



Seward Montessori School

Safe Routes to School Plan

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Introduction

What is Safe Routes to School?

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a program with a simple goal: helping more children get to school by walking and bicycling. Envision active kids using safe streets, helped by engaged adults (from teachers to parents to police officers), surrounded by responsible drivers.

Safe Routes to School programs use a variety of strategies to make it easy, fun and safe for children to walk and bike to school. These strategies are often called the “Five Es.”

- **Education:** programs designed to teach children about traffic safety, bicycle and pedestrian skills, and traffic decision-making.
- **Encouragement:** programs that make it fun for kids to walk and bike. These programs may be challenges, incentive programs, regular events (e.g., “Walk and Bike Wednesdays”) or classroom activities.
- **Engineering:** physical projects that are built to improve walking and bicycling conditions.
- **Enforcement:** law enforcement strategies to improve driver behavior near schools.
- **Evaluation:** strategies to help understand program effectiveness, identify improvements, and ensure program sustainability.



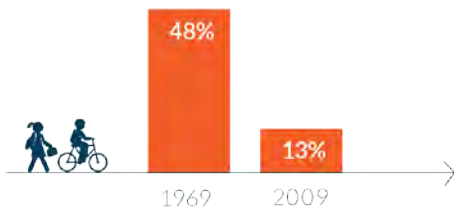


The Challenge

Although most students in the United States walked or biked to school pre-1980's, the number of students walking or bicycling to school has sharply declined. This decline is due to a number of factors, including urban growth patterns, school siting requirements, increased traffic, busy student schedules, and parental concerns about safety. The situation is self-perpetuating: as more parents drive their children to school, there is increased traffic at the school site, resulting in more parents becoming concerned about traffic and driving their children to school.

Why Safe Routes to School?

Within the span of one generation, the percentage of children walking or bicycling to school has dropped precipitously.



Kids are not getting enough physical activity.



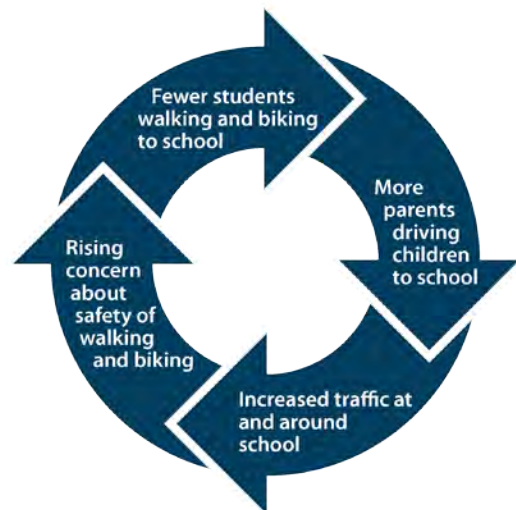
Roads near schools are congested, decreasing safety and air quality for children.



Kids who walk or bike to school:



- Arrive alert and able to focus on school
- Get most of their recommended daily physical activity during the trip to school
- Are more likely to be a healthy body weight
- Demonstrate improved test scores and better school performance
- Are less likely to suffer from depression and anxiety¹



The downward cycle of traffic and reduced walking and bicycling

¹ More information, including primary sources, can be found at <http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org>.



Benefits of Walking and Bicycling to School

Safe Routes to Schools programs directly benefit schoolchildren, parents and teachers by creating a safer travel environment near schools and by reducing motor vehicle congestion at school drop-off and pick-up zones. Students that choose to bike or walk to school are rewarded with the health benefits of a more active lifestyle, with the responsibility and independence that comes from being in charge of the way they travel, and learn at an early age that bicycling and walking can be safe, enjoyable and good for the environment.

Safe Routes to Schools programs offer ancillary benefits to neighborhoods by helping to slow traffic and by providing infrastructure improvements that facilitate bicycling and walking for everyone. Identifying and improving routes for children to safely walk and bicycle to school is also one of the most cost-effective means of reducing weekday morning traffic congestion and can help reduce auto-related pollution.

In addition to safety and traffic improvements, an SRTS program helps integrate physical activity into the everyday routine of school children. Health concerns related to sedentary lifestyles have become the focus of statewide and national efforts to reduce risks associated with being overweight. Children who bike or walk to school have an overall higher activity level than those who are driven to school, even though the journey to school makes only a small contribution to activity levels. Active kids are healthy kids. Walking or bicycling to school is an easy way to make sure that children get daily physical activity.

SRTS benefits children:

- Increased physical fitness and cardiovascular health
- Increased ability to focus on school
- A sense of independence and confidence about their transportation and their neighborhood

SRTS benefits neighborhoods:

- Improved air quality as fewer children are driven to school
- Decreased crashes and congestion as fewer children are driven to school
- More community involvement as parents, teachers and neighbors get involved and put "eyes on the street"

SRTS benefits schools:

- Fewer discipline problems because children arrive "ready to learn"
- Fewer private cars arriving to drop off and pick up children
- Opportunities to integrate walking, bicycling and transportation topics into curriculum (e.g. "Walk & Bike Across America")
- Increased efficiency and safety during drop-off and pick-up times





How to Use this Plan

This SRTS plan provides an overview of Safe Routes to School with specific recommendations for a 5 E's approach to improve the safety and the health and wellness of students. The specific recommendations in this plan are intended to support infrastructure improvements and programs over the next 5 years.

It should be noted that not all of these projects and programs need to be implemented right away to improve the environment for walking and bicycling to school. The recommended projects and programs listed in this plan should be reviewed as part of the overall and ongoing Safe Routes to School strategy. Some projects will require more time, support, and funding than others. It is important to achieve shorter-term successes while laying the groundwork for progress toward some of the larger and more complex projects.

This plan includes recommendations for infrastructure projects both long- and short-term as well as programmatic recommendations. At the heart of every successful Safe Routes to School comprehensive program is a coordinated effort by parent volunteers, school staff, local agency staff, law enforcement and community advocates, such as public health. The following paragraphs highlight the unique contributions of key partners in Safe Routes to School.

Parents can use this report to understand the conditions at their children's school and to become familiar with the ways an SRTS program can work to make walking and bicycling safer. Concerned parents or city residents have a very important role in the Safe Routes to School process. Parent groups, both formal and informal, have the ability and the responsibility to help implement many of the educational and encouragement programs suggested in this plan. Parent groups can also be critical to ongoing success by helping to fundraise for smaller projects and programs that are implementable without serious effort on behalf of the district or local agency.

School district and school administrative staff can use this report to prioritize improvements identified on District property and develop programs that educate and encourage students and parents to seek alternatives to single family commutes to school.

District officials are perhaps the most stable of the stakeholders for a Safe Routes to School program and have the responsibility for keeping the program active over time. District staff can work with multiple schools sharing information and bringing efficiencies to programs at each school working on Safe Routes.



Parents lead students on walking school bus from a park and walk site



Parents waiting in queue for students at pick up play a significant role in student transportation safety



School administrators have an important role in implementing the recommendations contained within this SRTS plan. The impetus for change and improvement must be supported by the leadership of the school. School administrators can help with making policy and procedural changes to projects that are within school grounds and have the responsibility to distribute informational materials to parents within school publications.

