



Safe Routes to School

A plan to encourage more students to walk and bike to/from school – when and where it's safe.

JUNE 27TH, 2023

PEQUOT LAKES, MINNESOTA

Eagleview Elementary, Pequot Lakes Middle School, and High School.



The Vision

Walking, biking, and rolling to school is safe, comfortable, and fun for all students in Pequot Lakes.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs are sustained efforts by parents, schools, community leaders, and local, state, and federal governments to improve the health and well-being of children by enabling and encouraging them to walk and bicycle to school WHEN AND WHERE IT IS SAFE TO DO SO.

The vision identified by the SRTS planning team is to increase opportunities for all students to walk or bike to and from school safely by identifying and addressing the issues and barriers that currently exist. Therefore, the local planning team hopes to accomplish three main goals through the SRTS planning process.

1. Determine the current environment surrounding walking and biking to school i.e., how many students district-wide are walking and biking to school?
2. Conduct an assessment of issues and barriers to walking and biking to school.
3. Develop strategies that lead to an environment more conducive to safe walking and biking to school.

THE 6 E'S

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs rely on six core strategies, called the "Six Es", to work towards their vision. Successful Safe Routes to School projects see remarkable changes in the way students and parents choose to travel to and from school. These projects succeed by including each of the "Six E's" of Safe Routes to School to ensure that their project is a well-rounded, multi-prong and time-tested approach to getting students safely walking and bicycling. The Six E's of Safe Routes to School are:

ENGAGEMENT

Working with students, families, school staff, and community members and organizations, especially those from priority Equity groups, to create and implement Safe Routes to School initiatives.

ENGINEERING

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

EDUCATION

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

ENCOURAGEMENT

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

EVALUATION

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

EQUITY -

Prioritizing positive outcomes for students from lower-income households; Black, Indigenous, and other students of color; students with disabilities; and other students who face disproportionate barriers to walking, biking, and rolling to school.



Acknowledgements

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

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Table of Contents

The Vision.....	2
The 6 E's.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
Introduction	5
Assessments of Issues and Barriers	9
District Map.....	11
Eagleview Elementary in Context.....	12
Pequot Middle School/High School in Context.....	13
Infrastructure – Existing Conditions.....	16
Student Population Heat Density Map.....	18
Relative Location of School Sites.....	19
Introduction to Programs.....	20
Working for Change – Action Steps.....	22
Engineering Goals and Actions.....	23
Engagement Goals and Actions.....	26
Equity Goals and Actions.....	28
Encouragement Goals and Actions.....	29
Education Goals and Actions.....	32
Evaluation Goals and Actions.....	34
Appendices.....	37
Appendix A	
Appendix B	



INTRODUCTION - ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

This report is designed to support multiple groups of people involved with Safe Routes to School in the Pequot Lakes School District, including students, caregivers, teachers, school administrators, public works staff, elected officials, and county and state employees. To help make the body of this report relevant to all readers—while also documenting all of the participation, analysis, and deliberation that went into development of the plan—some content has been moved to the Appendices.

SRTS programs examine conditions around schools and conduct projects and activities that work to improve safety and accessibility and reduce traffic and air pollution near schools. Thus, these programs help make bicycling and walking to school safer and more appealing transportation choices thus encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age.

The Region Five Development Commission (R5DC) has successfully developed numerous Safe Routes to School Plans for communities throughout the region, over many years. The Region Five Development Commission assists local units of governments and schools in all aspects of Safe Routes to School planning including developing a planning team, facilitating public informational meetings, facilitating planning team work sessions, administering both student and parent surveys, conducting local walk-audits, drafting the planning document itself, assisting in the adoption process, and much more.

PLANNING PROCESS

The Region Five Development Commission working in cooperation with the Pequot Lakes School District have developed this SRTS plan through the efforts of an ad-hoc community group of volunteers, school staff, State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) coordinator, and professional planning consultants. This local planning team collected and analyzed information, identified issues, barriers, community needs and priorities, and developed recommendations designed to increase bicycle and pedestrian safety for students.

METHODOLOGY

The charge of the planning team was to provide oversight of the overall planning process as well as to provide vital input regarding issues and barriers to safety of students walking or bicycling to and from school; to identify areas of concern as well as to set forth a vision that will guide future transportation planning related to SRTS.

PLANNING TEAM

After being awarded the Technical Assistance grant from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) in 2022, the Pequot Lakes School District staff, in coordination with the Region Five Development Commission began developing a local planning team (LPT) that would represent a diverse cross section of the community. The planning team was designed to both articulate the needs of the community as they relate to SRTS as well as develop strategies and recommendations going forward. The planning team was comprised of several key stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise including elected officials, tribal transportation planners, educators, engineers, members of law enforcement, local transportation planners, parents, community members as well as local transportation planners.

