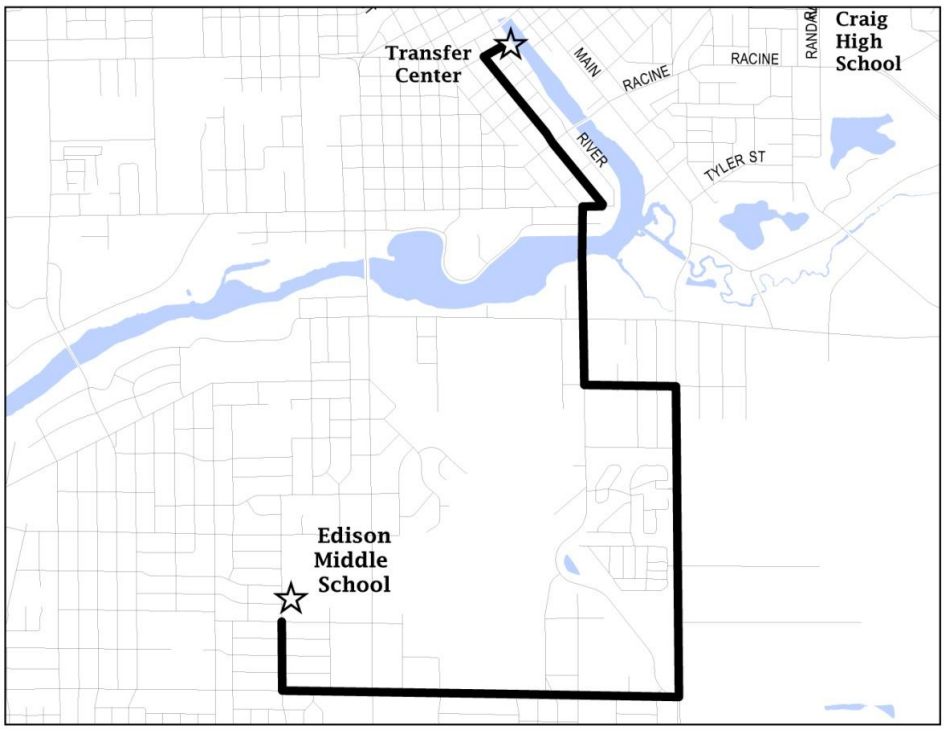
Map 3 JTS Routes



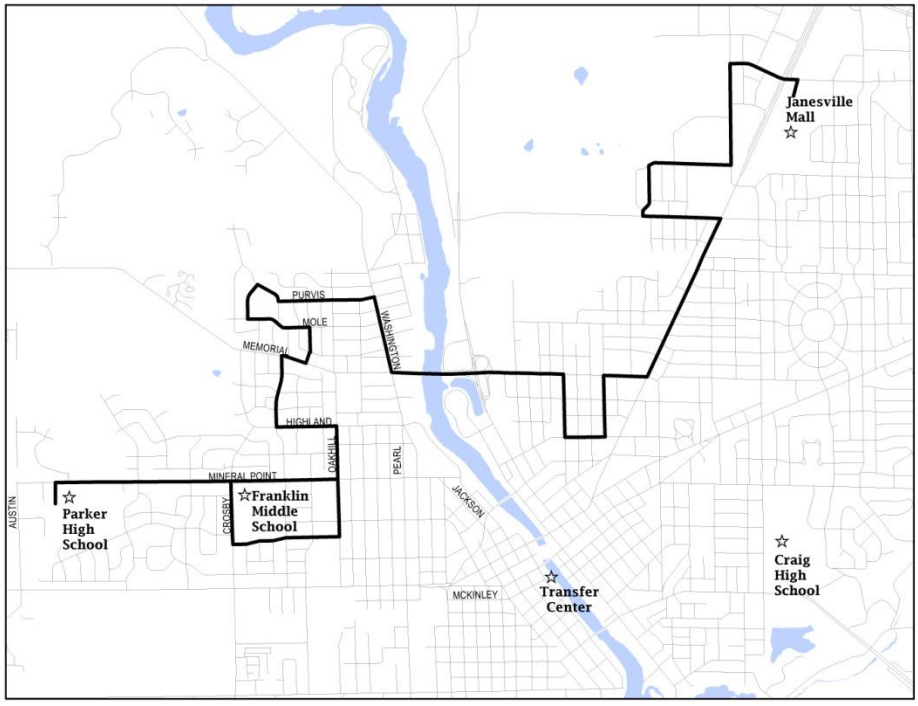
Map 4 Holmes/Tyler Extra Service Route



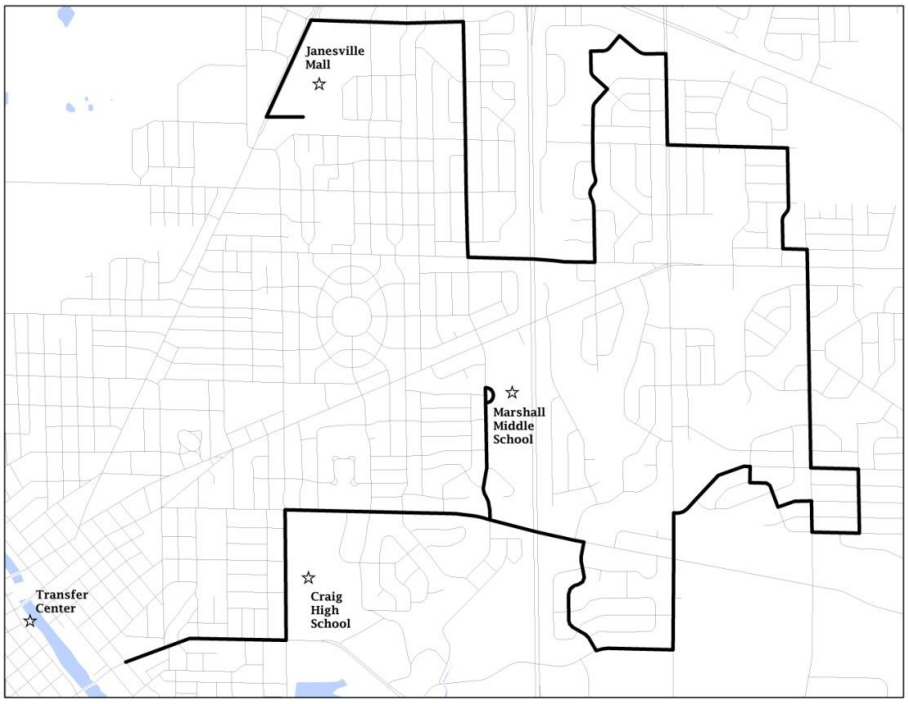
Map 5 Kellogg Extra Service Route



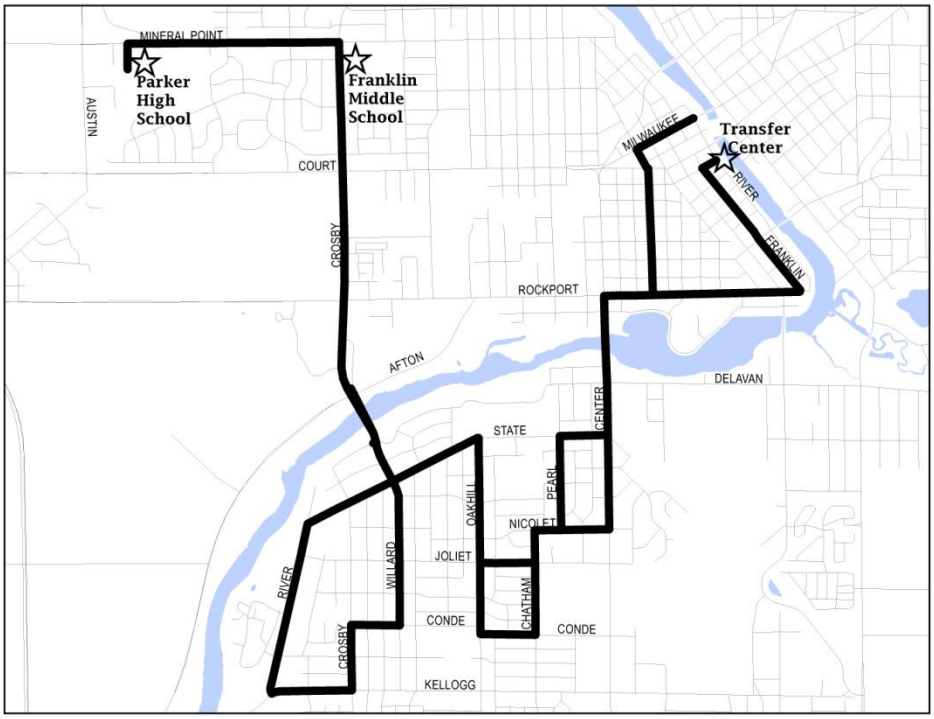
Map 6 Northwest Extra Service Route



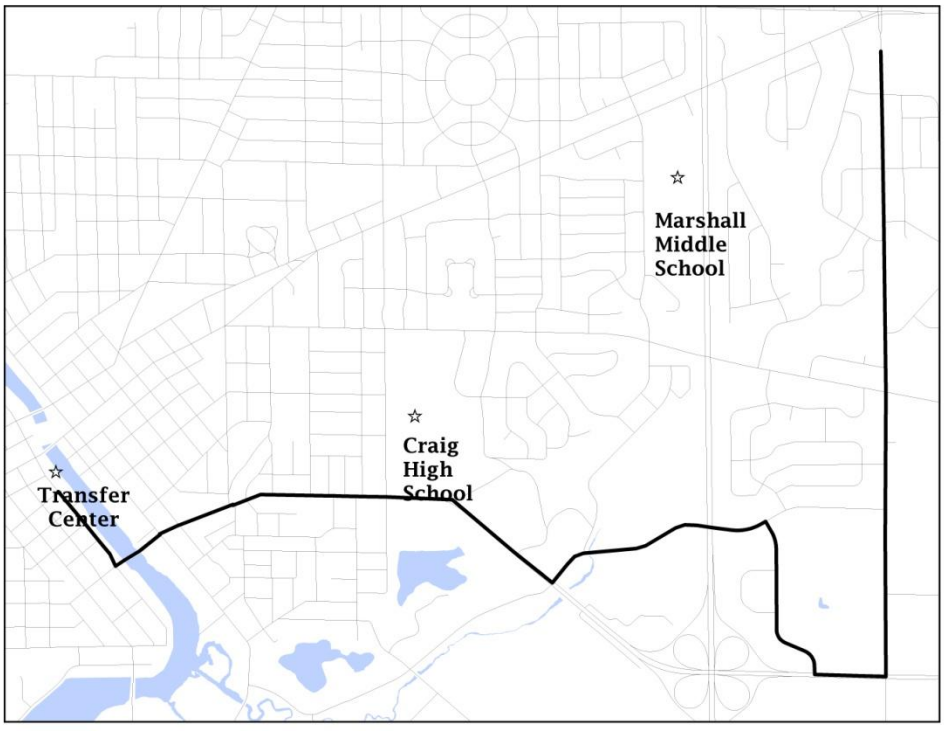
Map 7 Pontiac / Wuthering Hills Extra Service Route



Map 8 Southwest Extra Service Route



Map 9 Wright Extra Service Route



Traffic Counts

Traffic counts are reported as the number of vehicles expected to pass a given location on an average day of the year. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) releases counts of traffic volume for select roads on a three year cycle. The most recent counts of Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) are from 2008. Maps that were used to audit schools included traffic counts for certain roads near schools.

Crash Data

Understanding bicycle and pedestrian crash data helps to identify methods for preventing future crashes. Highway and bicycle safety specialists now use the term "crash" instead of "accident" to emphasize that most automobile and bicycle interactions are predictable and preventable occurrences. Bicycle crashes include both falls and collisions. A bicyclist may fall due to slippery conditions or an unexpected impediment to travel. A bicyclist might have a collision with a car, bike or pedestrian.

Between 2002 and 2006, there were 185 documented vehicle crashes involving bicyclists or pedestrians in Janesville. Eighty-four (45%) of these crashes involved a cyclist, and 101 (55%) involved a pedestrian. Missing data, such as who is typically involved in a crash (children or adults), or what time of day crashes occur, did not allow for the creation of detailed statistics. Future issue specific studies may need to further define the types of crashes and contributing factors to determine if children were involved or not.

Locating crashes (and groups of crashes) as they relate to areas around schools is of primary interest. The following tables show the numbers of bicycle and pedestrian crashes in school areas. In Chapter 3: Identifying Safety Issues, crashes are mapped in relation to each individual school.

Table 3: Pedestrian and Bicycle Crashes

	Pedestrian Crashes		Bicycle Crashes		Sum of Bicycle & Pedestrian Crashes	
School	Within 1/4 Mile	Within 1/2 Mile	Within ¼ Mile	Within ½ Mile	Within 1/4 Mile	Within 1/2 Mile
Adams Elementary	0	3	3	4	3	7
Harrison Elementary	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jackson Elementary	0	1	0	0	0	1
Jefferson Elementary	2	4	1	10	3	14
Kennedy Elementary	0	1	1	1	1	2
Lincoln Elementary	0	1	1	2	1	3
Madison Elementary	1	4	0	5	1	9
Monroe Elementary	0	3	3	4	3	7
Roosevelt Elementary	2	4	0	7	2	11
Van Buren Elementary	0	1	0	3	0	4
Washington Elementary	1	3	1	2	2	5
Wilson Elementary	1	5	1	13	2	18
Edison Middle	1	4	0	5	1	9
Franklin Middle	1	3	0	3	1	6
Marshall Middle	3	4	2	3	5	7
Total	**12**	**41**	**13**	**62**	**25**	**103**

Note: Crash data from 2002-2006 supplied by WisDOT.

Policies

Government Policies

The following provides an overview of applicable city and school district policies.

Janesville Sidewalk replacement/placement policy

In summary, Section 17.32.120 of Janesville Code of General Ordinances assigns the responsibility of sidewalk construction to the subdivider or owner of a property.

Sidewalks are to be installed at the time of development. Property owners are responsible for the maintenance of sidewalk. A petition process is in place to add sidewalk to developed areas that lack sidewalk.

Janesville Sidewalk snow removal enforcement

According to 12.08.080 of Janesville city ordinance:

"Every occupant of a lot, and every owner of an unoccupied lot having a sidewalk or sidewalks in front of the same shall keep such walk or walks and the nearest one-half part of crosswalks connecting therewith free from snow and ice, provided, however, that a period of twelve hours shall be allowed after each snowstorm for the removal of snow which fell during such storm."

Crossing Guard Policy

Janesville City Council policy establishes a process whereby a study may be requested by the School Traffic Safety Committee, school representatives, Parent-Teacher Organizations, or individual citizens. The City Engineering Department then prepares a study and presents a recommendation to the Transportation Committee regarding the use of any traffic control devices or other measures to alleviate or eliminate whatever hazards may be identified. Upon review of the report and recommendation, the Transportation Committee prepares a recommendation to the Common Council based upon results of this study and established Council policy.

Bicycling Policies

The Janesville School District strongly discourages children below third grade from riding bikes to school. The school does not provide special supervision for the bike rack and is not responsible for bikes that are damaged or stolen.

Regarding bicycles on sidewalks, Janesville City Ordinance 10.64.080 states:

"Bicyclists exercising due care may drive and operate their bicycles upon the sidewalk, except sidewalks in the central business districts, in outlying business districts, pedestrian paths, within one block of school grounds, or public playgrounds, when such riding shall jeopardize the safety of pedestrians thereon."

Busing Policies

The Janesville School District is responsible for the development of all school bus routes. School bus transportation is provided for students:

- Living within School District boundaries, and;
- Living more than two miles from their home school, or;
- Living in the Briarcrest, Royal Oaks, Falling Creek and Highway 51 North areas, or;
- Enrolled in a magnet school for the purpose of participating in the Challenge Program who will be transported from their home school to the magnet school.

CHAPTER 3: IDENTIFYING SAFETY ISSUES

Community Input

Communication with the community occurred throughout the planning process. Prior to the first public meeting and open house, city staff met with PTA representatives and school principals to introduce the SRTS initiative. Early outreach resulted in a well attended public meeting and open house on April 15, 2009.