City and County staff can use this report to identify citywide issues and opportunities related to walking and bicycling and to prioritize infrastructure improvements. City staff can also use this report to support Safe Routes to School funding and support opportunities such as:

- MnDOT Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grants
- Federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grants
- Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP)

For all infrastructure recommendations, a traffic study and more detailed engineering may be necessary to evaluate project feasibility, and additional public outreach should be conducted before final design and construction. For recommendations within the public right-of-way, the responsible agency will determine how (and if) to incorporate suggestions into local improvement plans and prioritize funding to best meet the needs of each school community.

Police department staff can use this report to understand issues related to walking and bicycling to school and to plan for and prioritize enforcement activities that may make it easier and safer for students to walk and bike to school. The Police Department will be instrumental to the success of the enforcement programs and policies recommended in this plan. The Police Department will also have a key role in working with school administrations in providing officers and assistance to some of the proposed education and encouragement programs.

Public health staff can use this report to identify specific opportunities to collaborate with schools and local governments to support safety improvements and encourage healthy behaviors in school children and their families.



Enforcement is a key component of successful SRTS programs. Safety officers can become a key ally of students walking and cycling to school



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Vision and Planning Background

“Safe Routes to School initiatives will improve safety and encourage more students and families near Seward Montessori to walk, bike or roll to school. The program will result in less traffic congestion, higher levels of physical activity, and an enhanced quality of life in our neighborhoods.

The program will connect students and their families with year-round opportunities for active transportation through education, encouragement, and use of a safe on-street and trail network. Safe Routes to School will foster a culture of healthy and active families by encouraging non-motorized forms of transportation as a safe, comfortable and normal way of getting to and from school.”

The vision of walking and bicycling around Seward Montessori School will help frame the Safe Routes to School planning process and inform recommended improvements to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and programs.

Relevant Planning Background

Programs at Seward Montessori

Seward Montessori has a long history of encouraging students to walk and bike to school. The school has an active Safe Routes to School (SRTS) parent group that meets regularly throughout the school year. The group is responsible for coordinating several programs that are being planned or are currently active, including:

- **Bike Sharks:** The Bike to School program (Bike Sharks) utilizes an automated bike counter that rewards students, parents and teachers for riding their bikes to school. Using this program, the school recently broke a 100 bike one-day goal. The Bike Sharks have additional programs such as bike giveaways and urban group rides/explorations.
- **Bike/Walk Safety Curriculum:** Seward Montessori has begun to use the Minnesota Walk! Bike! Fun! Training curriculum this fall. The school plans to implement the training in a health class this spring in an effort to share the information with a broader population at the school.
- **Walking Wednesdays:** Seward Montessori has been coordinating with Minneapolis Public Schools on a seasonal bus-stop-and-walk program. The program returned this fall and is slated to continue next year. Over 400 students walk a half mile to school as part of this school-wide program.

Infrastructure in the Vicinity of Seward Montessori

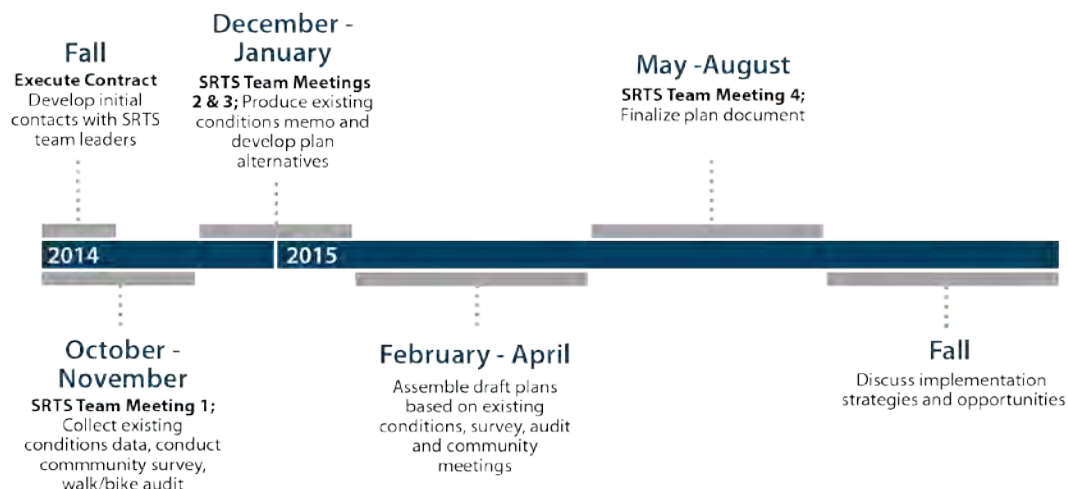
- The City of Minneapolis has implemented a test closure of 29th Avenue at the Midtown Greenway; feedback from the community has been largely positive. The SRTS parent group at Seward is continuing to work with the city in an effort to make this closure permanent.



- Hennepin County is continuing to coordinate with the Seward Neighborhood Group to make improvements to the intersection of Franklin & Riverside & 29th Avenues. The improvements would benefit people walking through this intersection; pilot improvements are being proposed before permanent changes are made. Hennepin County Public Works staff will continue to coordinate with the Seward Neighborhood Group, as well as parents and other local residents.
- The City of Minneapolis is planning bikeways (bicycle boulevards) along 24th Street and 29th Avenue. The bicycle boulevards will have traffic calming elements, signs, stencils and other features to make bicycling more comfortable and convenient along these corridors. The bikeway along 24th Street would integrate with separated bicycle facilities through Matthews Park, just south of Seward Montessori.

Planning Process Overview

The year-long planning process for this SRTS plan included building an SRTS team, gathering data and information about existing conditions, developing recommendation for the 5 E's, and developing a written document that set forth a path for the SRTS program. The graphic below depicts key milestones in the planning process.