The Local Planning Team (LPT) communicated via email and met several times throughout 2022 and 2023. LPT members also oversaw the administration of both the parent survey and the in-class student tally. Additionally, the LPT conducted a walk audit and a hazard observation of school drop off and pick up at



each of the school sites to identify areas in need of improvement. The Planning Team reviewed the final draft of this plan and recommended it for submittal to MnDOT and approval to the Pequot Lakes School Board and Pequot Lakes City Council.

TIMELINE AND MEETINGS

After the planning team was developed, they held a series of monthly working sessions throughout the planning process to determine issues and barriers as they relate to SRTS in the Pequot Lakes School District.

Month	Purpose
July 2022	Grants and Contract Awarded
August 2022	Development of the Local Planning Team (LPT)
September 2022	Public Informational Kick Off Meeting
October 23rd, 2022	LPT Meeting, Walk Audit, and launched in Class Student Tally
November 13th, 2022	LPT Meeting – Developed Community Survey
December 19th, 2022	LPT Meeting – Administered Community Survey
January 2023	LPT Meeting – Hazard Observation (Both schools)
February 2023	LPT Meeting – Identified Issues and Barriers
March 2023	LPT Meeting – Developed Goals and Strategies
April 2023	LPT Meeting – Reviewed Draft Plan
May 2023	LPT Meeting - Submitted DRAFT Plan for MnDOT Review
June 2023	LPT Meeting – Considered revisions to Final DRAFT
July 2023	LPT Meeting – Present Final Plan to School Board and City Council for formal adoption.





PLEASE JOIN US!

Wednesday, September 28th | 9:15 AM
ISD#186 Pequot Lakes District Office
30805 Olson Street

- Find out more about Safe Routes to School planning
- Hear how the planning process works
- Learn how you can make an impact by helping to create a safer environment for students

IN CLASS STUDENT TALLY

The planning team oversaw the administration of the in-class student tally which is intended to provide the LPT with baseline data regarding how many students are currently walking or bicycling to school.

The in-class student tally is a form distributed to educators that is intended to be administered in class by tallying students via a raised hand. The Tally directs educators to ask students how they arrived at and departed from school i.e., which mode of transportation they utilized for both trips. The tally is intended to be administered over a three consecutive day period in order to eliminate variability and obtain an accurate average count. Additionally, the LPT determined that the tally should be administered on a Tuesday, Wednesday, and a Thursday to further avoid variability associated with students' schedules on Mondays and Fridays. The complete In-Class Student Tally results can be found in Appendix A.

PARENT SURVEY

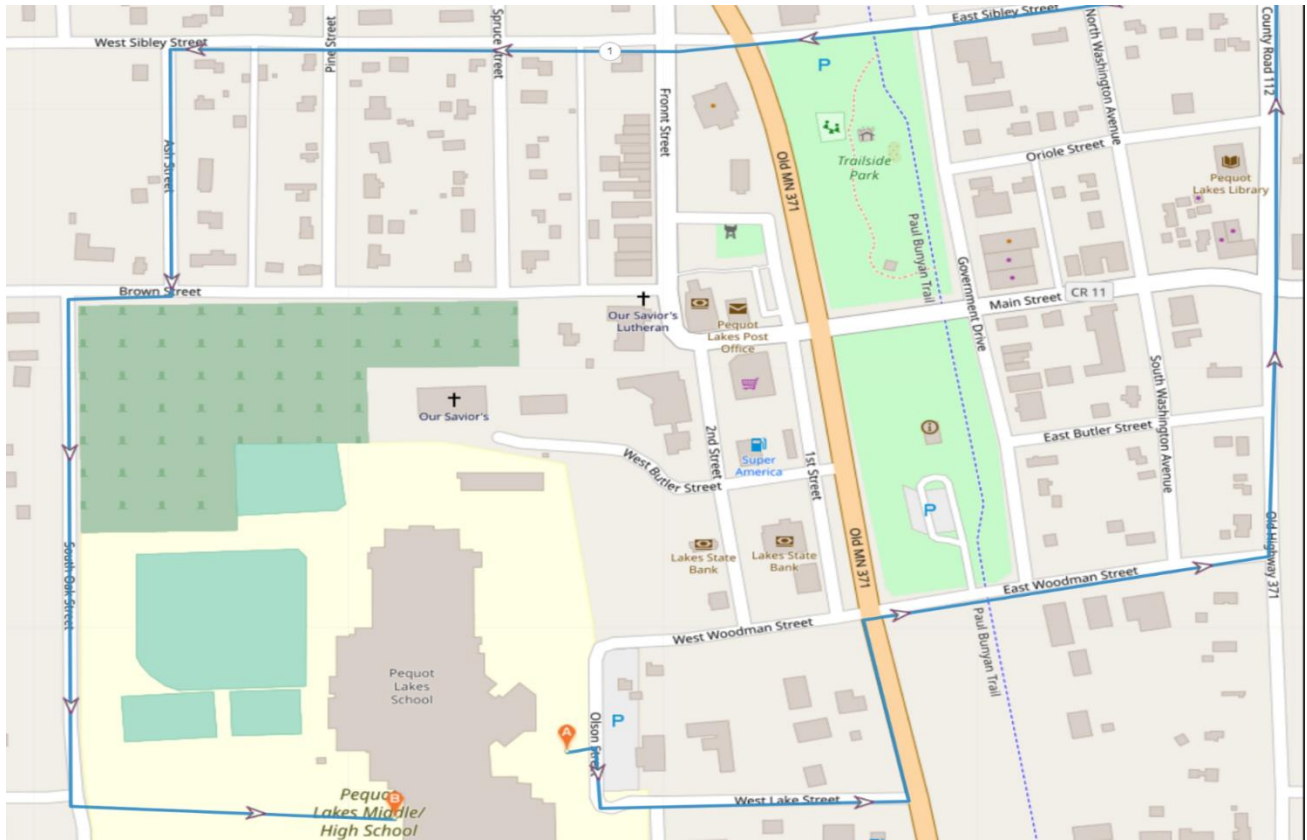
The planning team oversaw the administration of the parent survey which is intended to provide insight into why parents allow or don't allow their students to walk or bike to or from school, which barriers prevent them, and to identify other opportunities to improve walking and bicycling. The surveys that were used were designed by the National Center for SRTS and asked respondents to answer 16 questions. A copy of the survey and the complete survey responses can be found in Appendix B.