The April meeting was an opportunity to identify major concerns associated with barriers to walking and biking. Principals and parents spoke of dangers around the school related to traffic and crime. They also spoke of past efforts to improve on dangers and the difficulty in implementing solutions.

A Janesville Gazette article prompted a few phone calls from the public.[xvi] Residents spoke of a need to enforce traffic laws and for education of both adults and children in regards to bicycle and pedestrian safety.

An informal poll on the Janesville Gazette website received 1002 votes and 46 comments from the public.[xvii]

Figure 1: Janesville Gazette website poll

What Deters Your Children From Walking/Biking to School?

Response	Percent	Votes
Distance	27%	271 votes
Traffic danger	16%	164 votes
Weather	5%	52 votes
Fear of crime	30%	306 votes
Other—elaborate in comments	8%	81 votes
None—my children do walk/bike to school	12%	128 votes
1002 total votes		

The auditing of schools provided another means to gather input from the public. Parents from most schools volunteered to perform the audits and make

recommendations based on their observations. The full report from all schools can be found in Appendix B.

The second public meeting and open house was held on October 12, 2009. The meeting covered the data results and had a brainstorming session to talk about recommendations. The room split up into two groups and had roundtable discussions. Participants provided district-wide recommendations as well as some school-specific recommendations.

Parent Perceptions

The circumstances that have led to a decline in walking and bicycling to school did not happen overnight and have created a self-perpetuating cycle. As motor vehicle traffic increases, parents become more convinced that it is unsafe for their children to walk or bicycle to school. They begin driving them to school, thereby adding even more traffic to the road and sustaining the cycle. Understanding the many reasons why so many children do not walk or bicycle to school is the first step in interrupting the cycle.

Many factors contribute to the reduction in children walking and bicycling to school. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has published the findings from two nationwide surveys of parents, which identify barriers that prevent them from allowing their children to walk to school. [xviii]

In the 2004 nationwide survey, 1,588 adults answered questions about barriers to walking to school for their youngest child, children ranged from 5 to 18 years. Parents cited one or more of the following six reasons.[xix]

Table 4: Parents' Perceived Barriers to Walking & Biking to School (Nationwide)

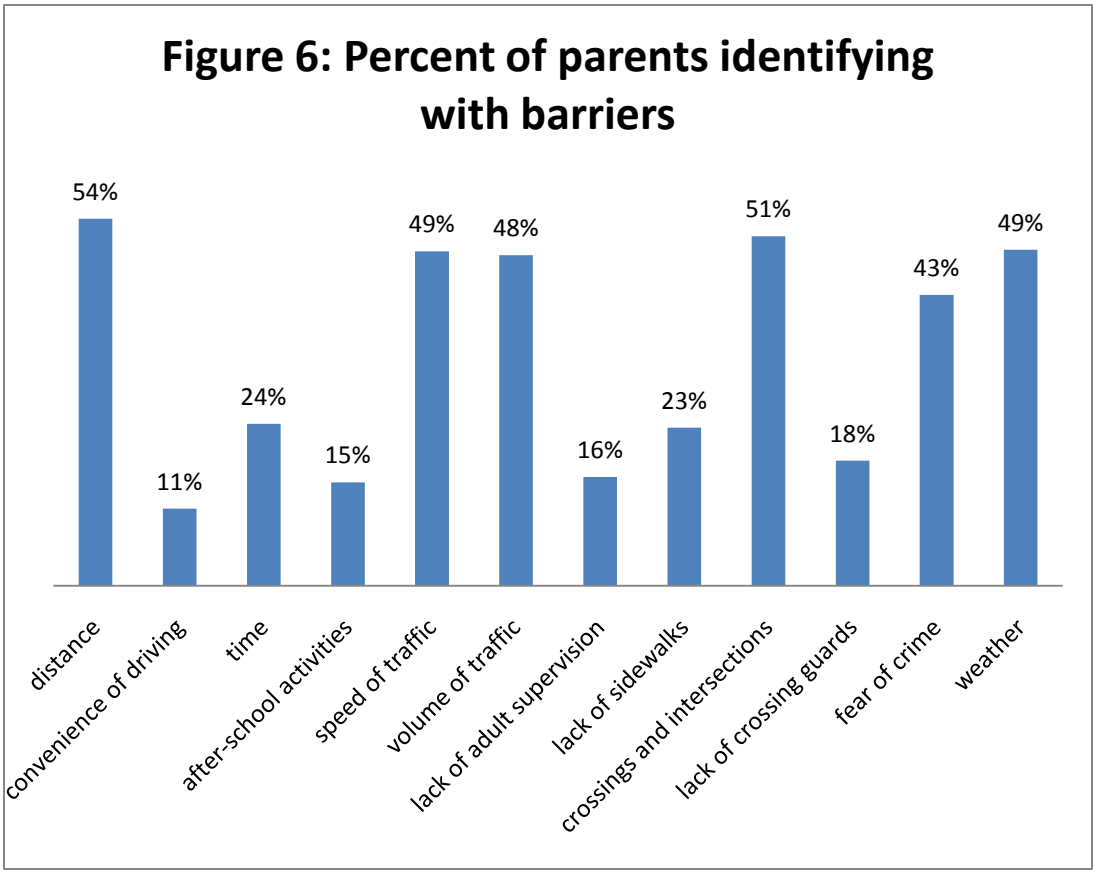
Barrier	Percent of parents identifying with the barrier
Distance to school	61.5 %
Traffic-related danger	30.4 %
Weather	18.6 %
Crime danger	11.7 %
Opposing school policy	6.0 %
Other reasons (not identified)	15.0 %

In the spring 2009, a similar parent survey was administered to all K-8 parents through a take home survey sent with students or mailed home – in both English and Spanish. The survey asked for information about what factors affect whether parents allow their children to walk or bike to school, the presence of key safety-related conditions along routes to school, and related background information. The survey results will help determine how to improve opportunities for children to walk or bike to school, and measure parental attitude changes as the local SRTS program grows. There were approximately 1,500 surveys returned.

The survey form listed 12 barriers and respondents were allowed to choose as many as they identified with. Respondents most often chose distance as a barrier to walking or biking. Other popular choices were speed of traffic (49%), volume of traffic (48%), crossings and intersections (51%) and weather (49%).

Several differences exist between the nationwide responses and Janesville responses. Not surprisingly, Janesville residents are more concerned with harsh weather conditions. Janesville residents are much more concerned with crime (43%) than the rest of the nation (12%).

Figure 2: Janesville Parents' Perceived Barriers to Walking & Biking to School



When asked how far students live from school, 28% of respondents said they lived less than ¼ mile from the school they attend. An additional 16% lived within a ½ mile yet 67% of parents said they usually drive their children to school. Fewer (57%) also pick up their children using the family vehicle. These results are slightly higher than the travel data collected, which calculated 63% of trips to school and 55% of trips from school made by family vehicle. Excellent weather in the spring may have contributed to fewer car trips during the week the survey was administered.

When asked if they would allow their child to walk or bike to school if any of these conditions were changed or improved the majority replied "yes". The only factors that would be unaffected by change or improvement were "Convenience of driving" and "Child's participation in before/after school activities".

Figure 3 shows the percentage of parents in Janesville who would allow walking and/or biking if certain barriers changed. Like the previous question, respondents were allowed to choose as many barriers as they wished. Several of the barriers chosen may be considered infrastructure related such as speed and volume of traffic. Figure 3 suggests that infrastructure improvements may increase the number of children allowed to walk or bike to school.

Figure 3: Percent of parents who would allow walking/biking if barriers changed

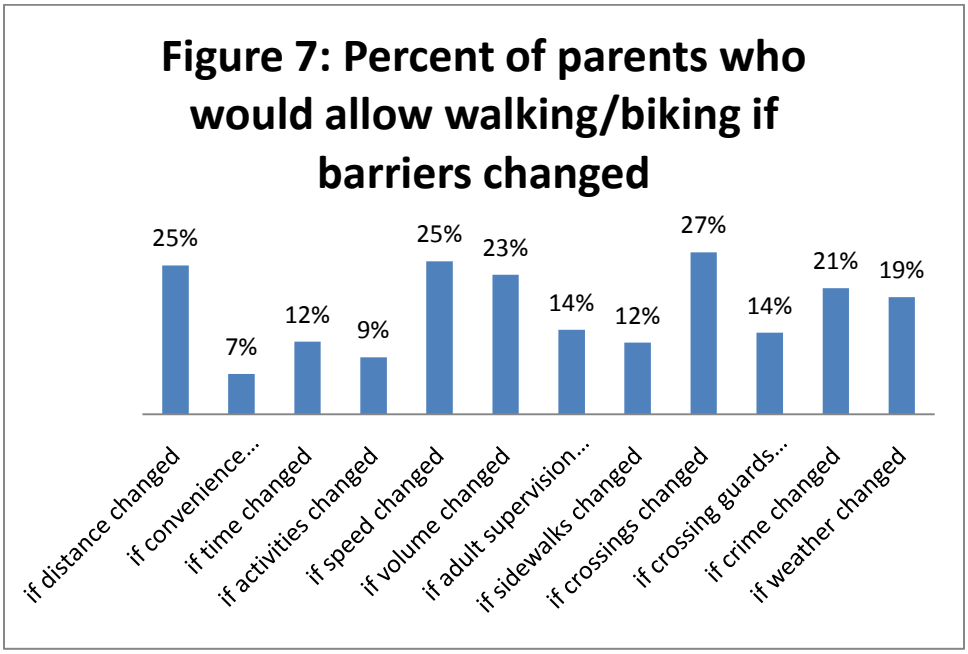
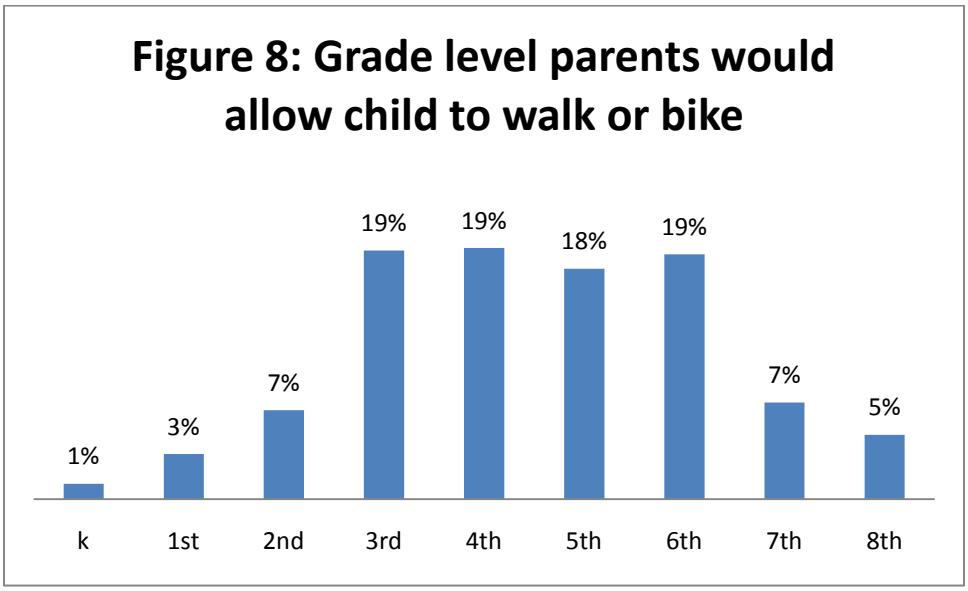


Figure 4 shows what grade level parents would allow their child to walk or bike. Nearly 80% of respondents said they would let their child start walking or biking between 3rd and 6th grade. This result indicates that encouragement strategies could target children in these grades. The results do not include the percentage of parents who would never allow their child to walk or bike.

Figure 4: Grade level parents would allow child to walk or bike



Parents were asked if they feel their child's school encourages or discourages walking and biking. The results in Table 5 indicate most parents feel the schools are neither encouraging nor discouraging.

Table 5: Parents' Perceived Encouragement by School to Walk & Bike

Strongly Encourage	2%
Encourage	14%
Neither	81%
Discourage	2%
Strongly Discourage	1%

Parents were asked if they feel walking and biking is a fun activity for their child. Table 6 shows that most parents are either neutral or they think it is a fun activity.

Table 6: Parents' Perceived Level of Fun for Child

Very Fun	16%
Fun	37%
Neutral	42%
Boring	4%
Very Boring	2%

Parents were asked how healthy they believe it is for their child to walk and bike. The results in Table 7 show that nearly 90% of respondents believe walking and biking is a healthy activity.

Table 7: Parents' Perceived Health Benefits for Child

Very Healthy	49%
Healthy	40%
Neutral	11%
Unhealthy	0.4%
Very Unhealthy	0.4%

Assessment & Audit

The assessment and audit highlights and reinforces what each school is doing right to keep students safe and provides direction in those areas that need improvement. The assessment evaluates the facilities regarding the school grounds, from sidewalks, to bicycle racks and entrances. The audit generally evaluates the area within two-miles of the school, and focuses specifically on the ¼ mile nearest the school.

The audits were performed by Task Force members and volunteers during the spring of 2009. A map was created for each school which allowed the auditors to navigate the area and record their observations. Participants were given written instructions with a list of common issues assigned specific codes. Auditors wrote codes on the maps to record their observations.

Major issues identified from the individual audits have been incorporated into individual school analysis. The full report from all schools can be found in Appendix B.

Primary issues identified included:

- Speed of traffic
- Volume of traffic
- Sidewalk--gaps, broken or poorly maintained, inaccessible
- Vision obstructions--overgrown vegetation, illegally parked cars
- "Scary" places

Student Surveys

The Student In-Class Travel Tally was developed to help measure how students get to school and whether the SRTS Program affects trips to and from school in the future. A copy of the student, teacher and parent surveys used for this analysis can be found in Appendix A. The student and parent survey instruments were developed by the National Center for Safe Routes to School.

Teachers used the tally sheet to record specific information about how children arrive and depart from school each day for one week. Teachers also recorded the weather conditions for each day, and were able to add comments to the surveys. The data collected for the Janesville District was submitted to the National Center for Safe Routes to School to help track the success of SRTS programs across the country.

Data was collected during a one week period in late April of 2009. The weather during data collection was fair, with little rain. As shown in Table 8, 60% of students travel to and from school via family vehicle. The next highest categories were "walk" with 18%, and "bus" with 9%.

Table 8: Current Travel Mode Estimates

Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
18%	4%	9%	60%	8%	1%	0%

Table 9 shows the recorded results from the Student In-Class Travel Tally for each school. At all school levels, the data shows utilization of a range of modes, but transportation by family vehicle is the predominant means.

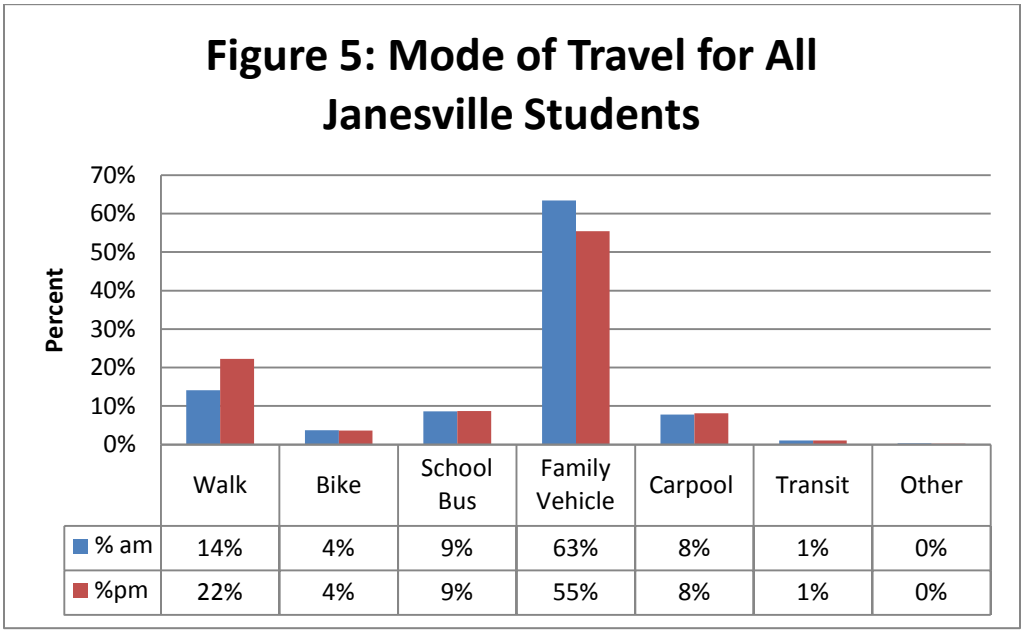
Walking and biking varied widely from school to school. Lincoln Elementary School measured the highest rate of children walking (33%) while Jackson Elementary School had the lowest rate (5%). Marshall Middle School had the highest rate (9%) of children biking. Individual school results are discussed in greater detail in the School Analysis.