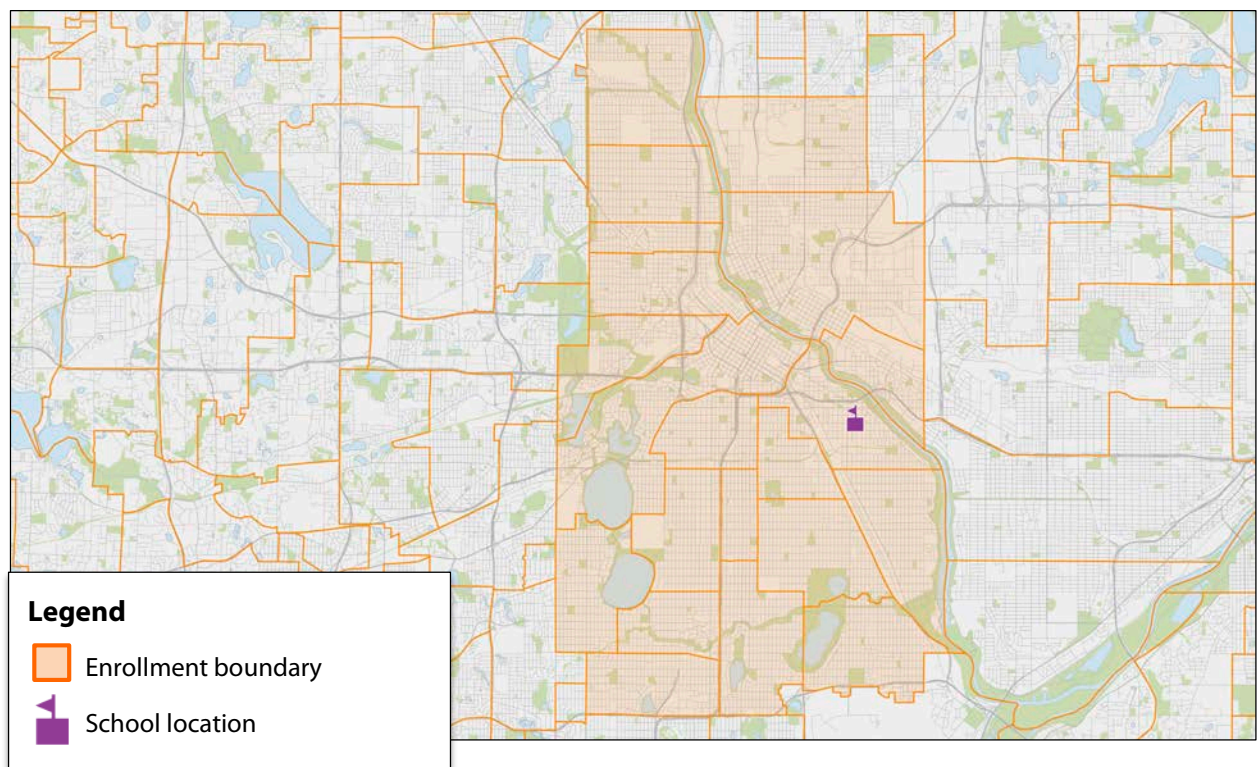


Existing Conditions

School Context

Seward Montessori School located at the intersection of S. 28th Avenue and E. 22nd Street in Minneapolis, Minnesota. School enrollment for the 2014-15 school year was 846 students. The principal of Seward Montessori is Tammy Goetz. Arrival time for students is 7:30am, and dismissal time is 2:00pm.

Seward Montessori School Enrollment Boundary



Seward Montessori is a magnet school. As such, enrollment is open to any student within the Minneapolis Public School District.



Surrounding Land Use

Seward Montessori is bound by East 22nd Street on the north, 29th Avenue South on the east, and 28th Avenue South to the west. Matthews Recreation Center and Matthews Park form the southern boundary, with East 25th Street further to the south. Surrounding blocks are primarily residential, and include a mix of single-family residential homes and some small multi-family homes. There are two churches located near the school at the intersection of 28th Avenue South and East 22nd Street. Matthews Park includes several amenities: baseball fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, multiple playgrounds, and a wading pool.

Commercial and light industrial development is located southwest of the school centered along East 26th Street and Minnehaha Avenue. Another major east-west commercial corridor, East Franklin Avenue, is located one block north of the school. Other major roadways in the vicinity include I-94 a half-mile north of the school, and MN Highway 55 / Hiawatha Avenue within one mile west of the school.

Students in grades K-5 that live within a half-mile of the school are not eligible for bussing. Students in grades 6-8 that live within one mile of the school are also not eligible for bussing. If a student walks or bikes to school they are not allowed to enter the building before 7:20 AM.

Student Walking and Bicycling Conditions

Sidewalks are present on both sides of every street in the surrounding area. Residential streets in the area have a speed limit of 30 mph. Within a quarter-mile of the school there are marked crosswalks at all four corners of the signalized intersections on East Franklin Avenue. There are also marked crosswalks on the four corners of the intersections of East 25th Street and 27th Avenue South, and East 25th Street and 29th Avenue South. There are numerous all-way stop signs near the school, including the four corners of Matthews Parks, East 22nd Street and 28th Avenue South, and East 22nd Street and 29th Avenue South.

The Midtown Greenway is located three blocks south of the school, with multiple at-grade access points including 26th, 27th, 29th and 30th Avenues. Bicycle lanes are present on 26th Avenue South and East Franklin



Commercial uses along East Franklin Avenue north of the school. The Seward Community Co-op grocery store in the foreground has bicycle racks.



Students walk home on sidewalks cleared of snow and ice. The Seward Montessori school garden can be seen on the right.



The Midtown Greenway, shown here near 29th Avenue South, is a major bicycle and pedestrian corridor located south of the school. The Greenway is plowed during winter months.



Avenue. The East River Parkway Trail is located six blocks east of the school along the Mississippi River, and is connected to the school by East 24th Street.

Seward Montessori hosts several bicycle encouragement and education programs. These include the Bicycle Ambassadors program that meets weekly in collaboration with SPOKES, and team competitions among students to track bicycle trips using ZAP Twin Cities.

Facilitated Crossing Locations

Crossings are facilitated at the following locations:

- East 22nd Street and 28th Avenue South (one student)
- East 22nd Street and 29th Avenue South (one student)
- East 24th Street and 29th Avenue South (three students)
- East 25th Street and 29th Avenue South (none observed at time of observation)
- Exit of the parent parking loop on 28th Avenue South (two students, one adult)

School Layout

A church, recreation center, and park are all located on the same block as the Seward Montessori School. The church is in the northwest corner, and the Matthews Recreation Center and Park are both located south of the school building. There are three vehicle access points into the school campus parking lot, located off of 28th Avenue South, southwest of the school building. Parents pick up and drop off in this parking lot. On-street parking for parent vehicles is located on the west side of the school on 28th Avenue South. Buses load and unload on the streets north and east of the school (East 22nd Street and 29th Avenue South). There are multiple entrances into the school building, but these will be consolidated to two after the upcoming renovation project.



Many students and parents bicycle to school. This bicycle rack along the east side of the school has a built-in bicycle pump.



Student patrols wait at a marked crosswalk south of the school at the intersection of East 24th Street and 29th Avenue South.



Students arrive to school on foot and by school bus. Sidewalks are located on each side of the school block.



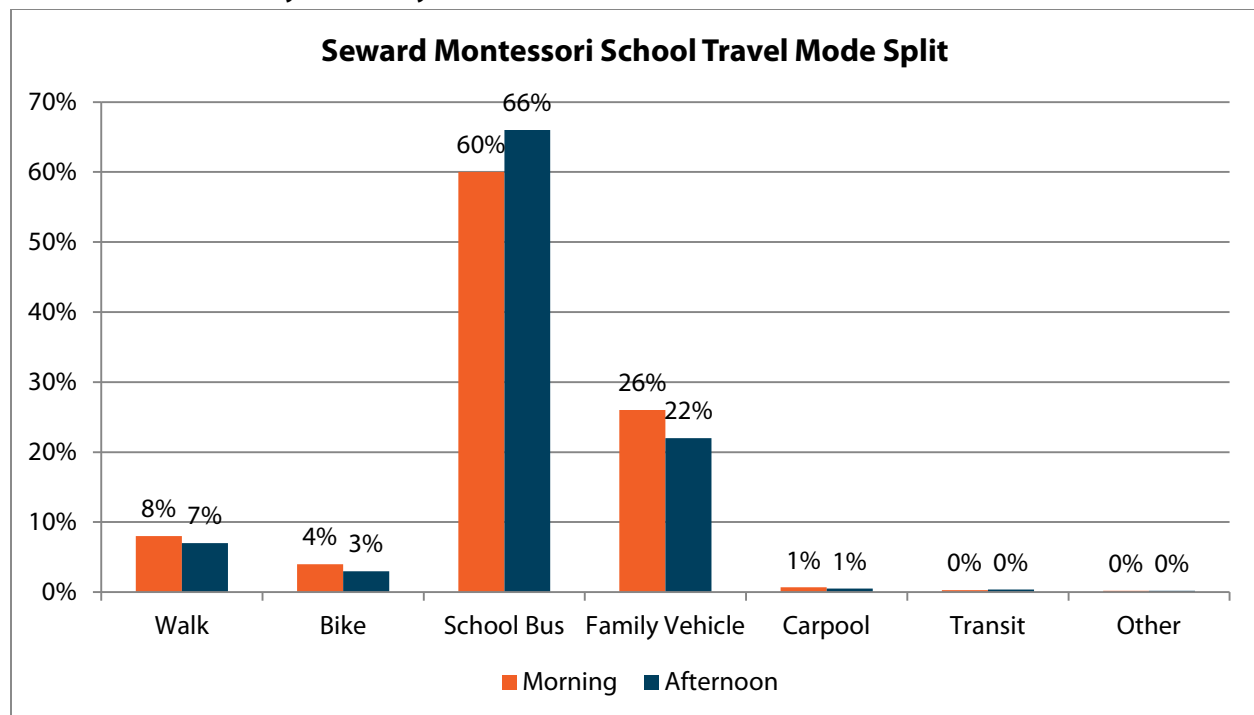
Bicycle parking is located along the on the east side of the school building. Triangle racks are located adjacent to the building, and modified-U racks are located on the southeast side, near the sidewalk. A built-in bicycle pump is also located near the modified-U racks.