The parent survey, which was conducted mostly online, but hardcopies were also made available at public locations throughout the community and yielded a good response rate. The input from the parent survey provided crucial information regarding issues and barriers to walking and biking to and from school.

COMMUNITY WALKING AUDIT/SITE ASSESSMENTS

The planning team conducted walking audits around each of the school sites to further determine issues and barriers as well as to begin thinking about potential solutions to improve student's ability to safely walk or bike to and from school. The input from the walk audit proved invaluable to the planning team in determining where issues and barriers exist and in determining potential solutions.





HAZARD OBSERVATION

In addition to the walk audit, the LPT spent time observing both driver and pedestrian behavior during peak hours including school drop off and pick up at both school sites. The purpose is to identify not only unsafe driver or pedestrian behaviors, but also to identify any issues and barriers such as congestion, back-ups, or unsafe crossings. Lastly, the LPT used this opportunity to attempt to reimagine the infrastructure layout of roads, sidewalks, crosswalks signage, lighting and any other aspect of driver or pedestrian safety should the need arise.

ASSESSMENT OF ISSUES AND BARRIERS

Building on the information gathered from the in-class student tally, the parent survey, the walk audit and their observations from school drop off and pick up, the local planning team discussed, and assessed the issues and barriers that emerged and were identified. There is a great quote from Albert Einstein that goes: “If I had an hour to solve a problem, I’d spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and five minutes thinking about solutions.” With this aphorism in mind the local planning team spent a considerable amount of time assessing the issues and barriers in order to appropriately identify solutions to the challenges that they identified throughout the planning process.

The assessment of issues and barriers was meant to inform the decision-making process by bringing together all the information gathered from the surveys, walk audit, public meetings, and working sessions.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

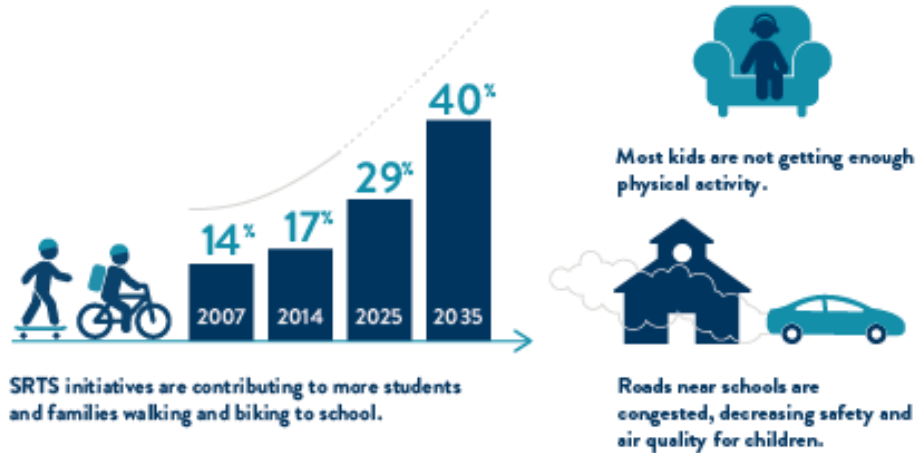
After collecting as much information as possible throughout the in-class student tally, the parent survey, the walk audit and their observations from school drop off and pick up; and after spending considerable time assessing the issues and barriers, the local planning team developed a list of observations and recommendations intended



to address the issues identified as well as to capitalize on some of the opportunities that were discovered along the way. The observations and recommendations were then arranged and organized accordingly within the nationally recognized six “E” approach.

Why Safe Routes to School?