Table 9: Current Travel Mode Estimates by School

School	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Van Buren Elementary	15%	1%	31%	48%	4%	0%	1%
Kennedy Elementary	16%	1%	2%	69%	11%	1%	0%
Adams Elementary	18%	5%	2%	67%	7%	1%	0%
Madison Elementary	21%	1%	5%	65%	8%	0%	0%
Lincoln Elementary	33%	2%	3%	57%	4%	0%	0%
Roosevelt Elementary	14%	5%	9%	65%	7%	0%	1%
Harrison Elementary	9%	4%	5%	72%	11%	0%	0%
Washington Elementary	19%	4%	9%	59%	9%	0%	0%
Wilson Elementary	27%	2%	2%	69%	0%	0%	0%
Jefferson Elementary	12%	6%	1%	75%	6%	0%	0%
Monroe Elementary	19%	2%	7%	65%	6%	1%	0%
Jackson Elementary	5%	1%	33%	54%	6%	0%	0%
Edison Middle	20%	7%	20%	43%	7%	2%	1%
Marshall Middle	15%	9%	3%	54%	17%	2%	0%
Franklin Middle	22%	2%	11%	51%	9%	4%	0%

Significantly, nearly half of the students who walked home did not walk to school. This equates to about 530 more students walking home after school. This anomaly may be worth further investigation.

Figure 5: Student Travel Summary (AM & PM)



Travel modes differed between elementary and middle school students. Figure 6 shows how Middle School students traveled to and from school. Middle school students more often used modes other than the family vehicle. Significantly, nearly half of the students who walked home did not walk to school, suggesting lack of time in the morning is a barrier to walking.

Figure 6: Mode of travel for all middle school students

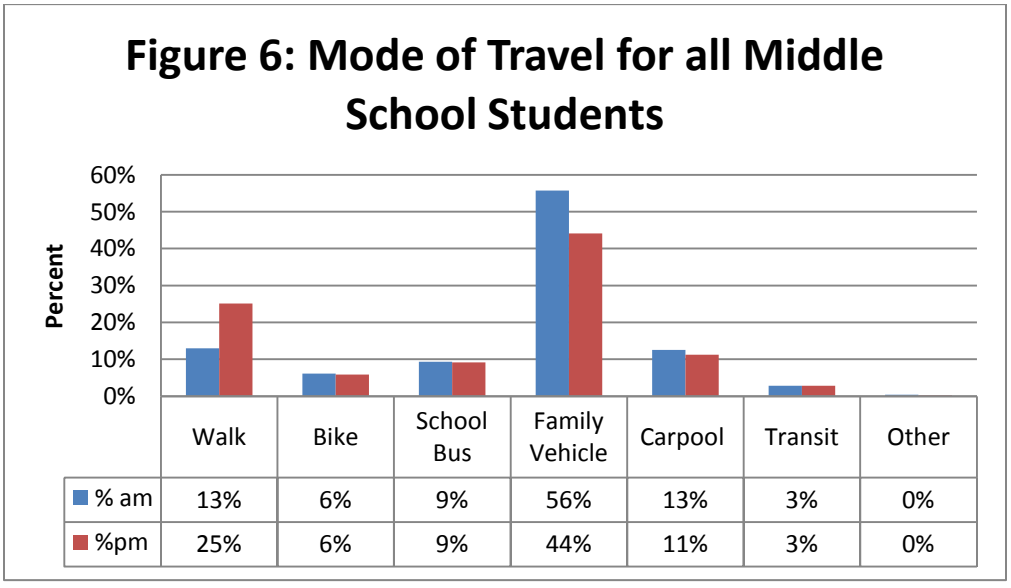
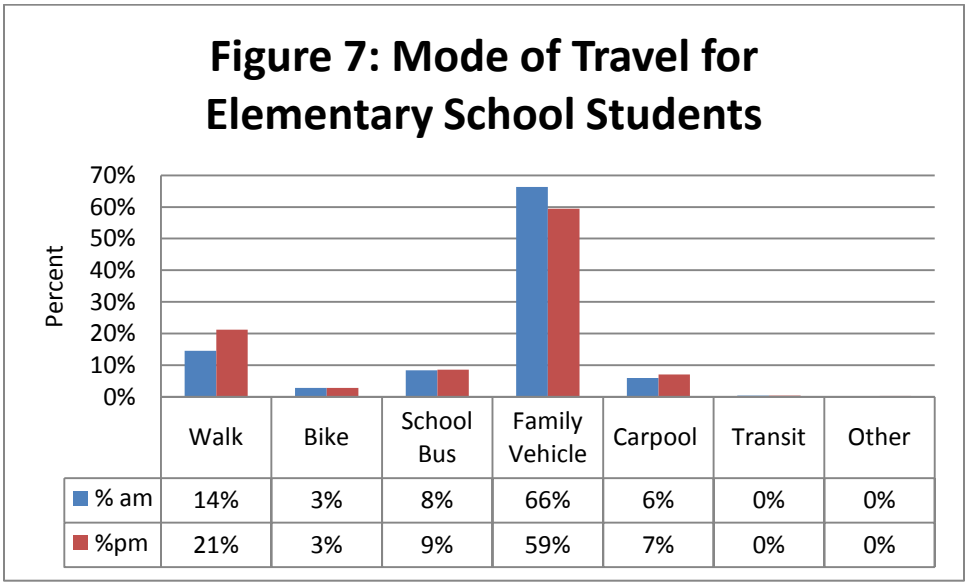


Figure 7 shows how Elementary School students traveled to and from school. It should be noted that school district policy strongly discourages children below third grade from riding their bikes to school.

Figure 7: Mode of travel for elementary school students



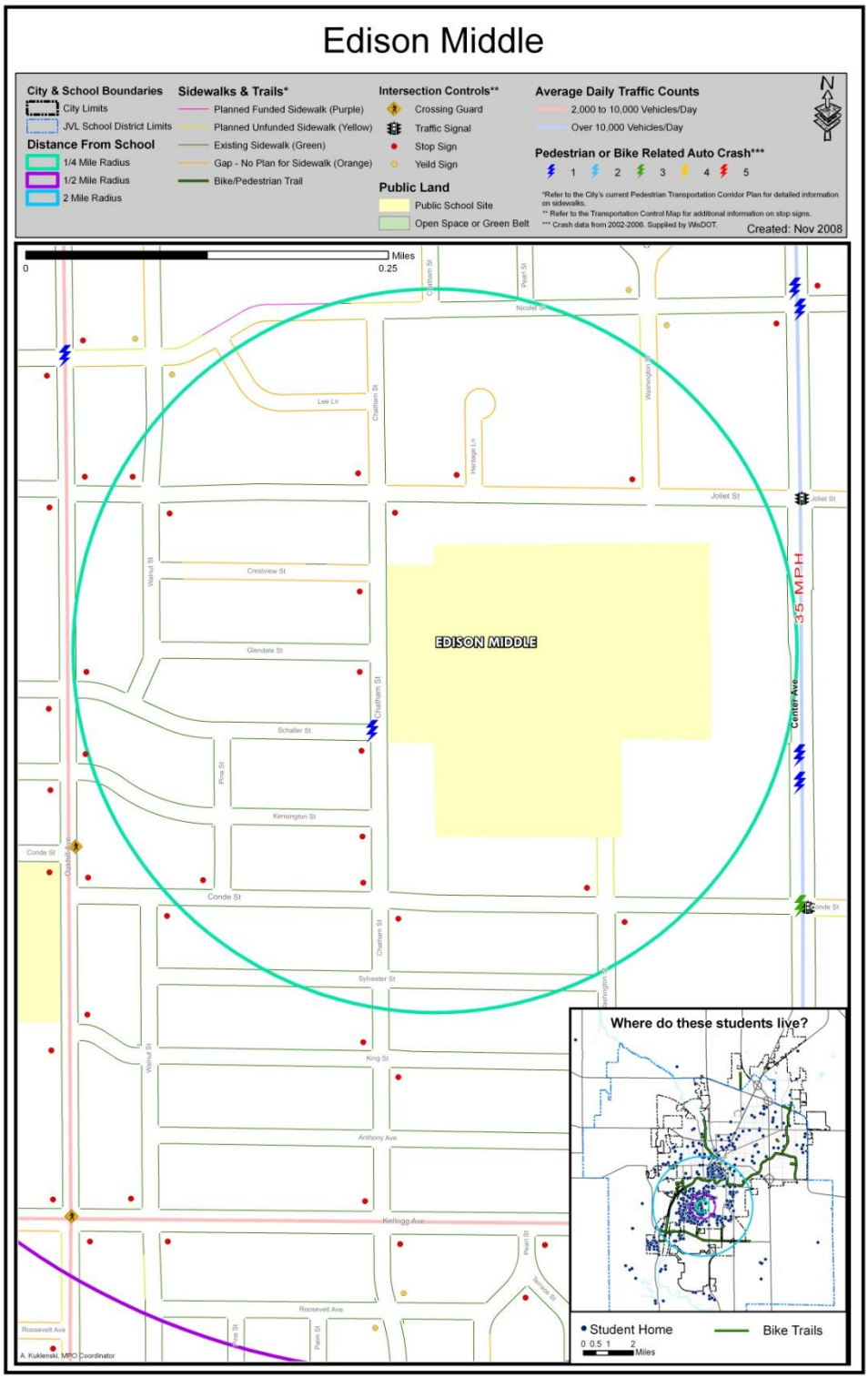
School Analysis

Edison Middle

1649 S. Chatham

730 students in grades 6 – 8

Edison Middle School is located on the south side of the city. The neighborhood consists of multi-family residential, single family residential, and a commercial area east of the school. The streets are laid out in a mostly grid pattern, with some cul-de-sacs and streets that do not connect.

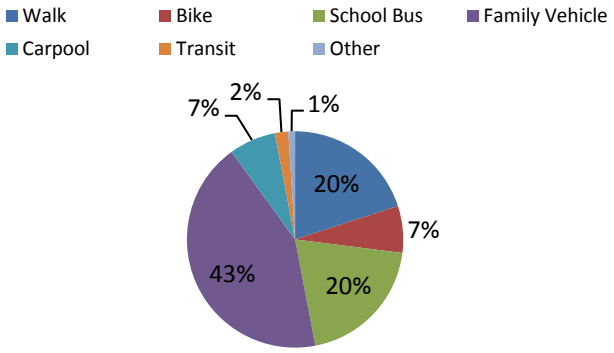


Map 10: Edison Middle School

Student Geography and Travel Pattern

Edison Middle School students use a variety of transportation modes. Although family vehicle is the most common (43%), Edison has the lowest rate of family vehicle use compared to other schools in the city.

The survey of Edison parents revealed that over 1/3 of them live greater than two miles from school.



Key Concerns:

- Traffic along Center Ave.
- Intersection of Joliet and Chatham needs warning of school crossing
- Accessibility of sidewalks (lacking curb ramps in places)

Comments:

"Bullying to and from school"

"Sexual predators are released in this city not worth risking my child's safety- I would rather driver her to school"

"Vandalism of bikes at school has also been an issue!"

Franklin Middle

450 N. Crosby Avenue

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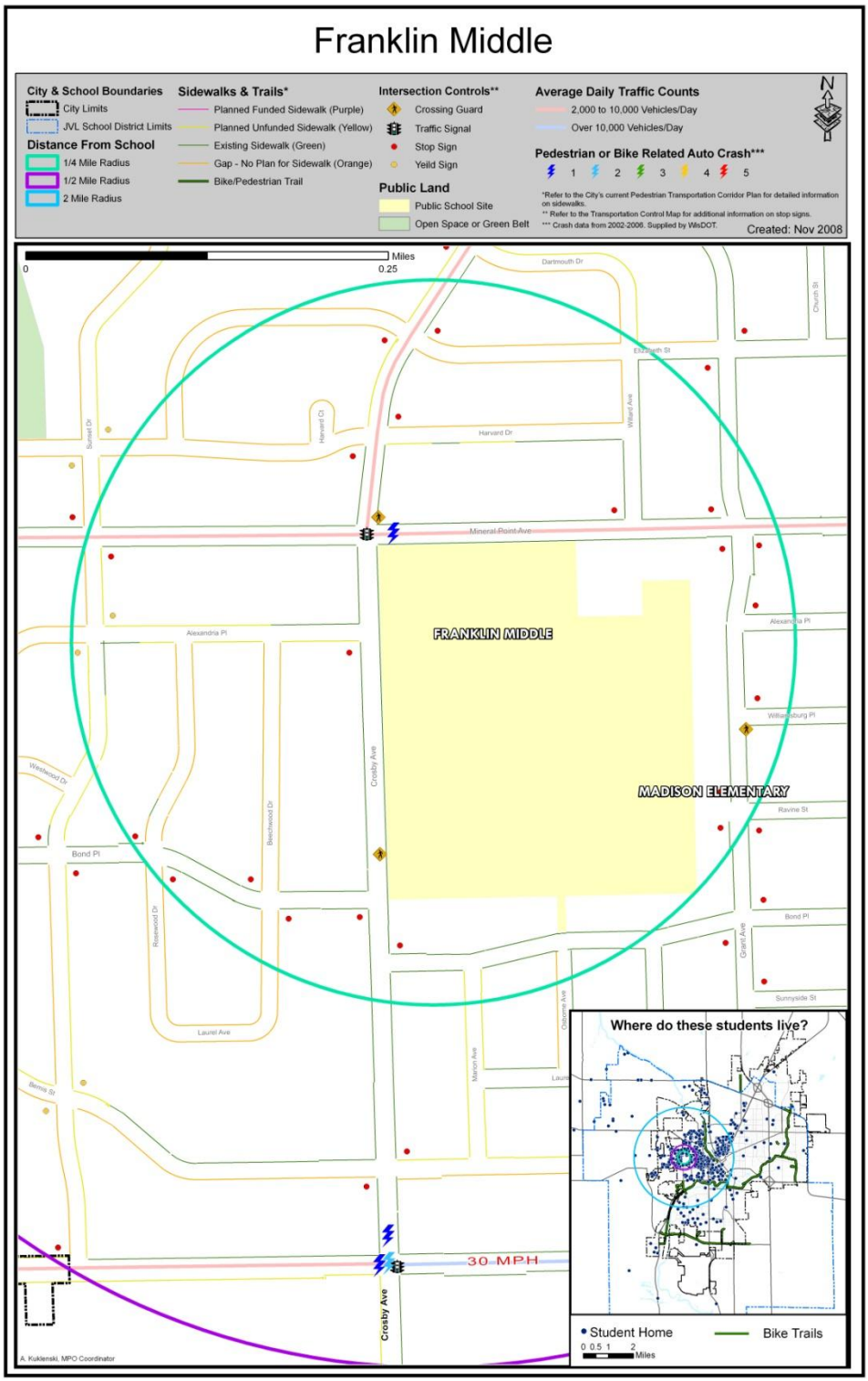
580 students in grades 6 – 8

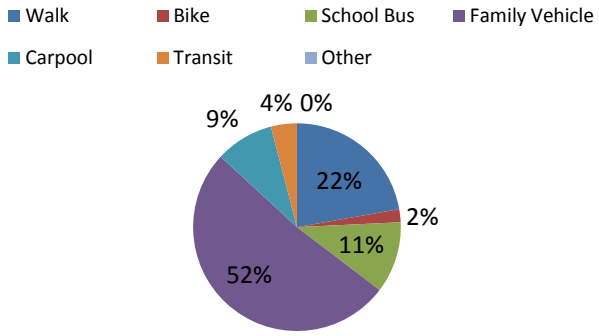
Franklin Middle School is located on the northwest side of the city and it is adjacent to Madison Elementary School. The neighborhood has a small commercial development north of the school along Mineral Point Ave. and commercial development south of the school along W. Court St. The streets are laid out in an irregular pattern and many of the streets west of the school lack sidewalk.