School Travel Patterns

In-classroom tallies of students' arrival and departure travel modes were conducted at Seward Montessori in October 2014. A total of 1,158 trips were tallied in the morning and 1,002 trips were tallied during the afternoon.

Overall, 63% of students traveled to and from school by school bus and 24% by family vehicle. Eight percent of students walked to and from school, 1% carpooled and 4% traveled by bike. As shown in the chart, the mode split was fairly consistent during the morning and afternoon, with slightly more students taking the bus home in the afternoon and fewer being driven home in the family vehicle.

Student Travel Survey Summary



Parent Survey Summary

In November 2014, Seward Montessori School parents were asked to fill out a short survey about how their children travel to and from school, perceived barriers to walking and biking to and from school, and their own attitudes related to walking and biking. Administrators received 103 total surveys relative to a school enrollment of 875 students.

Current Travel Patterns: Mode and Distance

The majority of Seward Montessori School students travel to and from school by school bus or family vehicle. However, survey results indicate that students who live closer to school (within a ½ mile) are more likely to walk to school. All of the students who walked to or from school live within one mile of the school.



Proximity to School vs. Children's Walk & Bike to School Rate



38% of respondents live within a 30 minute walk of the school (up to one mile away)

17% of respondents' children "usually" walk to/from school



66% of respondents live within a 30 minute bike ride of the school (up to two miles away)

9% of respondents' children "usually" bike to/from school

Barriers to walking and bicycling

Despite the fact that 38% of respondent's children could walk to school in 30 minutes or less, and 66% of respondent's children could bike to school in 30 minutes or less, only 17% of parents who responded to the survey reported that their children usually walked to/from school and 9% reported that their children usually biked to school. Parents may be reluctant to allow children to walk and bike to school for a variety of reason, though many students seem interested in walking or bicycling. The survey reveals that 57% of students who live within one mile the school and 55% of students who live within two miles of the school have asked permission to walk or bike to school.

The parent survey also asked specifically about barriers to walking and biking to school. More than half of respondents who do not allow their children to walk or bike to school reported that the following issues affected their decision:

- Safety of Intersections and Crossings (79%)
- Amount of Traffic Along Route (77%)
- Weather or Climate (68%)
- Distance (67%)
- Speed of Traffic Along Route (60%)
- Lack of available adults to walk/bike with (56%)

Other reasons given by respondents for not allowing children to walk or bike include the additional time required compared to other modes (46%), violence or crime (37%), a lack of sidewalks or pathways (21%), child's participation in after school programs (19%), a lack of crossing guards (16%) and the convenience of driving (12%).



Parent attitudes about walking and bicycling

Eleven percent of parents who answered the survey think that Seward Montessori School neither encourages nor discourages walking and biking to and from school. Eighty-five percent of parents responded that they believe the school encourages or strongly encourages walking and biking to/from school and 2% of the respondents believe that the school discourages walking and biking to/from school.

The survey also revealed parent opinions about how much fun walking and bicycling is for their children, and how healthy walking and bicycling is for their children. Eighty-nine percent of parents felt that walking and bicycling to school was very healthy or healthy for their children, while 74% think riding bikes or walking to and from school is fun or very fun for their child.