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



KIDS WHO WALK OR BIKE TO SCHOOL:

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

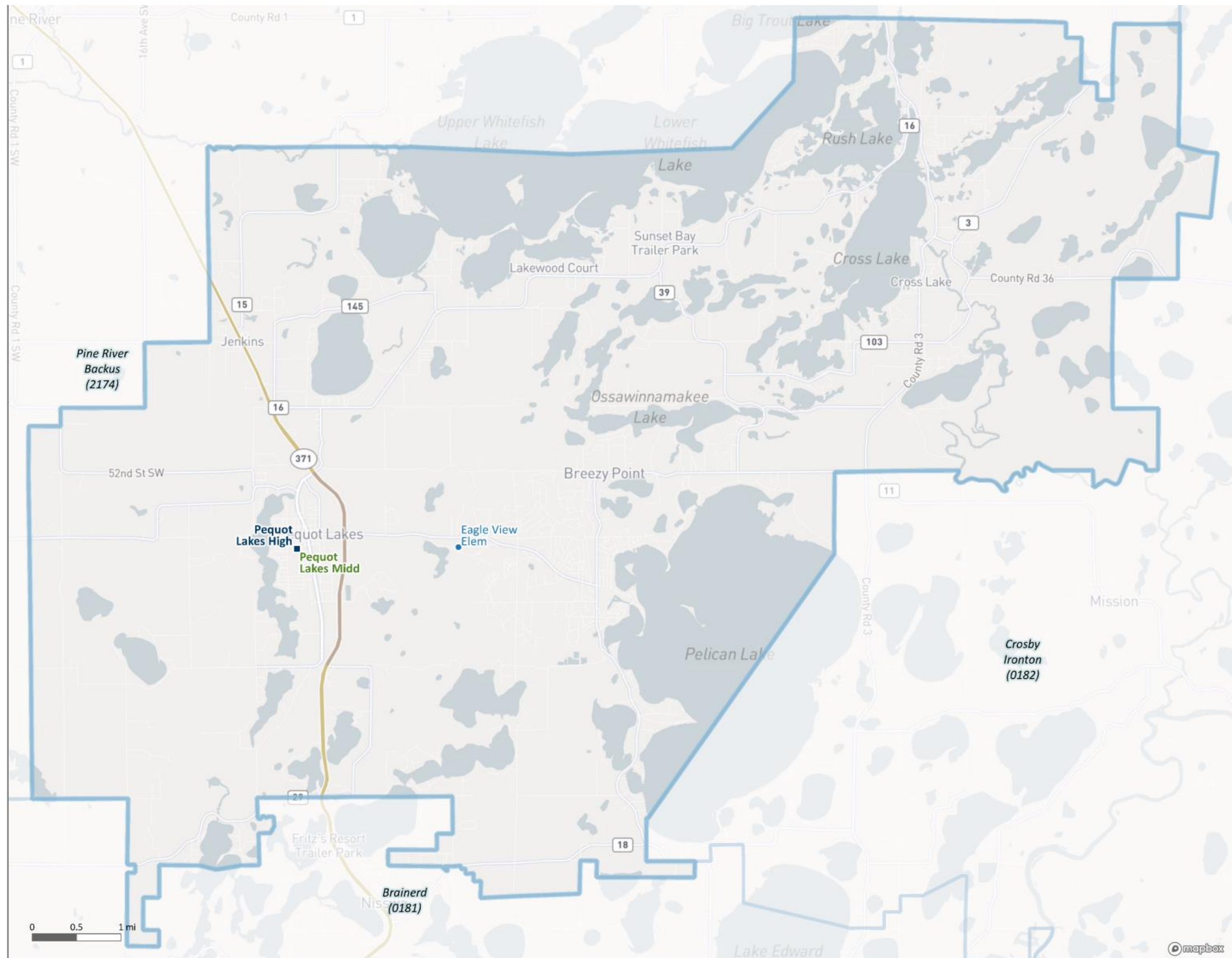
A REINFORCING CYCLE OF WALKING AND BIKING TO SCHOOL



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



Map 1: Pequot Lakes School District Map



[Eagleview Elementary] Community in Context



SITE CIRCULATION

Pedestrians: Very few if any students walk or bike to or from Eagleview Elementary school as it is located over two (2) miles from the city of Pequot Lakes and over two and a half (2.5) miles from the city of Breezy Point. Additionally, Eagleview sits along County Road 11 which is one of the busiest East/West highways in the northern portion of the County. The vast majority of students are either dropped off by their parents or take the school bus, from high school to the elementary school.

Bicyclists: No students were observed walking and biking around the school area on the day of the hazard observation. This is again attributed to the distance between Eagleview Elementary and both Pequot Lakes and Breezy Point.

School Buses: Buses approach the school from both the East and the West, as students from both Pequot Lakes and Breezy Point and the surrounding rural areas attend Eagleview.

Transit: There is no public transit available at this time.

Vehicles: School staff recommend that parents drop off and pick up students by using the eastern most entrance/exit which leads up to the school and offers a turnaround. This keeps the parents separate from the school buses and works very well.