Map 11: Franklin Middle School

Student Geography and Travel Pattern

Franklin Middle School has the highest rate of walking of all the middle schools (22% compared to 20% at Edison and 15% at Marshall), yet it has the lowest rate of biking (2% compared to 7% and 9% respectively).



The survey of Franklin parents indicates roughly 1/3 of students live within ½ mile from the school.

Key Concerns:

- Intersection of Crosby and Mineral Point Road
- Speeding and volume of traffic along Crosby Avenue
- Gaps in sidewalk network

Comments:

"My child sometimes bikes in early fall (Sept) and late spring (May/June) weather permitted. Would like a sidewalk down Marion to Crosby to Franklin"

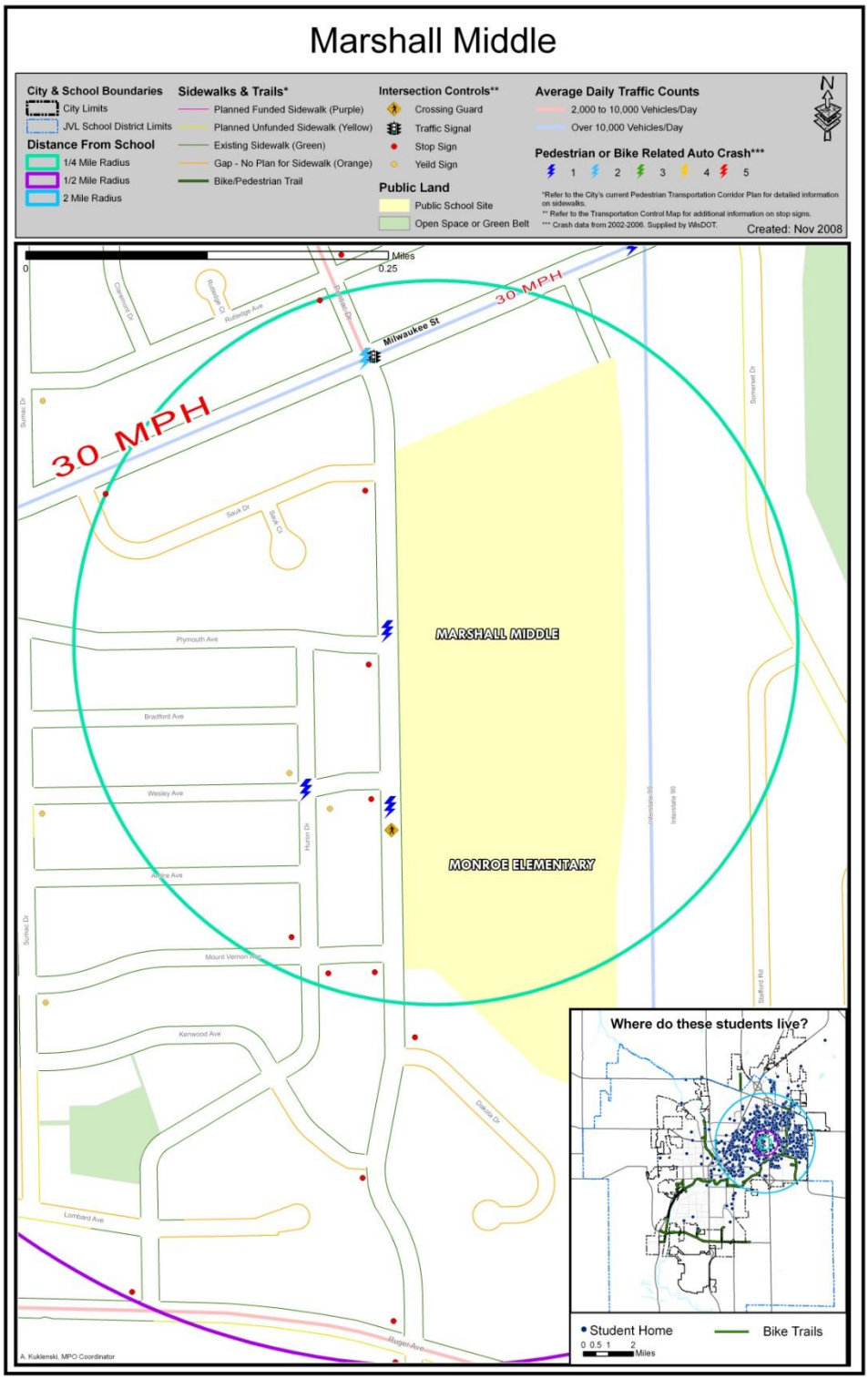
"Drivers around the schools are not careful and do not look out for children they are too interested in getting away fast"

Marshall Middle

25 S Pontiac Drive

890 students in grades 6 – 8

Marshall Middle School is located on the east side of Janesville. It is directly north of Monroe Elementary School. Both schools are just west of Interstate 39/90 in a predominately single family residential neighborhood. A small commercial development exists to the north of the school along E. Milwaukee Street. Streets are fairly well connected west of I-39/90, but less regular east of the highway.

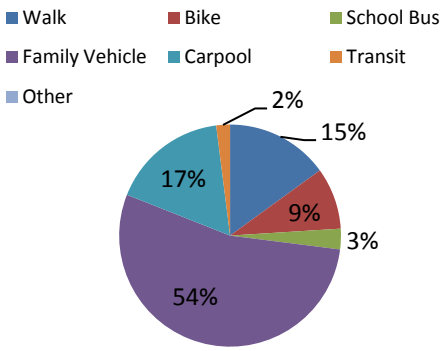


Map 12: Marshall Middle School

Student Geography and Travel Pattern

Marshall Middle School students most often travel via family vehicle (54%), but also have the highest rate of biking in the city (9%). Marshall also has the highest percentage of students carpooling (17%).

78% of parents surveyed said they live between ½ mile and two miles from school, which could contribute to the high rate of family vehicle use. About 20% said they live within ½ mile. Marshall serves the largest geographical area and student population of the three middle schools.



Key Concerns:

- Intersection of Milwaukee and Pontiac Drive
- "scary" area along Middle School Road due to no eyes on the street
- Commercial area along East Milwaukee Street—inattentive drivers pulling into/out of driveways
- Pontiac Drive- parking violations, signage

Comments:

"The school pick up and drop off needs improvement"

"kids make fun of wearing helmets so my kids will not ride!"

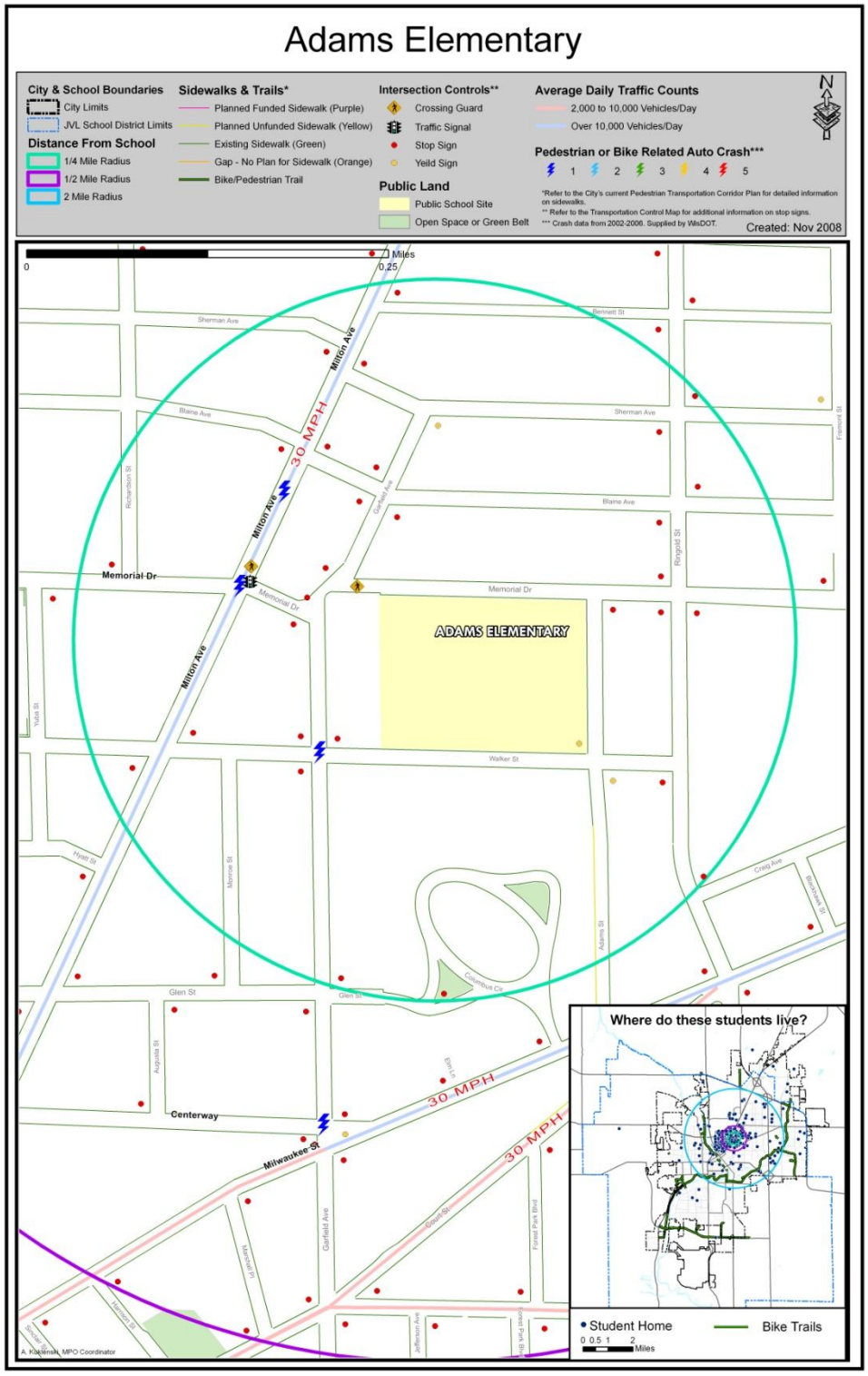
"The traffic situation is terrible at Marshall. I'd never want my son trying to ride a bike in that mess. Walking is not much better—kids get run down in the crosswalk! The only way I feel they are safe is to drop them off myself"

Adams Elementary

1138 E. Memorial Drive

415 students in grades K - 5

Adams Elementary School is located on the near northeast side of Janesville, near the Rock County historic fairgrounds. Streets are laid out in an irregular pattern with long blocks. Sidewalks around the school are mostly sufficient for walking.

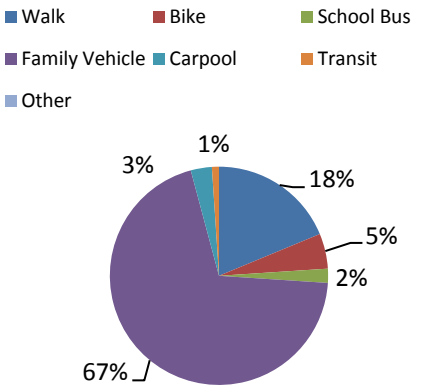


Map 13: Adams Elementary School

Student Geography and Travel

Adams Elementary School students primarily travel to and from the school via the family vehicle (67%). Survey of parents revealed that 25% who take their children to school by family vehicle live less than ¼ of a mile from school. 62% of parents responded that they live less than ½ of a mile from school.

Bicycling is slightly more popular at Adams (5%) than the average elementary school (3%).



Key Concerns:

- High speed and traffic volume along Milton Avenue and Milwaukee Street
- "scary" dogs along Adams Street
- Memorial Drive- traffic traveling too fast, parking violations, signage
- Insufficient bicycle racks

Comments:

"We love walking to school each day. The school is very close to our home so it's easy to walk"

"Kids are not safe from predators"

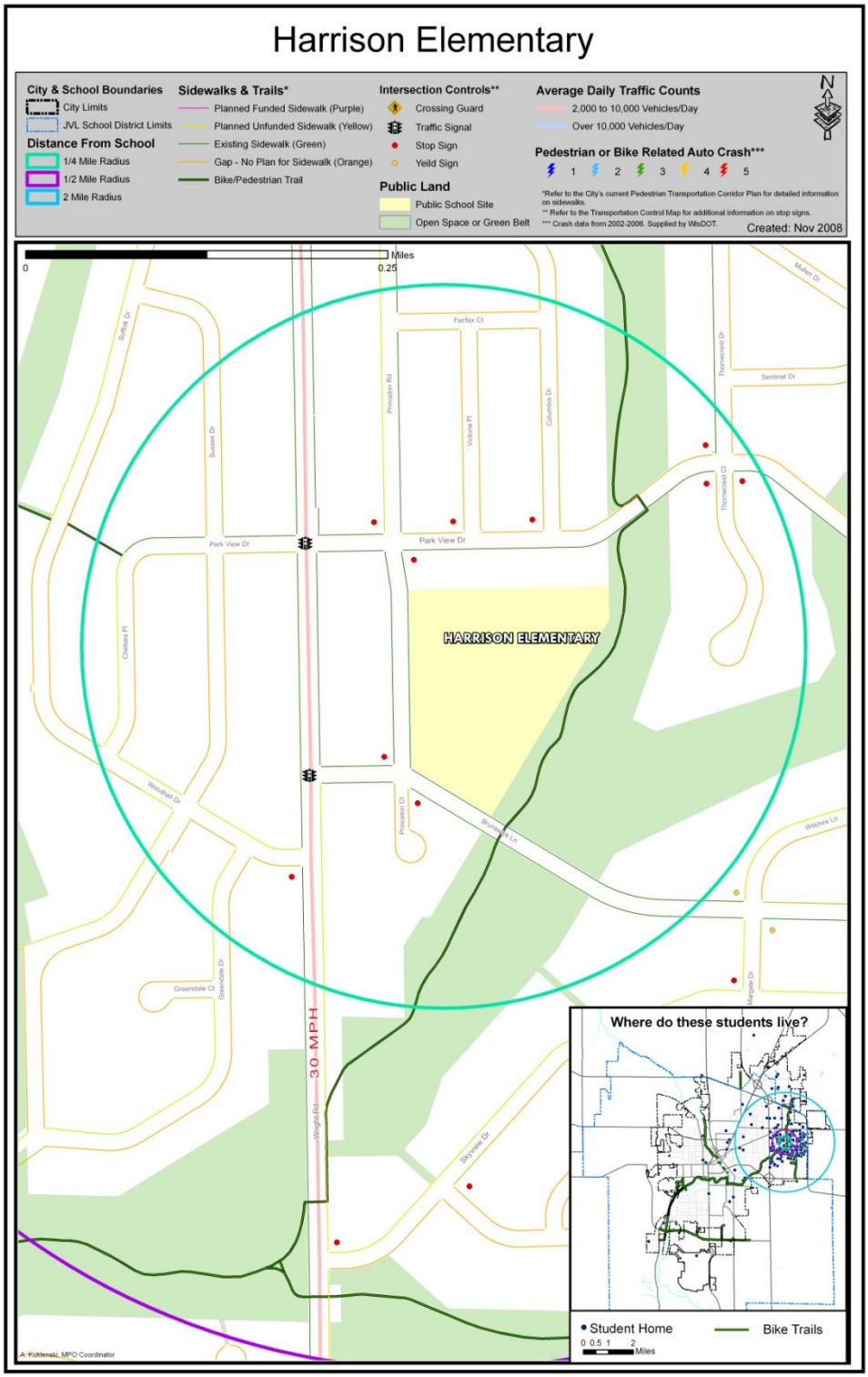
"Safety is the main concern"

Harrison Elementary

760 Princeton Road

300 students in grades K-5

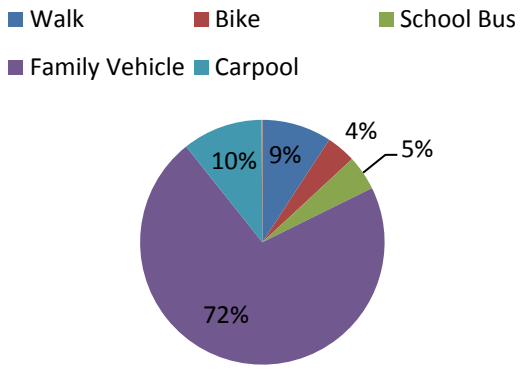
Harrison Elementary School is located on the far eastside of Janesville. The neighborhood is single family residential with an irregular street pattern and some cul-de-sacs. The Spring Brook Trail runs north/south behind the school, which children use via a "goat path" to access the school. Sidewalk is missing along many routes. Some existing sidewalk has missing curb ramps.