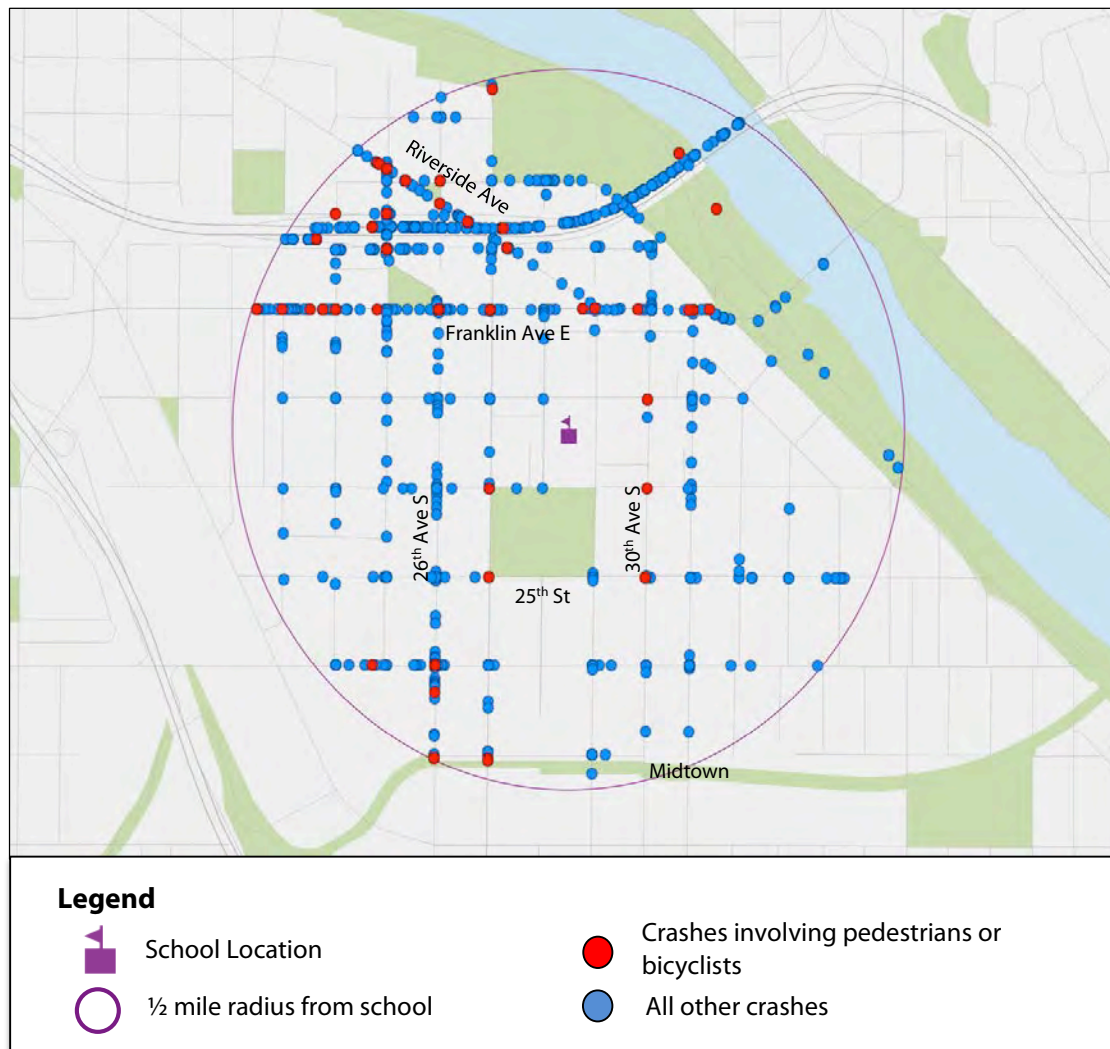
Traffic Conditions and Crash Analysis

An assessment of collisions surrounding the campus of Seward Montessori was completed using Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) crash data from 2004 - 2013. A primary objective in analyzing this data is to identify crash patterns and particular locations or corridors that have been unsafe for pedestrian and bicyclists over a period of time.

Data from 2004 - 2013 reported a total of 1,921 collisions within ½ mile of Seward Montessori. Of these collisions, 47 involved bicyclists, and 18 involved pedestrians.

Pedestrian and bicycle collisions within ½ mile of Seward Montessori are concentrated along several corridors including Franklin Avenue East, 26th Avenue South, 27th Avenue South, 30th Avenue South, and Riverside Avenue.

Seward Montessori School Area Crash Locations 2004 – 2013





Site Audit

Two audits were conducted at Seward Montessori School. The first took place in conjunction with the project Kick-Off meeting on October 22, 2014. The Kick-Off audit, which was abbreviated, took place during arrival, and was conducted by several members of the consultant team, with assistance from additional project team members. A more thorough visit took place during dismissal on December 3, 2014. The temperature on December 3 was about 20°F and the weather was sunny. Two members of the consultant team conducted the dismissal observation.



The railroad tracks south of the school can be a barrier. The sidewalk near the railroad track in this photo has not been cleared.

Walking and Bicycling

Most walkers traveled home with a parent or other adult. Walkers were observed traveling east on East 22nd Street, east on East 24th Street, and south on 29th Avenue South. Older students were also observed crossing at these locations, perhaps traveling home from Lincoln International High School or Aurora Middle School, which are located west of Minnehaha Avenue. Other walkers were observed walking north on 28th Avenue South and continuing north or crossing to the west to walk down East 22nd Street. Students can also walk south on 28th Avenue South to access a path through Matthews Park.



Students use one of the paved paths through Matthews Park, south of the school. The paths are regularly cleared in the winter.

No bicyclists were observed during the December 3rd audit, but several were observed during the October 22nd audit. While the triangle racks are closer to the building entrance, more students and parents were observed using the modified-U racks to lock up bikes.

Bus

School buses line up surrounding the school along the curb on East 22nd Street and 29th Avenue South. Students exit the building and use sidewalks to walk to their bus. Small signs with bus numbers are located along the east and north side of the school to help students find their bus. On-street parking in the bus loading and unloading zones is restricted between 7:00 AM and 2:00 PM. Several school faculty members help to patrol bus pick-up. It appeared that one staff person was assigned to each bus to help manage the process.



Matthews Park is a destination for students and the surrounding community. It is well-used, even in the colder months.



Car

Private car pickup was concentrated on the west side of the school. There is a parent pickup loop in the parking lot on the west side, which will be reconstructed soon. Many cars parked on both sides of 28th Avenue South; parents either waited in the cars or got out of the cars to walk to the main door to meet students. Only a few cars were observed stacking in the parking lot loop area. There is an adult/teacher who supervises the parking lot patrols and instructs car drivers to stay south of the dumpster/recycling area if they are using the parking lot loop for pickup. This keeps the loop area adjacent to the front door free of vehicles.



Students and parents use the sidewalks during school dismissal.



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Infrastructure Issues and Recommendations

The initial field review and subsequent meetings yielded specific recommendations to address the key identified barriers to walking and bicycling at Seward Montessori School. This plan does not represent a comprehensive list of every project that could improve conditions for walking and cycling in the neighborhood, but rather the key conflict points and highest priority infrastructure improvements to improve walking and cycling access to the school. The recommendations range from simple striping changes and school signing to more significant changes to the streets, intersections and school infrastructure. Short-term projects that should be addressed in the 2015-2016 school year are noted as such in the Implementation Strategy section of this plan. Some of the more significant recommendations for changes to streets and intersections may require policy changes, additional discussion and coordination, engineering, and significant funding sources.

All engineering recommendations are described in Table 1 with locations shown on the Recommended Improvements Map. It should be noted that funding is limited and all recommendations made are planning-level concepts only. Additional engineering studies will be needed to confirm feasibility and final costs for projects.

Maintenance

School routes and crosswalks should be prioritized for maintenance. To ensure high visibility crosswalks maintain their effectiveness, review all crosswalks within one block of the school each year. If there is notable deterioration, crosswalks should be repainted annually. In addition, crosswalks on key school walk routes should be evaluated annually and repainted every other year or more often as needed.

Because walking and cycling diminish during the cold winter months, it is particularly important to prioritize snow removal and maintenance of school routes. Snow removal is a critical component of pedestrian and bicycle safety. The presence of snow or ice on sidewalks, curb ramps, or bikeways will deter pedestrian and cyclist use of those facilities to a much higher degree than cold temperature alone. Families with children will avoid walking in locations where ice or snow accumulation creates slippery conditions that may cause a fall. Curb ramps that are blocked by ice or snow effectively sever access to pedestrian facilities. Additionally, inadequately maintained facilities may force pedestrians and bicyclists into the street. Identified routes to school should be given priority for snow removal and ongoing maintenance.



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Table 1. Seward Montessori Issues and Recommendations

Project #	Location	Problem/Issue	Solution/Recommendation	Lead Agency
A	E 22 nd St at 28 th Ave S and 29 th Ave S	Difficult crossing and multiple conflicts points during peak periods.	Enhance pedestrian visibility and reduce vehicle turning speeds. Implement high visibility crosswalks on all legs of the intersection.	City of Minneapolis
B	E 24 th St south of school between 28 th Ave S and 29 th Ave S	Indirect connection; opportunity for improvement	Enhance western entrance to the park path and enhance the path connection to full width of paving as part of the E 24 th Street bicycle boulevard.	City of Minneapolis
C	E 24 th St and 29 th Ave S	Difficult crossing. Visibility challenges with busses and	Enhance crossing to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle crossing. Consider raised crosswalks/intersection and curb extensions. Coordinate with plan for bicycle boulevards for 24 th Street and 29 th Avenue South.	City of Minneapolis
D	E 24 th St and 31 st Ave S and 33 rd Ave S	Traffic calming opportunity	Construct mini traffic circle to function as traffic calming along E 24 th St bicycle boulevard.	City of Minneapolis
E	Midtown Greenway at 29 th Ave S	Pavement is cracked and uneven – needs repaving. In August and September of 2015 conducting pilot closure to vehicles at this location.	Reduce traffic volumes along 29 th Ave S. Support efforts to make street closure permanent and coordinate with long term planning for a bicycle boulevard.	City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority
F	Midtown Greenway at 26 th Ave S	Confusing crossing for users.	Enhance the Midtown Greenway crossing of 26 th Ave S to improve user comfort and increase driver yielding rates.	City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority
G	West River Parkway Trail at E 23 th St	Confusing and uncomfortable crossing for users.	Enhance the connection between E 24 th St bicycle boulevard at the West River Parkway Trail.	Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board
H	E Franklin Ave at 24 th Ave S	Difficult crossing and low driver yield rates.	Enhance the crossing of Franklin Ave to improve user comfort and increase driver yielding rates.	Hennepin County
I	E Franklin Ave at 30 th Ave s	Difficult crossing and low driver yield rates.	Explore the potential of reducing the number of through lanes on Franklin Ave as part of the Protected Bikeways Plan (protected bikeways project 2B).	Hennepin County
J	E Franklin Ave at 29 th Ave S	Difficult crossing and low driver yield rates.	Enhance the crossing of Franklin Ave to improve user comfort and red light violations during right-turn-on-red.	Hennepin County