SCHOOL CONTEXT:

Eagleview Elementary

PRINCIPAL:

Melissa Hesch

ENROLLMENT:

630

GRADES SERVED:

k-4

40% of students eligible for free or reduced lunch

*Source: School district records

**Source: School district records

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS:

- Eagleview Elementary's enrolled population of 630 students is spread across kindergarten through 4th grade and is drawn from a district comprising most of the northern part of Crow Wing County.

[Pequot Middle School, High School, and District Office] Community in Context



SITE CIRCULATION

Pedestrians: Many students were observed walking to and from campus along several routes including West Lake St, West Woodman, and South Oak Street. Pedestrians included middle school students as well as high school students. It was noted that many of the students walk to a convenience store along West Lake Street before continuing their routes.

Bicyclists: A few students were observed biking around the school area on the day of the walk audit.

School Buses: Buses access the school campus from South Oak Street and continue along a roadway on school property along the northside of the school campus that leads to a dedicated bus parking lot with suitable space for parking, loading and turnaround.

Transit: There is no public transit available at this time.

Vehicles: School staff recommend that parents drop off and pick up students in a parking lot on the East side of the school campus and follow a known route once on school property which allows for a nice flow of vehicular traffic. There is some pedestrian traffic that crosses through the line of parked or slowly moving vehicles as the pedestrians access the staff and faculty parking lot. However, the majority of the students exit the school and follow a sidewalk that leads directly and uninhibitedly to a student parking lot.

SCHOOL CONTEXT:

Middle School, High School, District Office

PRINCIPAL:

Aaron Nelson (High School Principal)

Mike O'neil (Middle School Principal)

ENROLLMENT:

1,170

GRADES SERVED:

5-1240% of students eligible for free or reduced lunch

*Source: School district records

**Source: School district records

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS:

- Middle School and High School Campus's enrolled population of 1,170 students is spread across 5th through 12th grade and is drawn from a district comprising most of the northern part of Crow Wing County.

Infrastructure

Existing Conditions

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

Equipped with a wealth of information, gathered from the kickoff meeting, in-class student tally, the parent survey, the walk-audit and in talking with school transportation staff, parents and local residents, the planning team developed several observations regarding existing conditions and current issues and barriers.

The first overarching observation is that the two school sites have vastly different challenges. Being located in town, the middle school/high school offers far more opportunities for students to walk and/or bike to/from school. While Eagleview Elementary, being located approximately 2 miles out from downtown Pequot Lakes, and approximately 2.5 miles from downtown Breezy point experiences significant challenges and safety concerns for students walking and biking to/from school from either community.

In the paragraphs below we describe the specific issues and barriers that the planning team identified for each school site.

MIDDLE SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL

Rasmussen Road.

The sidewalk network along Rasmussen road currently ends abruptly, creating a gap between where the sidewalk ends, and Pequot Terrace Estates is located.

Patriot Avenue

Similarly, the sidewalk network along Patriot Avenue ends, creating a gap to new and anticipated development to the south of town.

While not necessarily an issue or a barrier, the planning team also emphasized the importance of continuing to prioritize ongoing maintenance of pavement markings and lighting along pedestrian

routes in and around the middle school/high school campus as worn off markings and limited lighting can lead to potentially unsafe conditions.

Oak Street.

The planning team recognized that there is little to no parking on South Oak Street along the ball fields and bus drop area. Additionally, traffic speeds along this route were noted as being high creating a safety concern for pedestrians, particularly because there are no pedestrian facilities along this route as well. These three factors create a potentially dangerous environment for bicyclists and pedestrians, especially during peak traffic times such as before or after school, and during extracurricular school activities.

Patriot Avenue South of Lake Street

Early on in the planning process, the planning team noticed that this is one of the main intersections for students crossing Patriot Avenue as they walk or bicycle to/from school. Currently, there is no pedestrian facility enabling students to cross at this point which is a natural/logical crossing given pedestrian habits and a clear path that has been worn from this intersection through the ditch and woods to the Paul Bunyan Trail.

Woodman and Patriot Avenue Crossing

Another crossing that caught the attention of the planning team was the intersection of Woodman and Patriot Avenue, where there is currently a crossing, however, given the high volume of bicycle and pedestrian traffic at this location, some crossing improvements are in order.

At both of these crossings, safety was a paramount concern due to the high traffic volumes on Patriot and the increased bicycle and pedestrian traffic, particularly during peak hours before and after school.

EAGLEVIEW ELEMENTARY

The planning team has a lot of discussions and observations regarding what could be done to improve safety and ease bicycle and pedestrian travel to/from Eagleview from both Pequot Lakes and Breezy Point.