Map 14:
Harrison Elementary School

Student Geography and Travel

Harrison Elementary School has one of the highest rates of family vehicle use in the city (72%). Although roughly 20% of parents said they live less than a ¼ mile from school, greater than 35% said they live more than ½ mile.



Key Concerns:

- Intersection of Brunswick and Princeton—traffic volume and many children crossing
- Illegal parking along Park View and Princeton
- Danger along Spring Brook Trail due to its seclusion

Comments:

"If more students walked or more adults outside I may allow my child to walk after 4th grade"

"Ruger [Avenue] has fast careless drivers and no sidewalks"

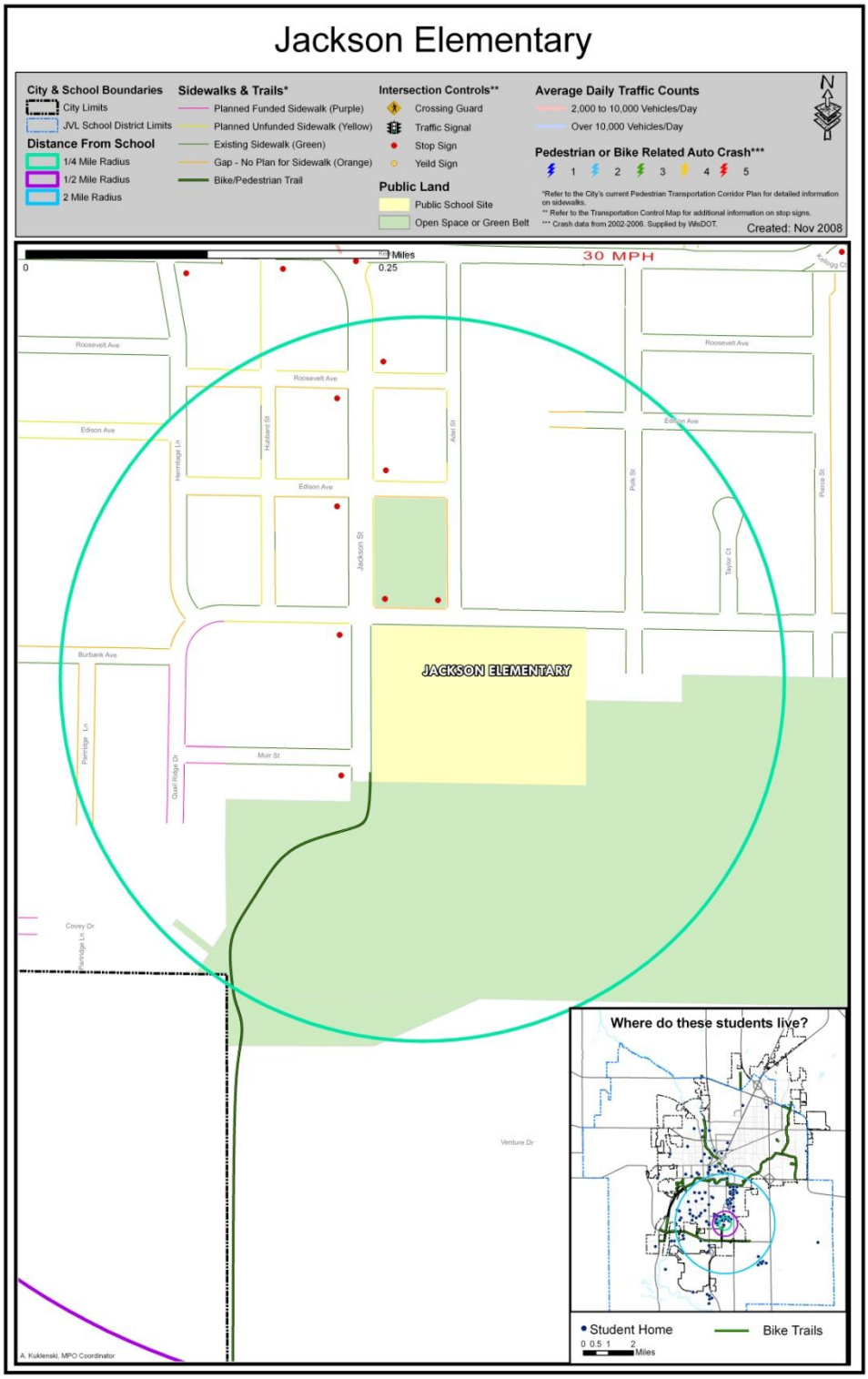
"2 or 3 almost abducted in the last 3 years in our area is way too scary to take chance"

Jackson Elementary

441 Burbank Avenue

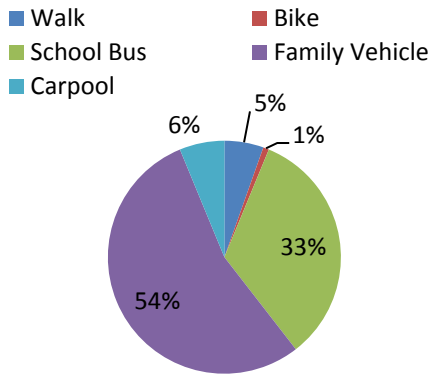
320 students in grades K-5

Jackson Elementary School is located on the south side of the city surrounded by very little residential development. The vacant General Motors plant, other industrial development, and open land are dominant land uses within a ½ mile of the school. Homes near the school lack contiguous sidewalk.



Map 15: Jackson Elementary School

Student Geography and Travel



Although family vehicle is the predominant mode of travel (54%), many students are bused (33%). 47% of parents responded that they live more than two miles from school. Jackson had the lowest rate of children walking (5%) in the city.

Major barriers exist for students living outside of the small residential area within a ½ mile from the school. Center Avenue to the west and Beloit Avenue to the east carry heavy traffic. Railroad tracks to the east are a barrier for residents living east of General Motors.

Key Concerns:

- Lack of sidewalks
- Traffic volume and illegal parking causing obstruction along Burbank Ave.

Comments:

"I think the 5th graders still need help w/ crosswalks…"

"Sidewalk changes from one side of the street to the opposite side on an awkward curve in the road. It's unsafe for children to cross @ this location but to remain on the sidewalk they have to cross in the middle of a block. Most children choose to walk in the street as a result"

Jefferson Elementary

1831 Mt. Zion Avenue

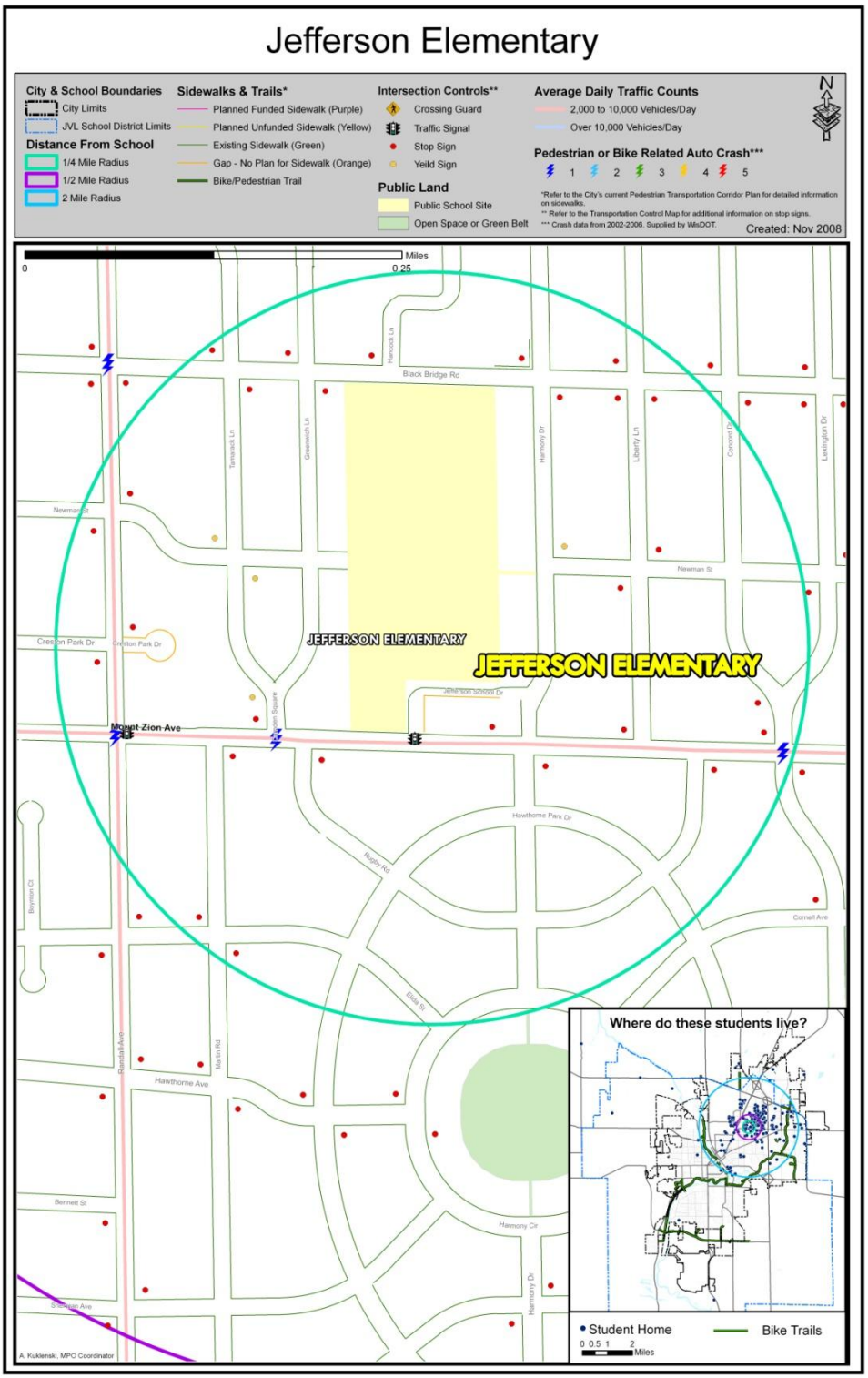
350 students in grades K-5

_____

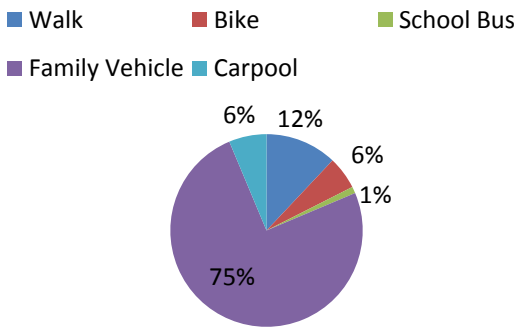
Jefferson Elementary School is located on the northeast side of Janesville. The neighborhood consists of single family residential housing with some commercial and multi-family housing along Randall Avenue. The street network is mostly a grid design with many pathways to the school.

Sidewalks are of good construction and meet accessibility requirements at most intersections.

Map 16: Jefferson Elementary



Student Geography and Travel



Jefferson Elementary suffers from the highest rate of family vehicle use (75%) in the city. Jefferson also has the highest percentage of children biking (6%) of all of the elementary schools. Ironically, Jefferson parents who said their child does not walk or bike to school cited traffic related barriers such as volume of traffic (67%) and traffic speed (63%). 75% of students being driven to school equates to roughly 260 cars circulating around the school at drop off and pick up times. Nearly 45% of parents indicated they live less than ½ of a mile from school.

Key Concerns:

- Traffic volume and speed along Mt. Zion
- Stranger danger

Comments:

"We walk to school with our child also because there are a lot of weird people out there!"

"Sex offenders along the route are a large concern as is traffic"

"I do not trust how some people drive so I don't want risking my child's life or getting hurt"

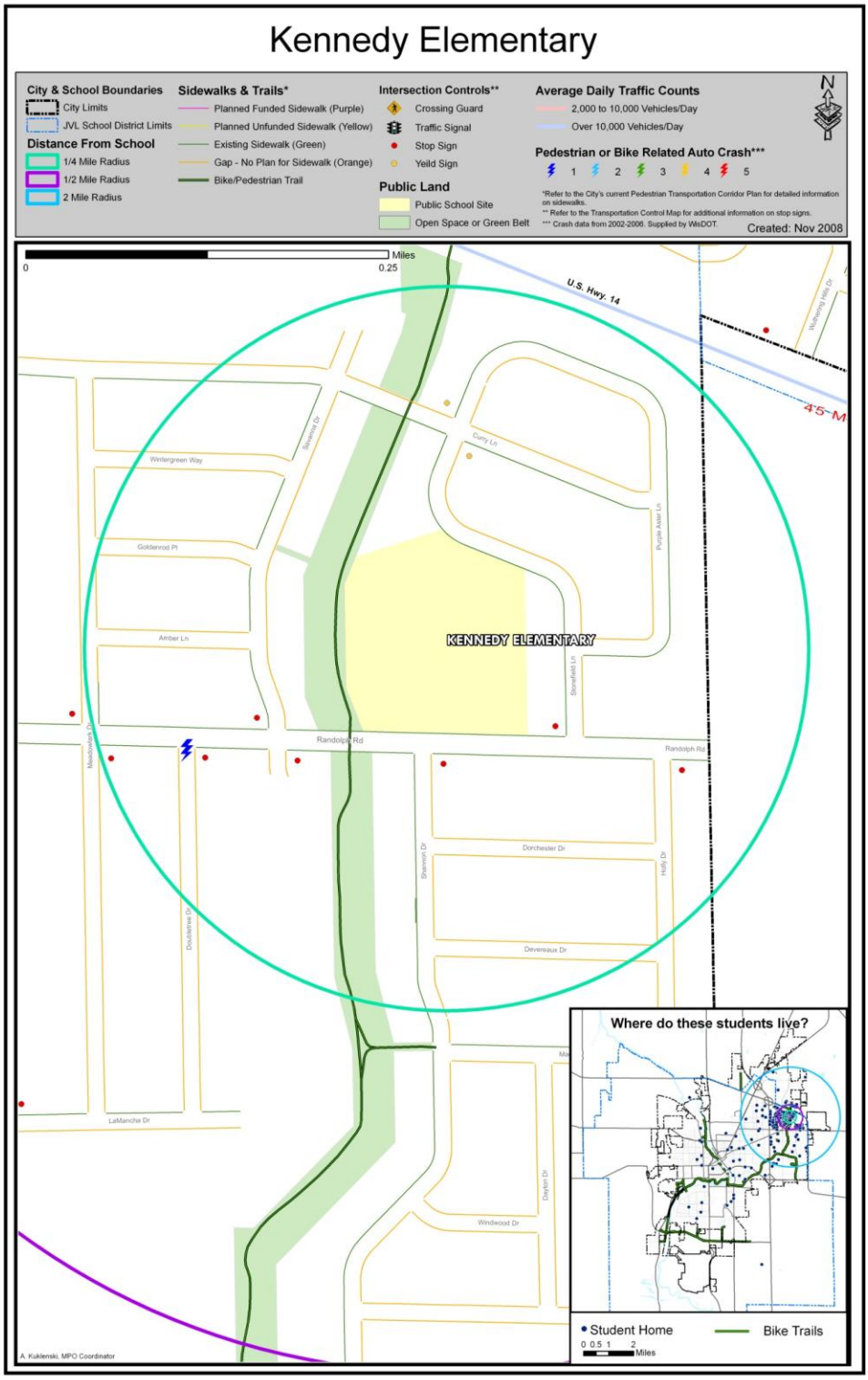
Kennedy Elementary

3901 Randolph Road

310 students in grades K-5

Kennedy is located in a single family residential neighborhood on the northeast side of Janesville. Streets are laid out in an irregular pattern, following the contours of drainage. The Spring Brook Trail is located west of the school.

The area has sidewalk on select streets but only on one side.