Infrastructure Recommendations



Project #	Solution/Recommendation
A	Implement high visibility crosswalks on all legs of the intersection.
B	Enhance the western entrance to the park path and enhance the path connection to full width with paving as part of the E 24th St bicycle boulevard.
C	Enhance the crossing here to prioritize pedestrian and bicycle crossing. Consider raised crosswalks/intersection, planted curb extensions, coordinating with planning for bicycle boulevard.
D	Construct mini traffic circle to function as traffic calming along the E 24th St bicycle boulevard.
E	Support the street closure effort to reduce traffic volumes along 29th Ave S, coordinating with long term planning for bicycle boulevard.
F	Enhance the Midtown Greenway crossing of 26th Ave S to improve user comfort and increase driver yielding rates.
G	Enhance the connection between E 24th St bicycle boulevard at the W River Parkway trail.
H	Enhance the crossing of Franklin Ave to improve user comfort and increase driver yielding rates.
I	Explore the potential of reducing the number of through lanes on Franklin as part of the Protected Bikeways Plan (protected bikeways project 2B)
J	Enhance the crossing of Franklin Ave to improve user comfort and red light violations during right-turn-on red.

Existing Conditions	
	School Grounds
	Sidewalks/Paths
	Standard Crosswalk
	High Visibility Crosswalk
	School/Pedestrian Warning Sign
	School/Pedestrian Crossing Sign
	Traffic Signal
	Stop Sign
	Rapid Flash Beacon
	Bike Parking
	Parent / Bus Loading
	Crossing Guards
Recommendations	
	Road Reconfiguration
	Sidewalks/Paths
	High Visibility Crosswalk



Programs Recommendations

The Safe Routes to School movement has been a leader in acknowledging that infrastructure changes are a necessary but insufficient condition for shifting school travel behavior. While engineering improvements like sidewalks, crosswalks, and bikeways are important, equally important are education programs to make sure children and families have basic safety skills, encouragement programs to highlight walking and bicycling to school as fun and normal, enforcement against unsafe and illegal motorist behavior, and evaluation of the impact of investments and non-infrastructure efforts.

Recommended Programs

- Walking School Bus
- Bike Train
- Classroom Lessons (Minnesota Walk! Bike! Fun! Curriculum)
- Walking Rewards/Trip Tracking

The following programs were identified as priority programs for Seward Montessori School during the SRTS planning process. These programs were selected to meet the interest and needs of the school community in the near term (one to five years). The programs are recommended to serve both schools and can be implemented in tandem, however programs can be tailored and implemented to meet the age group and interests of the school and students.

For each program concept, the recommendation includes the primary intended outcomes, potential lead and partners, a recommended timeframe for implementation, resources and sample programs, and a short description.



School Community Programs – Existing

Bike Sharks



What is it?	A school-wide bicycle advocacy and education program for students.
How often?	Throughout the school year.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After school bike repair classes at Spokes, a community cycling partner • After school bike rides, mostly on trails and between 7-10 miles long • Bike donation programs • Spring Tune-Up Days to prepare bikes for riding after winter • Bike Team Challenges to encourage riding • Biking Fridays to celebrate riding to school • Mile Clubs, where groups of students on bicycles reach specific bicycling milestones over their time at Seward. They receive an iron-on patch when their total miles reach 100 miles, 250 miles, 500 miles, and 1000 miles.



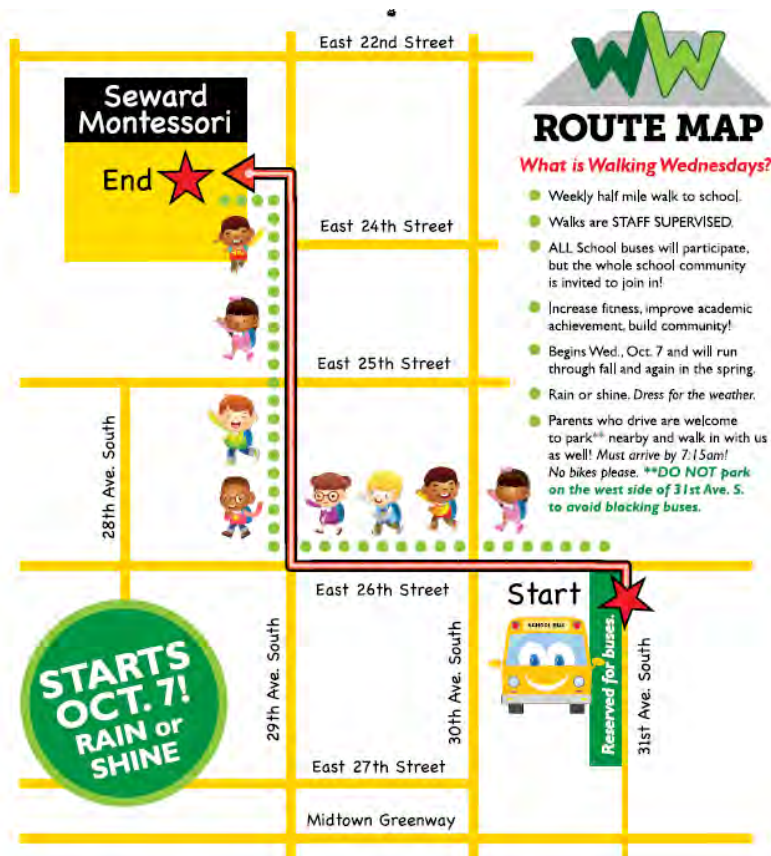


Walking Wednesdays



What is it?	A group of students who walk to school together from a designated remote bus stop location along a designated route. This program can be referred to as Bus Stop and Walk.
How often?	Weekly in the fall and spring.
Example	Every Wednesday, all school busses drop students off 1/2 mile from school and hundreds of students walk the remaining distance. The whole school community is invited to join; parents who drive their children are encouraged to participate by dropping their students off at the designated location and letting their students walk.

Fall 2015 Walking Wednesdays route map



Seward Splash 🌊 October 2, 2015



Walk and Bike to School Day



What is it?	Walk and Bike to School Day is an international event that attracts millions of participants in over 40 countries to encourage students and their families to try walking or bicycling to school.
How often?	These events can be held for one or more days and be split between a Walk Day and a Bike Day.
Example	Parents and other adults accompany students, and staging areas can be designated along the route to school where groups can gather and walk or bike together. Students often earn incentives for participating, such as healthy snacks, buttons, or stickers. The event planning team can work with local businesses to provide donations to students participating in the events.