Both traffic volume and traffic speed were identified as significant barriers and safety concerns along the entirety of County Road 11. County Road 11 is a major east west corridor connecting two of the county's larger communities. In addition, the seasonal traffic is significant along the corridor as well leading to additional volumes. All of this creates challenges and safety concerns regarding access to/from Eagleview onto County Road 11 for school buses, parent traffic, and bicycle and pedestrians showing a clear and present safety need for potential trail development along County Road 11 and intersection improvements at Eagleview and County Road 11

The responses from the parent survey indicated there was a significant safety concern that impacted parents' decisions to not allow their students to walk or bike to school. Currently there is no continuous pedestrian facility between Pequot Lakes, and Breezy Point where Eagleview bisects the two communities. Additional safety concerns along the County Road 11 corridor include poor drainage at various intersections along the route.

Recommendations were prioritized on the basis of community and stakeholder input, traffic and roadway conditions, proximity to schools, and proximity to and use by priority populations to address equity concerns.

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

Engineering recommendations are described on the following pages. Recommendations are planning-level concepts and will require additional study to confirm feasibility and to finalize project prioritization.

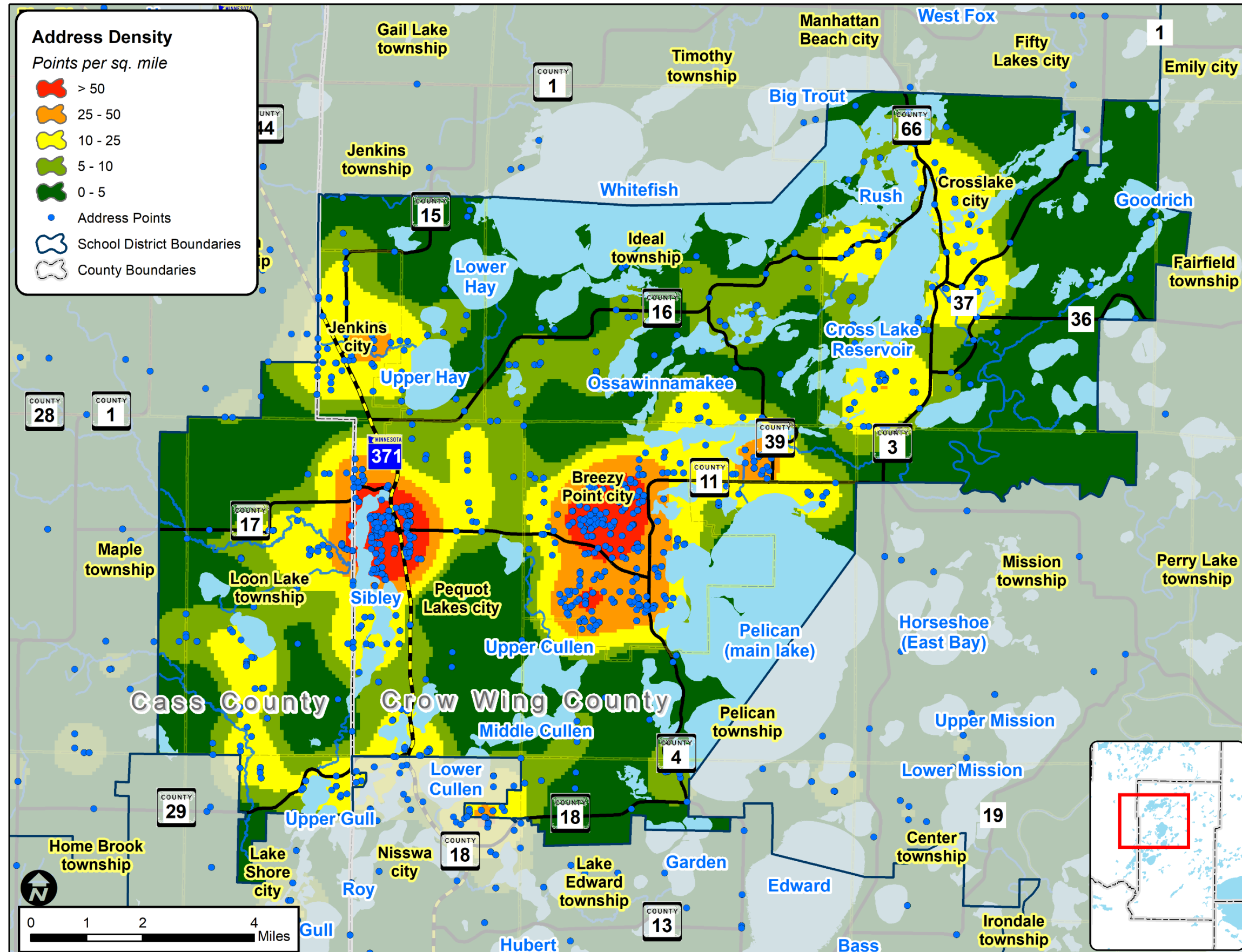
MAPS

The Maps below provide illustrations of certain aspects of the existing conditions. The first map is a density heat map of the student population within the Pequot Lakes School District. This map will be useful to planners and decision makers alike, as they prioritize the allocation of public funds and resources to best serve the transportation needs of the community.