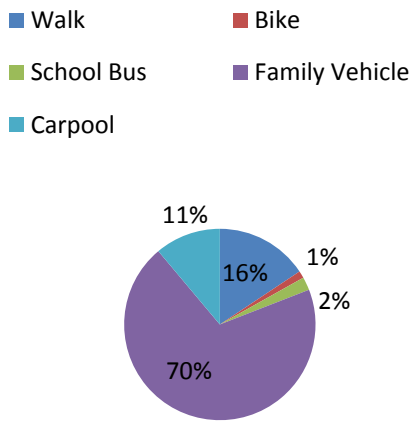


Map 17: Kennedy Elementary

Student Geography and Travel

Kennedy Elementary has a high rate of family vehicle use (70%). The school also has a slightly higher rate of carpooling (11%) compared to most of the other elementary schools.

65% of parents responding said they live within ½ of a mile from the school. 27% who said they live within ¼ of a mile said the family vehicle was the main form of transportation to school.



Key Concerns:

- Lack of sidewalks
- Bike path not plowed in winter

Comments:

"It would be more fun and not as scary to walk with someone."

"My children walk in the road because of no sidewalks. I did call the city. They said I would have to get signatures from people to get sidewalks. It was too much of a hassle."

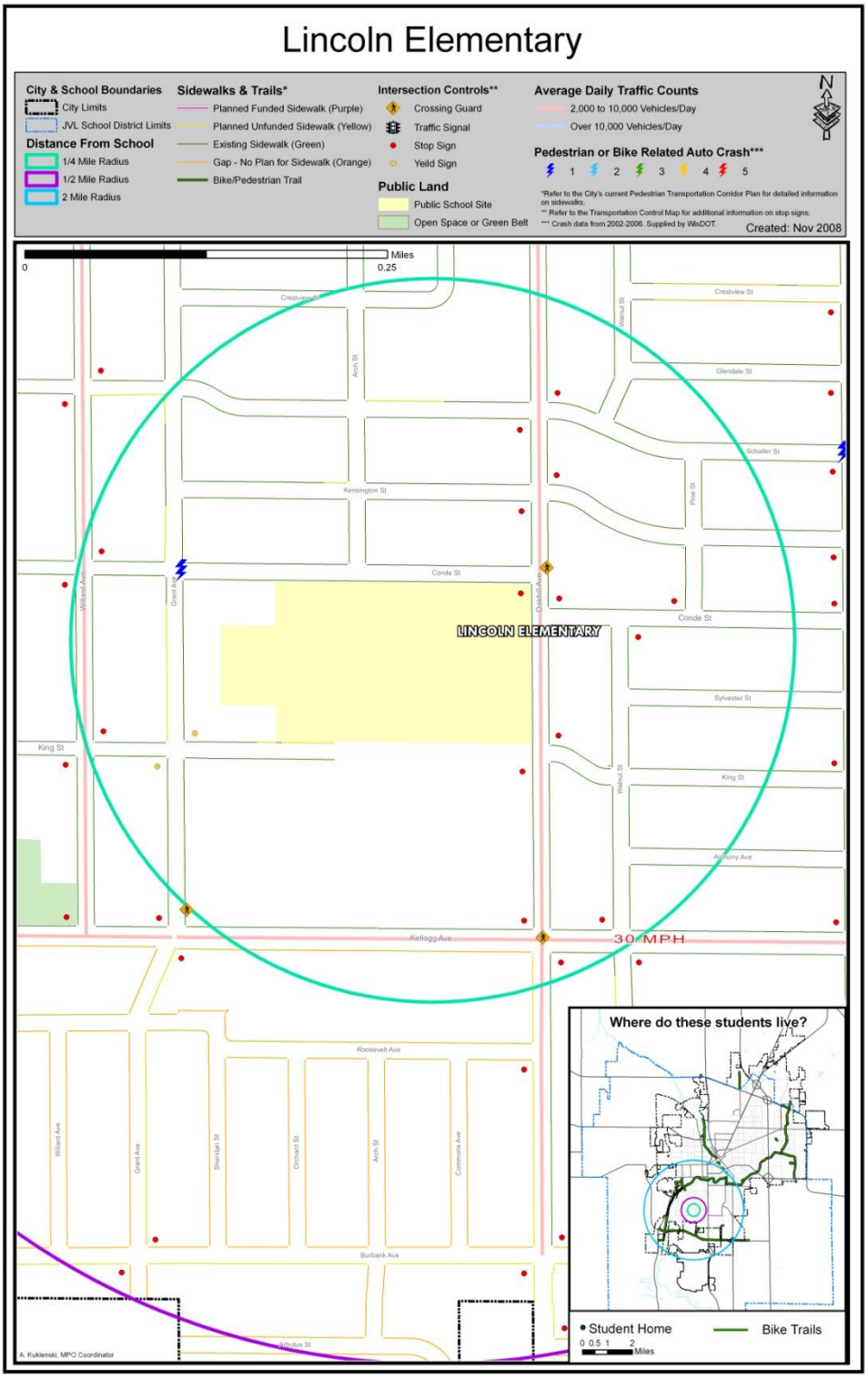
"I would never allow my child to walk alone for safety reasons."

Lincoln Elementary

1821 Conde Street

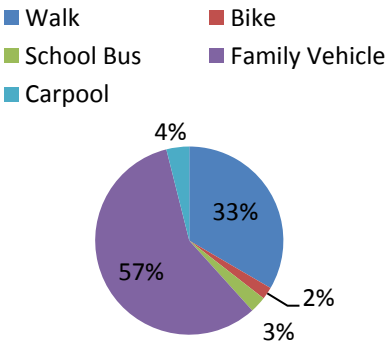
400 students in grades K-5

Lincoln Elementary School is located on the southwest side of Janesville. Streets around the school are in a mostly grid pattern, although with long rectangular blocks, allowing many different pathways to school and many access points. Sidewalks are contiguous and in good repair, although some intersections lack curb ramps. The residential area to the south of the school lacks sidewalks.



Map 18: Lincoln Elementary

Student Geography and Travel



Although family vehicle is the most common form of transportation to school (57%), Lincoln Elementary has the highest rate of students walking to and from school (33%). The high rate of walking can partially be attributed to proximity. 50% of parents responded that they live less than ¼ of a mile from the school.

Also of significance is the environment around the school. Students leave through multiple doors, thereby dispersing traffic. The environment around the school is relatively orderly. Traffic cones placed along the west side of Oakhill Avenue restrict standing or stopping. Many parents park on the side streets east of the school and walk up to the school to escort children.

Key Concerns:

- Traffic along Kellogg Avenue
- Obstructed view along Oakhill due to parked cars

Comments:

"Please have safety patrol stay longer for kids who are late"

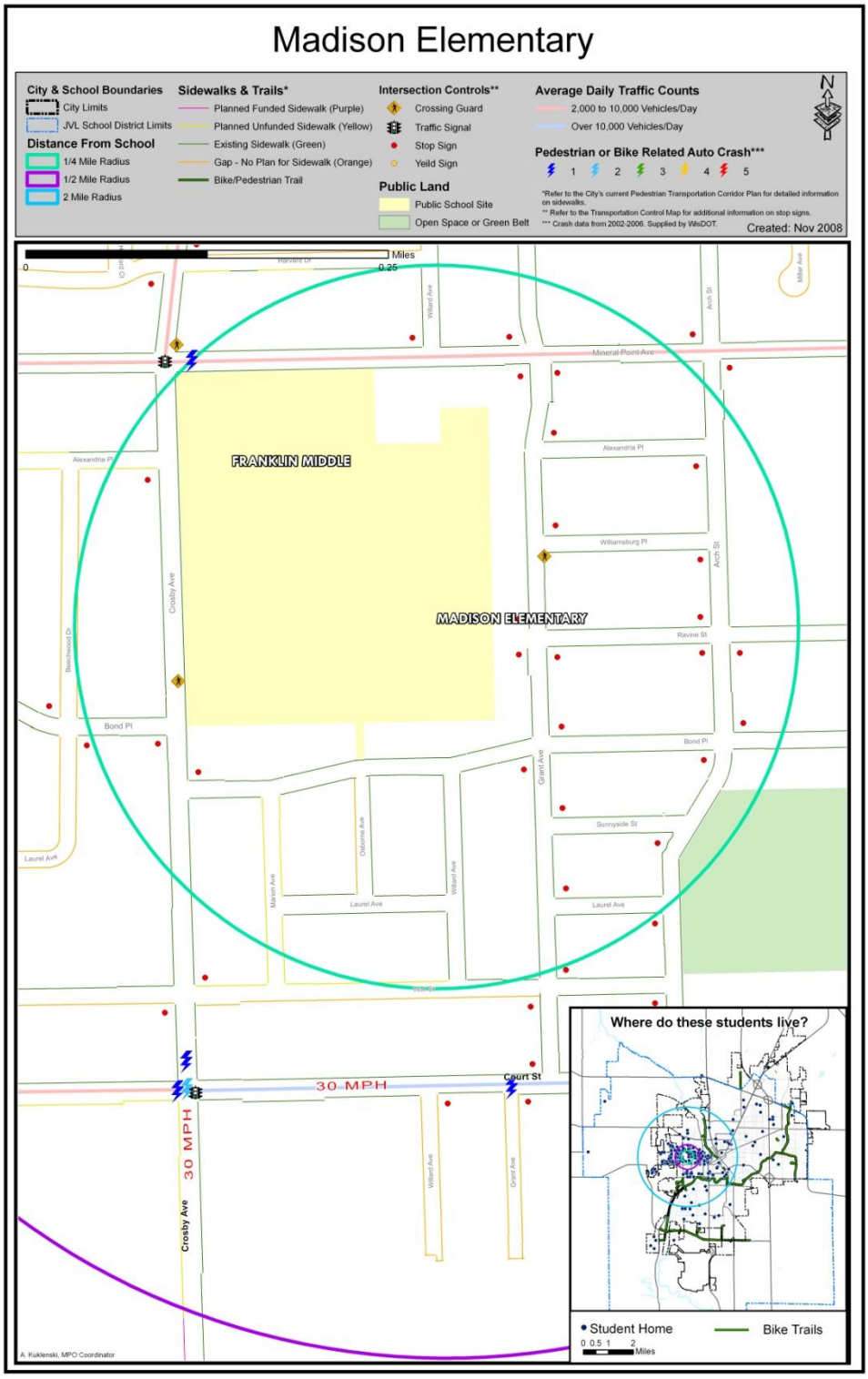
"We walk/bike in good weather during spring and fall"

Madison Elementary

331 N. Grant Avenue

385 students in grades K-5

Madison Elementary School is adjacent to Franklin Middle School. Many sections of sidewalk are in poor condition with cracks and uneven pavement. Curb ramps are lacking at the intersection of Willard Avenue and Laurel Avenue. Marion Avenue lacks sidewalk on either side of street.

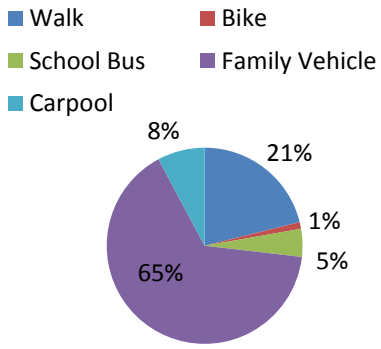


Map 19: Madison Elementary

Student Geography and Travel

Madison Elementary has a somewhat higher walk rate (21%) than the rest of the city (18%), but most children are still driven in the family vehicle (65%).

25% of parents said they live less than ¼ of a mile from school, while an additional 20% said they live between ¼ of a mile and ½ of a mile from the school.



Key Concerns:

- Intersection of Crosby and Court Streets—four bicycle or pedestrian crashes between 2002 and 2006
- Poorly maintained sidewalks
- Uncontrolled intersections exist at Bond Place and Marion Avenue, Bond Place and Osborne Avenue

Comments:

"Traffic needs to be controlled better at Bond/Crosby. Cars drive way too fast when there are children getting to and from school."

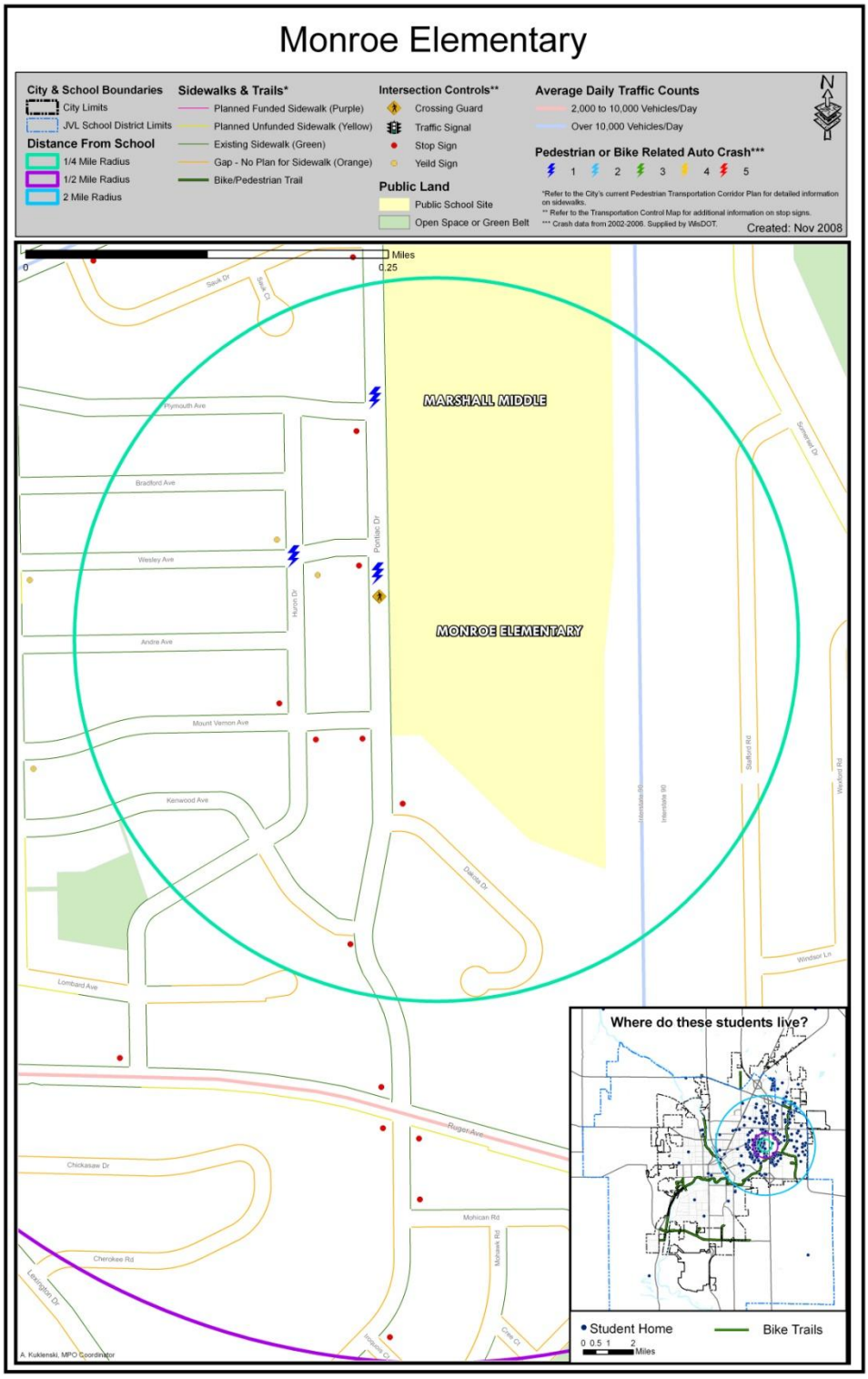
"Children should walk in groups many sidewalks not shoveled."

Monroe Elementary

55 S. Pontiac Drive

400 students in grades K-5

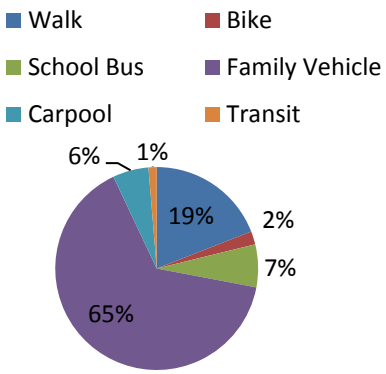
Monroe Elementary School is located on the east side of Janesville. Monroe Elementary School is directly south of Marshall Middle School. Both schools are just west of Interstate 90 in a predominately single family residential neighborhood.