School Community Programs – Proposed

Walking School Bus and Bike Train

Primary Outcomes	Improved walking and bicycling safety behavior; youth empowerment
Potential Lead	Parents or other school volunteers , Seward PTA
Potential Partners	Seward Montessori School Principal and Staff
Recommended Timeframe	Can be first associated with an event and build to weekly and daily depending on interest and volunteer capacity.
Getting Started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider a simple survey to determine interest in promoting as a school-wide or neighborhood program Identify a coordinator Coordinate with Walk and Bike to School Maps
Planning Resources	The Walking School Bus Guide: Combining Safety, Fun, and the Walk to School (SafeRoutesInfo.org) http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/walking_school_bus/index.cfm
Sample Programs	Minneapolis Safe Routes to School: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/publicworks/saferoutes/ Loring Community School: http://loring.mpls.k12.mn.us/walking-school-bus Lyndale Community School: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZMUKGdYOM4

A walking school bus involves a group of children walking to school with one or more adults. The “bus” follows the same route every time and picks up children from their homes at designated times. Children like the walking school bus because it gives them active social time before the school day begins (or, as one participating child put it, “it’s like recess before school!”). Adults like the walking school bus because they feel more comfortable when there are trained, trustworthy adults escorting their children to school. Teachers and principals like the walking school bus because it helps kids arrive ready to concentrate on school.

A bicycle “train” is very similar to a walking school bus; groups of students accompanied by adults bicycle together on a pre-planned route to school. They may operate daily, weekly or monthly. Bike trains also help address parents’ concerns about traffic and personal safety while providing students a chance to socialize, be active, and develop riding skills while under adult supervision.

Benefits

- Directly addresses two of the most common parental fears regarding walking or bicycling to school: stranger danger and traffic safety
- Highly convenient for parents and fun for students
- Scalable program that can increase in frequency or coverage as participation grows
- Helps develop bonds among classmates and neighbors, which can extend beyond the school day



Classroom Lessons / Skills and Safety Training

Primary Outcomes	Improved walking and bicycling safety behavior; youth empowerment
Potential Lead	Teachers/administrators at Seward Montessori School
Potential Partners	PTA/parents
Timeframe	Regularly integrated as viable. Safety training and skills elements twice per year.
Getting Started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Download and review curriculum Identify interested teachers Have key teachers attend a Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota training session Teachers plan for integration of curriculum
Planning Resources	Minnesota Walk! Bike! Fun! Curriculum: http://www.bikemn.org/education/srts-education-curriculum
Sample Programs	Oregon Safe Routes to School: http://walknbike.org/pedestrian-safety/ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: http://www.nhtsa.gov/ChildPedestrianSafetyCurriculum

A variety of existing in-classroom lessons and skills training activities are available to help teach students about walking, bicycling, health, and traffic safety.

Benefits

- One of the quickest and easiest ways to ensure all children receive important information on the safety basics and benefits of walking and bicycling
- Flexible activities can accommodate a variety of time/ space constraints and grade levels
- Helps institutionalize pedestrian and bicycle safety as a priority life skill (similar to home economics or driver education)



Pedestrian safety training teaches basic lessons such as, "look left, right, and left again."

In-class lessons introduce the topic of pedestrian and bicycle safety to children, including what types of situations they may encounter on the road, how to follow street signs, and how to interact with drivers. Rhymes, songs, and videos can be used to help children remember how to walk and cross streets safely.

The new **Minnesota Walk! Bike! Fun! Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Curriculum** is a two-part curriculum designed specifically for Minnesota's schools and is structured to meet Minnesota education standards. The Minnesota Walk! Bike! Fun! Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Curriculum was developed by the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. The curriculum was designed to help children ages five to thirteen 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. This curriculum is free for anyone to download and use.

Walking Rewards / Trip Tracking

Primary Outcomes	Increased walking; youth empowerment
Potential Lead	Seward Montessori Administration and teachers; PTA/parents
Potential Partners	Minneapolis School District; local groups/advocates/volunteers; local businesses
Recommended Timeframe	Annually, possibly in conjunction with International Walk to School Day or springtime Walk Month
Getting Started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify staff and volunteer resources available Determine the duration and format of the competition Consider coordination with Bike Sharks, other events and learning objectives at the school
Planning Resources	National Center for Safe Routes to School Guide: http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/encouragement/mileage_clubs_and_contests.cfm Fire Up Your Feet: http://fireupyourfeet.org MnDOT Encouragement Programs: Trip Tracking and Competitions webinar: http://www.dot.state.mn.us/saferoutes/pdf/webinars/encouragement-programs-webinar-slides.pdf
Sample Program	Marin County (CA) Pollution Punchcard: http://www.saferoutestoolschools.org/SR2Simages/Pollution-Guide-09-2.pdf

A walking trip or mileage tracking program can be implemented as an opt-in club, a classroom activity, or a collaborative school-wide event. Students track trips or mileage made by walking with some type of goal or culminating celebration or reward. Students can work towards a certain milestone to earn a prize or raffle entry, or they can track their individual or group progress as miles across their town, the state of Minnesota, or the United States. The program should encourage all students to participate, regardless of where they live; those who live too far to walk can participate in a Walking Wednesday activities, or students can be accommodated in PE class or during recess. Example programs include Pollution Punchcards or Walk Across America.

There are already several programs at Seward into which this program could integrate. There is existing momentum from Read Around, a program that encourages Seward students to spend time reading at home every day and keep track of the amount of time they spend reading. This program could also be coordinated with the Wellness Team. The Wellness Team supports students by increasing opportunities for healthy eating, introducing more physical activity, and finding ways to cope with stress in healthy ways.



Classrooms can compete for the 'golden sneaker award' or other designation that honors their walking and cycling efforts.



Evaluation

Why evaluate?

Evaluation is an important component of any Safe Routes to School effort. Not only does evaluation measure a program's reach and impact on a school community, it can also ensure continued funding and provide a path forward for ongoing and future efforts. Evaluation can measure participation and accomplishments, shifts in travel behavior, changes in attitudes toward bicycling and walking, awareness of the Safe Routes to School program, and/or the effectiveness of processes or programs.

Safe Routes to School evaluation is beneficial in the following ways:

- Indicates whether your SRTS efforts are paying off. Evaluation can tell you what's working well, what's not, and how you can improve your program in the future.
- Allows you to share your program's impact with others. Evaluation can demonstrate the value of continuing your program, with school faculty and administration, the district, parents, and elected officials.
- Provides a record of your efforts to serve as institutional memory. The nature of Safe Routes to School teams is that they change over time, as parents and their children move on to other schools and as staff turns over. Recording and evaluating your efforts provides vital information to future teams.
- Tells you if you are reaching your goals. Evaluation can confirm that you are accomplishing or working towards what you set out to do. On the other hand, evaluation efforts can reveal that there is a mismatch in your efforts and your goals or that you need to correct course.
- Encourages continued funding for Safe Routes to School programs. Data collected and shared by local programs can influence decisions at the local, state and national level. In part, today's funding and grant programs exist because of the evaluations of past programs.