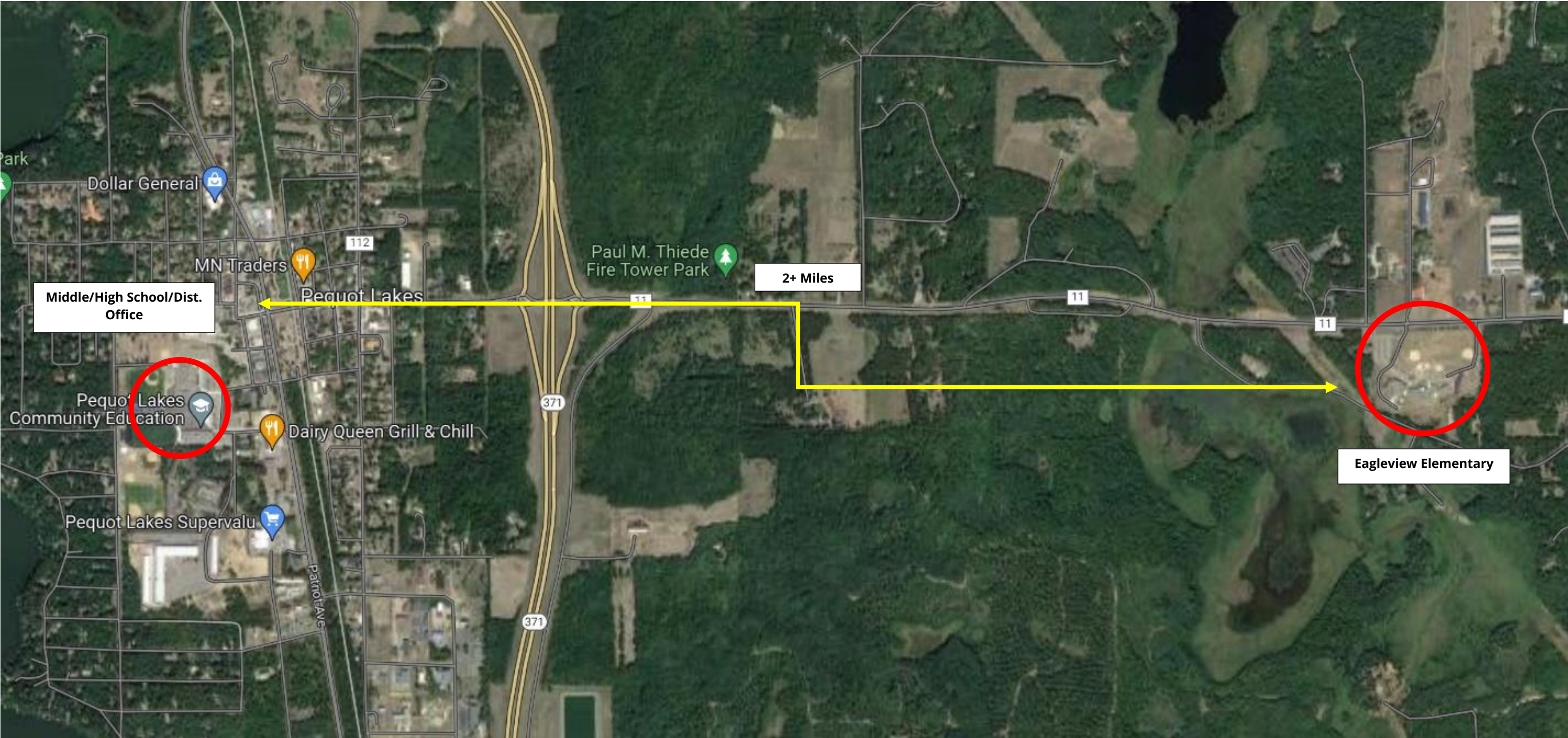
The Second Map illustrates the relative location of the two school sites in relation to one another and the City of Pequot Lakes.



Map 2: Student Population Density Heat Map



Map 3: Relative location of School Sites



Map43: Potential Trail Alignment Along County Road 11



Introduction to Programs

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

Programs are focused on educating students, families, and the broader community about walking and biking, as well as on building a culture that supports and normalizes walking and biking to school and other destinations.

Because programs are low-cost and can often be implemented quickly by an individual school or the school district, they represent an important Safe Routes to School strategy that complements longer-term strategies, including infrastructure improvements and policy changes



EXISTING PROGRAMS

The Pequot Lakes School District has been actively working towards providing safe and inviting spaces around school campuses for students. This foundation of encouraging student travel safety provides a valuable baseline for expanding programs to encourage more students to walk and bike.