Map 20: Monroe Elementary

Student Geography and Travel

Monroe Elementary is similar to Madison Elementary in terms of travel mode, which may be partly due to both elementary schools being in close proximity to a middle school. Monroe has a surprisingly low rate of carpooling (6%) considering Marshall Middle School has the highest carpool rate in the city (17%). Opportunities to increase carpooling exist for Monroe/Marshall and Madison/Franklin.



About 20% of parents responded that they live within a ¼ of a mile from school. An additional 13% said they lived between ¼ and ½ of a mile from the school.

Key Concerns:

- Intersection of Milwaukee Street and Pontiac Drive
- "scary" area along Middle School Road due to no eyes on the street
- Commercial area along Milwaukee Street- inattentive drivers pulling into/out of driveways
- Pontiac Drive - parking violations, signage

Comments:

"The traffic on Pontiac is not safe. Drivers are reckless in speed and attentiveness to students"

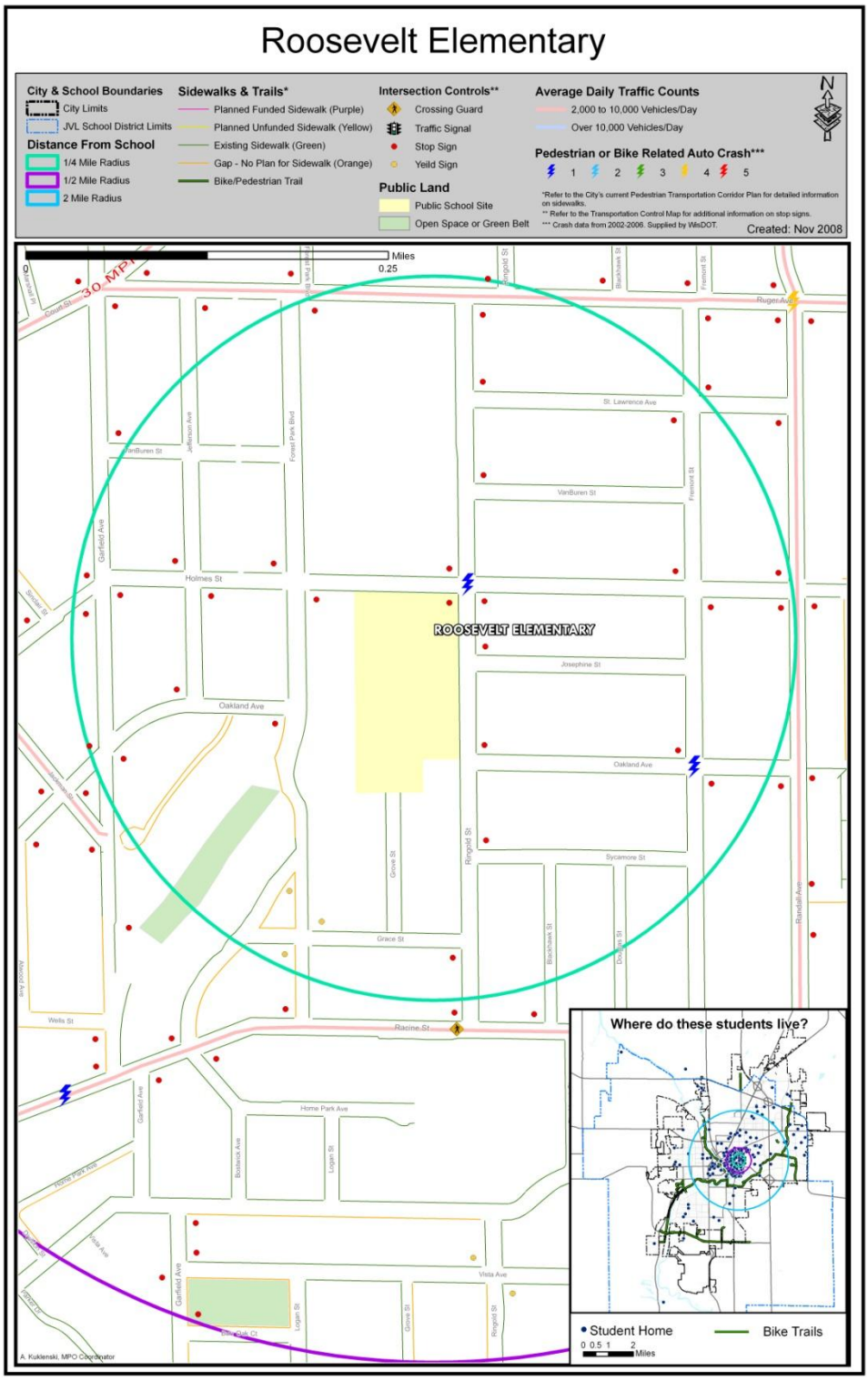
"I would like to have a crossing guard on Milwaukee & Pontiac" (three parents made this request)

Roosevelt Elementary

316 South Ringold

370 students in grades K-5

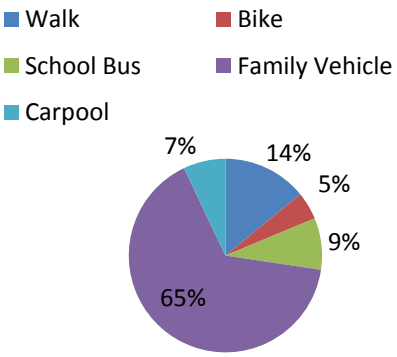
Roosevelt Elementary is located on the near east side of the city in a residential area near Craig High. There is a well maintained network of sidewalks.



Map 21: Roosevelt Elementary

Student Geography and Travel

Roosevelt Elementary is the typical school in terms of transportation mode.



Nearly 30% of parents responded that they live less than ¼ of a mile from the school and an additional 20% responded that they live between ¼ and ½ of a mile.

Roosevelt Elementary: cars park in bus loading zone.
Source: Terry Nolan

Key Concerns:

- High School students driving crazy

Comments:

"We would let our children walk if we lived closer to school"

"It is the traffic in front of the school that worries us"

"I feel an adult crossing guard is needed at Ruger and Ringold"

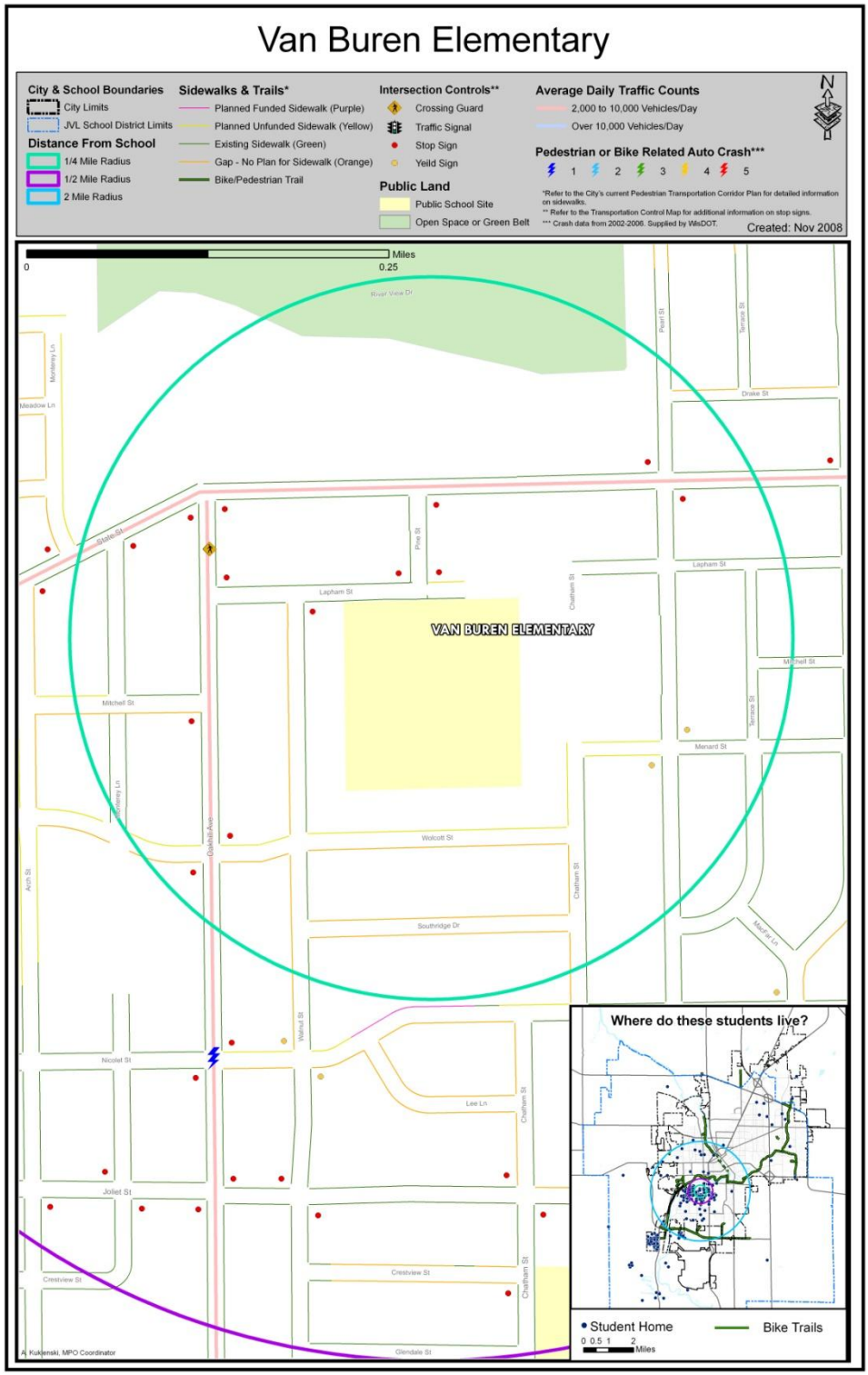
Van Buren Elementary

1515 Lapham

370 students in grades K-5

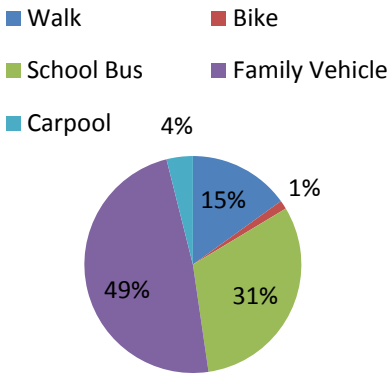
Van Buren Elementary School is located on the near southwest side of Janesville. Existing sidewalks are well maintained and ADA accessible; however there are large stretches of missing sidewalks on both sides of the street. Some streets are not connected around the school area.

Map 22: Van Buren Elementary



Student Geography and Travel

Van Buren Elementary has the lowest rate of family vehicle transportation (49%), partly because 31% of students are bused. Unlike Jackson Elementary, which also has many bused students, Van Buren has a walking rate (15%) on par with most other elementary schools in the city.



24% of parents responded that they live within ¼ of a mile from the school.

Key Concerns:

- Gaps in sidewalk
- Traffic along Oakhill Avenue and State Street

Comments:
"There are several sex offenders that live between our house and school. We also don't have sidewalks on the north side of west State Street from Willard down to South River Road"

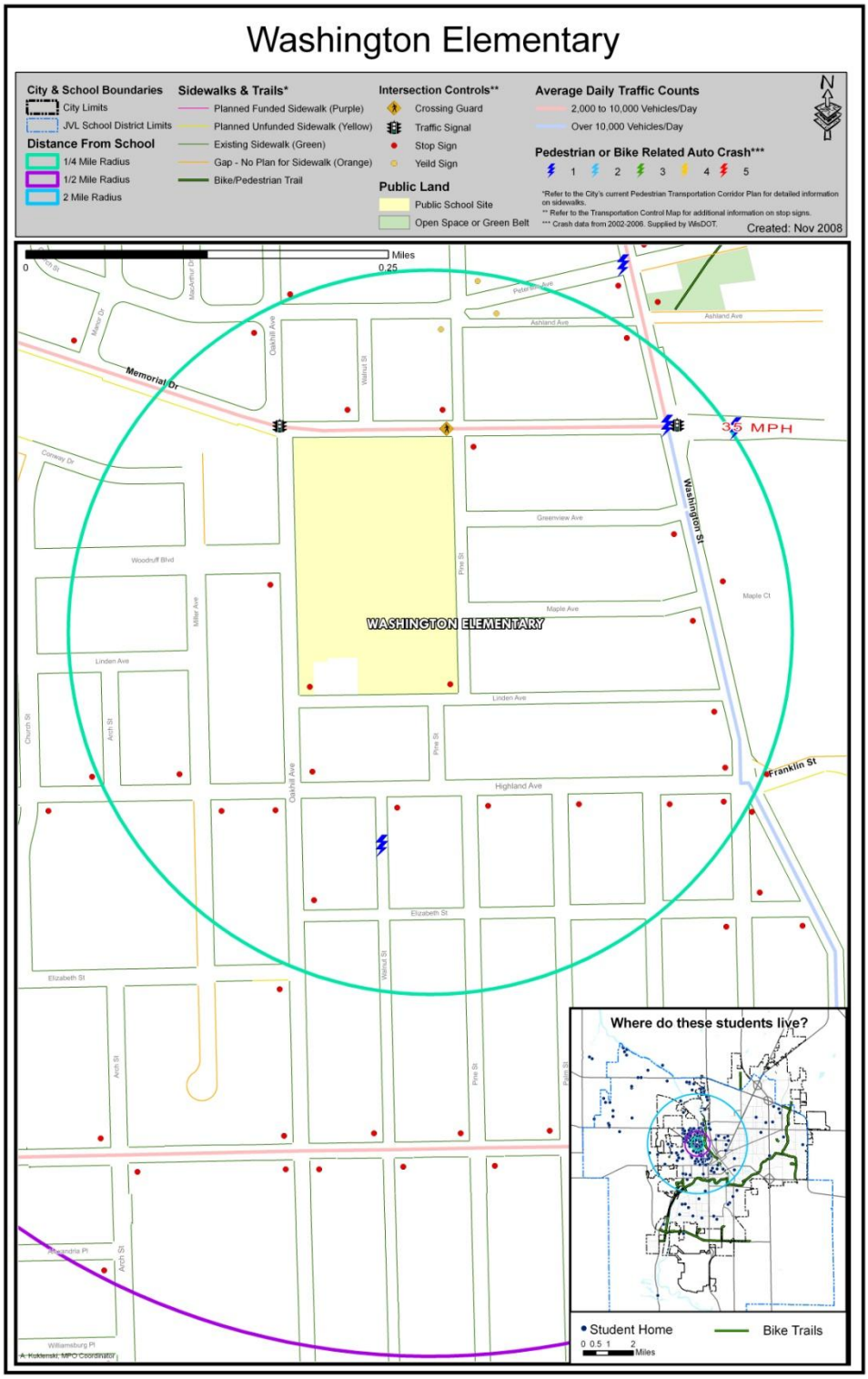
"Need crossing guard on Joliet and Willard intersection"

Washington Elementary

811 North Pine Street

435 students in grades K-5

Washington Elementary is located on the northwest side of Janesville. The street network is mostly a grid with long blocks. Existing sidewalk is mostly well maintained but views are occasionally obstructed by bushes, poles, etc.

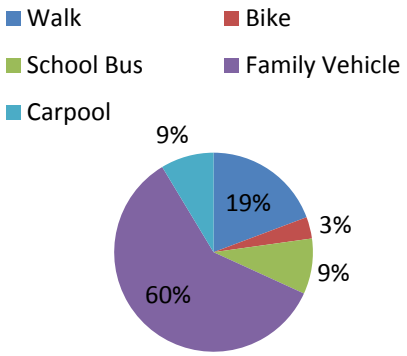


Map 23: Washington Elementary

Student Geography and Travel

Washington Elementary School travel modes are average compared to the rest of the city.

1/3 of parents responded that they live less than ¼ of a mile from the school. Another 31% said they live more than two miles away.