Basics of Evaluation

At a minimum, SRTS evaluation should include the standard classroom hand tallies and parent surveys expected in order to be consistent with the national Safe Routes to School program. Evaluating the programs can - and should where possible - delve beyond this, but it need not be burdensome. Evaluating the program can be as simple as recording what you did and when you did it, and counting or estimating the number of students who participated or were reached. Recording planning efforts and taking photos is also helpful for the legacy of the program. In most cases, it is beneficial to measure more, such as school travel mode split and miles walked/biked, from which the school, district or city can estimate environmental, health, and other impacts.

There are two kinds of information that can be collected: quantitative data (numbers, such as counts, logs, and survey results) and qualitative data (words and images, such as observations, interviews, and records).

Further, there are several different ways to collect information. This includes the following:

1. Conducting tallies/counts
2. Keeping logs (such as for mileage tracking)
3. Conducting surveys and interviews
4. Conducting observations and audits
5. Keeping planning and process records



Regardless of how elaborate you make your evaluation, it is important to plan ahead for measuring and tracking results. When you are designing your program, consider how you are going to evaluate it from the beginning, so that you can build in mechanisms for collecting the necessary data. For example, if showing changes in travel behavior over time is important to your effort, you will need to start by collecting baseline data so you know how students are getting to school currently in order to be able to demonstrate any change later.

Below is a series of basic steps to take in designing and executing your program evaluation:

1. Establish your goals and plan the specific program.
2. Decide what, how, and when to measure.
3. Collect baseline information, if necessary.
4. Conduct the program and monitor progress.
5. Conduct any post-program data collection, if necessary.
6. Interpret your data.
7. Use and share your results.

More resources for evaluation can be found on the National Center for Safe Routes to School's website here: <http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/evaluation/index.cfm>.

Before and After Study of Infrastructure

It's also helpful to understand the impact of the specific infrastructure projects on travel behavior and patterns. When planning to improve the built environment to serve school travel, a simple before and after study can be completed with minimal resources and in some cases little more than volunteer support.

Document baseline conditions before the project and evaluate a few months after completion.

- A complete traffic count is very helpful but may be cost prohibitive. At a minimum, complete a count of pedestrians and bicyclists and note any large vehicles. For information on how to conduct a pedestrian and bicycle count refer to the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project, which can be found online at <http://bikepeddocumentation.org/>
- Document motorist compliance with traffic laws, such as yielding at crosswalks and obeying the speed limit.
- Note pedestrian and bicyclist behavior that may cause safety concerns, such as wrong-way riding or crossing outside of crosswalks.

Annual Evaluation Tasks

At the beginning of each year establish which programs and improvements will be made and what needs to be done to complete basic steps 1-3.



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Implementation Strategy

The following section outlines an estimated implementation timeline for both the infrastructure and programmatic recommendations. This strategy identifies programs that can be started in first year of plan implementation and summarizes the estimated timing of infrastructure improvements.

Year One

The programs identified for year one implementation will require the leading organization to take some immediate actions to make progress and follow this timeline. See the **Recommended Programs** chapter for detailed descriptions of each program, including a list of steps to get started on implementation.

Year one programs were selected based on existing capacity and interest identified during the planning process. Most education, encouragement and enforcement programs will be ongoing and once started can be integrated into school programs year after year.

Future Actions

While some recommendations may not be implemented in year one, it is still important to plan and prepare for future programmatic and infrastructure projects. These future actions are displayed in simplified timeline, illustrating a potential approach to phasing in certain activities.



Programs Implementation

Walking School Bus

	Time Frame	Potential Lead:	Parents and school volunteers	Key Partner:	School Administrators
Action #1:	Year 1/Short-term	Communicate with parents and students at Seward Towers East, where there is currently a high density of students taking the bus.			
Action #2:	Year 1/Short-term	Place a description in the Splash newsletter to explain the concept to other families in the neighborhood to see if there is any other natural interest in starting additional walking school busses from additional directions.			
Action #3:	Medium-term	Work with the Seward bus coordinator to identify other stops that may be potential areas from which to start walking routes (high density of students taking the bus within walking distance from the school).			

Bike Train

	Time Frame	Potential Lead:	Parents and school volunteers	Key Partner:	School Administrators
Action #1:	Year 1/Short-term	Place a description in the Splash newsletter to explain the bike train concept to families in the neighborhood to see if there is any natural interest in starting a bike train.			
Action #2:	Medium-term	Proactively develop additional bike trains to utilize future improved bicycle infrastructure and a school-specific bicycle map (yet to be developed).			
Action #3:	Medium-term	Coordinate with other existing programs, including Pedal Pals, Bike Buddies, Earn-a-Bike Program, and Skills and Safety Training.			

Classroom Lessons / Skills and Safety Training

	Time Frame	Potential Lead:	Teachers/School Administrators	Key Partner:	PTA/Parents
Action #1:	Year 1/Short-term	Integrate the Bike! Walk! Fun! curriculum into school classes (E2 and Health Classes).			
Action #2:	Year 1/Short-term	Introduce and promote the Bike! Walk! Fun! trainings to additional teachers.			
Action #3:	Year 1/Short-term	Utilize the existing Minneapolis Public Schools Bike Fleet to provide bicycles to students.			
Action #4:	Medium-term	Develop a Seward-centered bike fleet with secure on-site storage and a bike repair station. Work with Free Bikes 4 Kidz and/or other partners to develop a program to populate the fleet.			



Walking Rewards / Trip Tracking

	Time Frame	Potential Lead:	Teachers/School Administrators/PTA/Parents	Key Partner:	Minneapolis School District Local groups/advocates volunteers and local businesses
Action #1:	Year 1/Short-term	Develop a school-wide walking incentive. Classrooms can compare how many miles they have walked collectively and how that relates to the classrooms' goals. Begin with incentives that have worked in the past for other programs (Birchwood Cafe food, teacher dress-up, etc.).			
Action #2:	Year 1/Short-term	Use momentum from the Read Around tracking program to model a walking trip tracking program.			
Action #3:	Medium-term	Look into software and other automated methods for tracking mileage.			



Infrastructure Action Plan

See the [Infrastructure Issues and Recommendations](#) chapter for detailed discussion of the infrastructure projects listed here.

Table 3. Seward Montessori School Implementation Plan

Project #	Solution/ Recommendation	Lead Agency	Priority	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
A	Install high visibility crosswalks on E 22 nd Ave at 28 th Ave S and 29 th Ave S	City of Minneapolis	High					
B	Enhance entrance to park path and pave path connection. (Coordinating with bike boulevard implementation.)	City of Minneapolis	Low-Medium					
C	Enhance crossing at E 24 th St and 29 th Ave S.	City of Minneapolis	Medium					
D	Construct mini traffic circle on E 24 th St at 31 st Ave S and 33 rd Ave S. (Coordinating with bike boulevard implementation.)	City of Minneapolis	Low-Medium					
E	Support the pilot street closure effort to reduce traffic along 29 th Ave S	City of Minneapolis	High					
F	Enhance the Midtown Greenway crossing of 26 th Ave S	City of Minneapolis	Medium					
G	Enhance the connection between the West River Parkway Trail and E 24 th St	City of Minneapolis	Medium					
H	Enhance the crossing of E Franklin Ave at 24 th Ave S	Hennepin County	High					
I	Enhance the crossing of E Franklin Ave at 30 th Ave S	Hennepin County	Medium					
J	Enhance the crossing of E Franklin Ave at 29 th Ave S	Hennepin County	High					