Key Concerns:

- Heavy/high speed traffic along Memorial Drive, Washington Street, and Oakhill Avenue
- Scary homes and alleyways along Highland Avenue

Comments:

"Parents are in too big of a hurry. They do not follow road rules. They do not have patience. These are the main reasons walking and biking are out of the question"

"Backpacks are too heavy to walk home from school or to school"

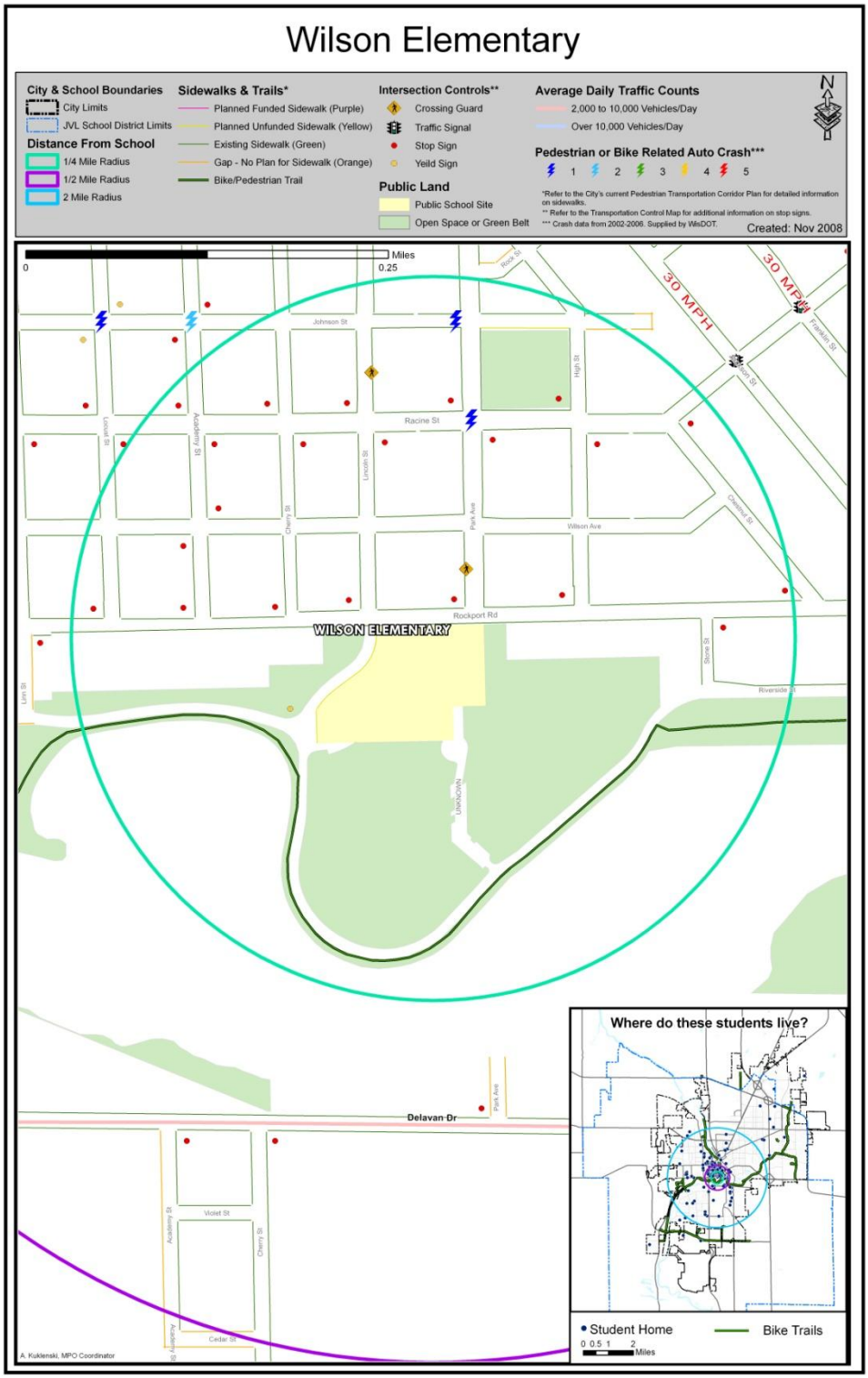
"I wish there was less crime and less child abusers around"

Wilson Elementary

465 Rockport Road

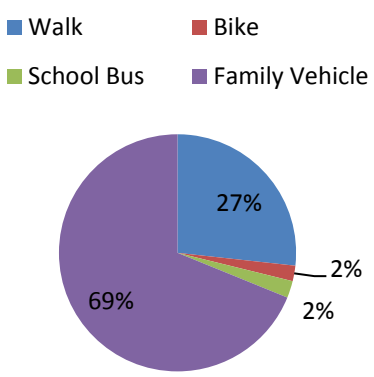
335 students in grades K-5

Wilson Elementary is located in the center of the city. Streets are narrow and laid out in a regular grid pattern. This allows for many pathways to the school. Sidewalks in the area are consistent and in good to fair condition.



Map 24: Wilson Elementary

Student Geography and Travel



Wilson Elementary has the second highest rate of students walking to school (27%). Wilson has a fairly high rate of family vehicle use (69%), yet it has a relatively orderly environment around the school during drop off and pick up times. Geography provides a separation between most pedestrian and vehicle traffic. Many parents park in the parking lot south of the school, which they access from Riverside Street. Because of this, Rockport Road has light traffic. Many children cross Rockport Road at the crosswalk, continue along Lincoln Street, then cross Racine Street with the assistance of a crossing guard.

No parent surveys were returned for analysis.

Key Concerns:

- Speed/volume of traffic along Racine Street

CHAPTER 4: RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN

Previous chapters identified existing policies, compiled information regarding travel mode, and quantified attitudes toward walking and biking. Recommendations to alleviate, improve, or diminish current concerns are divided into Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Engineering strategies. The chapter includes an action plan for implementation and a recommended evaluation schedule.

Education

Education is one of the complementary strategies in a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. Education activities include teaching pedestrian, bicyclist and traffic safety and creating awareness of the benefits and goals of SRTS.

In Janesville, there are many existing policies and programs to educate children about safety. After review, the SRTS Task Force recommends the expansion of several successful programs and the revival of a program that had been unfunded in the past. Due to the heightened sense of fear in Janesville, education will focus on personal safety and protection from "stranger danger".

Recommendation: Launch public education campaign to promote safety and health

> **Action:** Education will focus on community wide issues like stranger danger and traffic safety around schools. The campaign will also use health statistics to promote walking and bicycling as a healthy alternative to driving.

Recommendation: Expand bike rodeo program

> **Action:** The Janesville Police Department currently holds an annual bike rodeo at Wilson Elementary School. The event is open to all students; however most participants come from the neighborhood. Funding for the program comes from donations. As funding becomes available through fundraising and grants, the Janesville Police Department will hold additional events at schools around the city.

Recommendation: Integrate bicycling safety into physical education curriculum using school owned bicycle fleets

> **Action:** Marshall Middle School is the only school in the district to own a fleet of bicycles used during physical education classes. The School District will expand this program to include elementary schools. Bicycle fleets may be shared between schools and maintained by a private contractor.

Recommendation: Revive Safe House Program

Action: The Safe House Program was once an active program in Janesville. The Janesville Police Department has recently regained the capacity to run the program. The Janesville Police Department will coordinate with other city staff, School District, and PTA to identify safe houses and educate the public about the program. Chaperones participating in the Walking School Bus Program will be asked if they would like to have their house identified as a "safe house".

Encouragement

While encouragement dovetails with engineering and enforcement, it is most closely linked to education strategies. Janesville strategies may not be easily characterized as strictly encouragement or education. Encouragement comes during and after education. The SRTS Task Force will coordinate and support individual schools as they implement its recommendations.

Recommendation: Participate in International Walk to School Day

Action: Promotion and organization of Walk to School Day will begin in the spring and will continue through summer in order to raise the awareness of the event. The event will be advertised on websites, radio, newspaper, in newsletters, at community events, and at other school events. Parents will receive a permission slip that encourages participation by both students and parents. Walk to School Day advertising will include information about the Safe Routes to School movement as well as Janesville specific plan elements, such as the Walking School Bus Program.

Recommendation: Implement Walking School Bus Program

Action: The first step to developing a Walking School Bus Program will be to update individual school safe walking route plans. Task Force members will work with principals and others, as applicable, at each school to update plans. One of the key objectives will be to use the planning process as a way to find parents and volunteers interested and available to be chaperones of the Walking School Bus. Plans will be developed using results from school audits, travel data, parent surveys, and other observations.

The Walking School Bus Program will be piloted at one or more elementary schools. Once the program has been established, it will be used as the model to expand the Walking School Bus to other schools. Adding a Bicycle Train into the program is a long term future goal.

Recommendation: Encourage children to safely walk/bike through rewards and promotion

Action: An important aspect of getting children to walk/bike is restoring the "cool" factor. Strategies may include poster contests, class competitions, and highlighting teachers who walk/bike to school. Small rewards such as stickers or gift cards are inexpensive but effective motivators that can be used at the discretion of schools and teachers.

Education will be an important component of the encouragement program. The focus will be on pedestrian and bicycling safety. Children will be rewarded when they follow proper precautions around the schools.

Enforcement

The Janesville Police Department enforces traffic laws around schools in response to requests or complaints. Due to limited police department resources, an increase in enforcement is a challenge. Currently, coordinated efforts focus on targeting key areas and times with consistency of enforcement dependent on individual principals. Turnover in personnel at the school level often means change in policy and level of enforcement for that school. Students and parents must then accommodate any changes.

Recommendation: Consistently enforce traffic circulation and no parking rules around schools

Action: The City Engineering Department will continue to work with individual schools to update and refine traffic circulation and parking policies that safeguard pedestrians. The Janesville Police Department will work with schools to perform targeted patrol of problem areas and ticket offenders.

Recommendation: Purchase pole mounted speed indicators

Action: The City of Janesville will place speed indicators along roads susceptible to speeding. Placement should be determined through coordination by the City Engineering Department, Transportation Committee, Janesville Police Department, and School District.

Engineering

Engineering solutions can be the most costly "E" but can have dramatic lasting effects in terms of safety. Engineering requires a long time horizon to plan and execute. Area-specific engineering devices which modify existing infrastructure require careful study before implementation. Engineering changes to the physical environment may require policy changes, such as, revision of a city ordinance.

Recommendation: Upgrade signage in school zones

Action: School audits showed that signage was lacking, obstructed, or faded. The City of Janesville will install highly visible signs, paying particular attention to areas identified during audits.

Recommendation: Support Pedestrian Transportation Corridor Plan

Action: Within the context of the existing Pedestrian Transportation Corridor Plan, the City of Janesville should prioritize sidewalk maintenance and construction in areas near schools.

Recommendation: Evaluate the use of traffic calming devices along roads susceptible to speeding

Action: Traffic calming devices such as bump-outs, lane narrowing or lane reduction may be considered in school zone areas where traffic is moving at an unsafe speed.

Recommendation: Promote bicycle facilities near schools

Action: Within the framework of the existing Janesville Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which identifies future bicycle facilities, the city should prioritize bicycle/pedestrian off-road trails and on-road bicycle lanes along school routes. Planning should emphasize connecting schools to trails and bicycle lanes.

Recommendation: Design streets for the pedestrian/bicyclist

Action: The City of Janesville will follow Wisconsin Complete Streets Law SECTION 1918gr. 84.01 (35) when constructing or reconstructing roads using state or federal funding. Complete streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a complete street.

Recommendation: Support recommendations of the School District's Traffic Safety Committee (2006)

Action: The Traffic Safety Committee, which had many of the same participants as Safe Routes to School planning, made sound recommendations based on careful observation and deliberation. Any recommendations that have yet to be instituted by the School District, City, or Police Department should be considered in the future. Recommendations may be found in Appendix D.

Evaluation

Recommendation: Survey parents

Action: Using the parent survey developed by the National Center for Safe Routes to School, parents should be surveyed once or twice per year in order to evaluate how perceptions of walking and biking have changed over time. The Janesville Area MPO will coordinate the distribution and collection of surveys to schools; although, individual schools will choose the method of distribution to parents. Schools may consider sending a paper survey home in backpacks, or use the newly developed online version.

Recommendation: Survey students

Action: Using the student tally developed by the National Center for Safe Routes to School, teachers at each school should record their students' methods of travel to and from school for one week in the fall and one week in the spring each year. The Janesville Area MPO will coordinate the distribution and collection of surveys to schools, and all data will be reported to the National Center for Safe Routes to School. The survey will help measure the success of SRTS initiatives.

Recommendation: Audit schools

Action: An audit of the environment around every elementary and middle school should be completed once each year to evaluate the effectiveness of safety initiatives. The audit will focus on a ¼ mile radius around each school, and will review facilities on and near school grounds from sidewalks, to bicycle racks and entrances. Auditors will also evaluate car, bus, and bicycle/pedestrian traffic circulation around the schools during drop off and pick up times. City staff will provide materials and training to parents for auditing schools.

CHAPTER 5: DEVELOPING SAFE KIDS, FIT KIDS

This chapter was developed to identify resources and opportunities that will sustain Janesville's Safe Routes to School Program. A successful campaign requires multiple partners, coordination, and continuous effort.

Community Partners

The following entities already comprise a partnership within the Janesville SRTS task force to form and implement the plan.

City of Janesville

The City of Janesville carries out the functions of the Metropolitan Planning Organization, the area-wide transportation planning organization. The Community Development and Engineering departments collect and analyze data, track trends, develop grant opportunities, advance policies and execute structural changes.

Janesville Police Department does more than enforce law. The department plays a vital role in teaching the community about safety and awareness.

School District of Janesville

Educational Services staff develops curriculum and policy as well as write and administer grants.

PTA/PTO

The PTA/PTO is the link between students and the school district. These groups organize and execute events, coordinate volunteers, fundraise, and perform myriad tasks.

Rock Trail Coalition

The Rock Trail Coalition is a group of volunteers dedicated to the development, maintenance and enjoyment of hiking, biking and recreational trails in Rock County. As a member of the Metropolitan Planning Organization, RTC plays a vital role in planning trails and bicycle facilities in the Janesville area.

Velo Club

The Velo Club promotes bicycling through special events and regular weekly rides. The club represents cyclists' interests in the community.

Michael's Cycles

Michael's Cycles is active in the local biking community. In addition to supporting a racing team, each year they perform clinics, promote local weekly rides, and provide technical support at numerous bicycle events. Through volunteer work, advocacy, and monetary donations, Michael's Cycles works to raise the quality of bicycle riding opportunities not only for its customers, but for all area residents.

Dean Foundation

Dean and the lovable character Crash Helmet have been working to reduce the risk of head injuries, by encouraging everyone to wear a helmet when riding a bicycle, scooter, skateboard or when in-line skating. Crash Helmet visits elementary schools and daycare to educate young children of the importance of wearing a bike helmet.

Janesville Farmers Market

Theresa Huber, member of the SRTS Task Force, is the manager of the Janesville Farmers Market. The Janesville Farmers Market is a marketplace for family events, with monthly kids' activities that are fun and educational.

Funding and Resources

There are numerous funding sources and other resources that can assist the Janesville Program. A few of these resources are listed below.

Safe Routes to School Program

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Safe Routes to School Program provides funding on a biennial basis for planning, infrastructure, and non-infrastructure projects within two miles of an elementary or middle school. For more information: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/saferoutes.htm

Transportation Enhancement (WisDOT)

The Transportation Enhancement Program funds projects that increase the multi-modal transportation alternatives and enhance communities and the environment. Federal funds administered through this program provides up to 80% of the costs for a wide variety of projects including "provision of facilities for bicycles or pedestrians", and "provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists." For more information: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/te.htm

Bikes Belong

Bikes Belong grants up to $10,000 for facility, capacity, and education projects. For more information: www.bikesbelong.org

Dane County Bicycle Association

The Dane County Bicycle Association funds projects and initiatives that will improve the quality, scope and effectiveness of bicycling education, usage, and advocacy in Wisconsin. DCBA provides funding for a variety of bicycling projects, ranging from bicycle facilities, to bicycle advocacy efforts, to programs that promote bicycling among children as a healthy and rewarding activity, to books of popular bicycle touring routes. For more information: www.danecountybicycle.org

Wisconsin Medical Society Public Health Grant

Up to $15,000 is awarded to organizations with innovative programs to promote controllable (modifiable) lifestyle choices affecting health with a focus on prevention and incorporating principals of public health. Preference will be given to programs that will ultimately be self-sustaining and encourage appropriate partnerships and/or collaboration. For more information: www.wisconsinmedicalsociety.org