PROGRAMS ALREADY ACTIVE AT PEQUOT LAKES SCHOOLS:

- Walking and bicycling field trips
- Enhanced driver, bicycling and pedestrian safety curriculum.
- Bike giveaway
- Community Education programming
- Student involvement in community events
- Walk! Bike! Fun! Curriculum
- High Five Friday's

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

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

RECOMMENDED PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

- Consider ways to continually improve and best utilize Crossing Guards
- Continue In-School Curriculum & Activities such as Walk! Bike! Fun!
- When walking and biking isn't an option, consider identifying safe and strategic Park & Walk
- Consider ways to ensure that underserved neighborhoods have equal access to public facilities.
- Continue meeting as a SRTS planning team.
- Continue conducting the parent survey annually to track changing perceptions.
- Continue conducting in-class-student tallies to track walking and bicycling numbers over time
- Develop Suggested SRTS route map.
- Continue to build on existing events and find new Walk & Bike Field Trip events.
- Promote observance of Walk and Bike to School Days
- Walking School Bus and Bike Train that would include local PTA and school staff



Working for Change - Action Steps

This plan and planning process provide two critical ingredients for creating a more equitable transportation system for Pequot Lakes: a prioritized set of infrastructure and program recommendations, and a network of caregivers, school staff, local government employees, and community members committed to improving walking and biking.

PRIORITY SRTS INITIATIVES

- Improve key crossings of Patriot Ave at Woodman, Lake and others.
- Improve parking situation and pedestrian facilities along South Oak St. and the route leading to the bus lot.
- Improve safety along County Road 11, by considering an off-street trail, connecting the school to both Pequot Lakes and Breezy Point.
- Consider intersection improvement at Eagleview Elementary and County Road 11.
- Improve sidewalk network by filling in sidewalk gaps, making some extensions and key connections and continuing to prioritize maintenance.

ENGINEERING

Creating physical improvements to streets, sidewalks, trails, infrastructure, and neighborhoods that make walking and bicycling safer, more comfortable, and more convenient.

Goal 1: County Road 11 Trail Development

PRIORITY: High

RECOMMENDATION

Continue to seek funding and feasibility for the development of a trail along Crow Wing County Road 11 between Pequot Lakes and Breezy Point.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

Trail development would provide a barrier from heavy traffic and could potentially increase the number of walkers and bikers for all students K-12.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

County, city and school staff, with funding from MnDOT.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

Improving pedestrian conditions makes walking and rolling easier and safer for people with disabilities and meet all ADA requirements.

Goal 2: County Road 11 and Eagleview Intersection Improvements

PRIORITY: High

RECOMMENDATION

Consider additional improvements to County Road 11

- Rapid Flashing Beacon
- Traffic Control
- Nickel Road (change to general terms for South of Eagleview access)
- Use Bushman to avoid CR11 in future.
- Intersection improvements

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

Each of these recommended actions would improve the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians and all users on County Road 11 by improving traffic flow would making the intersection less intimidating for pedestrians while also reducing emissions by reducing vehicle idling.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

County, city and school staff, with funding from MnDOT.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

Improving sidewalk conditions makes walking and rolling easier and safer for people with disabilities. This intersection is also a key crossing to schools for lower-income families and students from Grande Apartments.

Goal 3: Rasmussen Road Pedestrian Infrastructure

PRIORITY: High

RECOMMENDATION

Consider extending the sidewalk along Rasmussen Road to the manufactured home park to the north.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

The sidewalk network currently has gaps and extending along this route would connect key areas of town.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

City staff, with funding from MnDOT.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

Improving sidewalk conditions makes walking and rolling easier and safer for people with disabilities. This intersection is also a key crossing to schools for lower-income families and students from the manufactured home community along Rasmussen Road.

Goal 4: Pavement Markings and Lighting

PRIORITY: High

RECOMMENDATION

Continue to consistently repaint and re-stripe crosswalks/ pavement markings and improve lighting to ensure a high degree of visibility.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

Poor visibility of striping and pavement markings and poor lighting can lead to potentially unsafe routes. Continuing to maintain these pavement markings will lead to safer outcomes.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

County, city and school staff, with funding from MnDOT.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

Improving pavement markings and lighting makes walking and rolling safer for people with disabilities along all routes that require striping and pavement markings.

Goal 5: Patriot Ave

PRIORITY: High

RECOMMENDATION

Consider extending sidewalk network to future development opportunities.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

New and anticipated developments are taking place south of town and pedestrian facilities have not yet been put in place to accommodate these developments.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

County, city, and school staff, with funding from MnDOT.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

Improving sidewalk conditions makes walking and rolling easier and safer for people with disabilities. Patriot Avenue is also a key route and crossing to schools for lower-income families and students.

Goal 6: Patriot Ave Crossing

PRIORITY: High

RECOMMENDATION

Consider improvements to the cross walk on Patriot Avenue, South of Lake Street. (Possible in conjunction with the City of Pequot Lakes Patriot Ave redesign).

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

This is one of the main intersections for students crossing Patriot Ave to and from school.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

City and school staff, with funding from MnDOT.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

Improving crossing conditions makes walking and rolling easier and safer for people with disabilities. This intersection is also a key crossing to school for lower-income families and students.

Goal 7: Woodman and Patriot Crossing

PRIORITY: High

RECOMMENDATION

Seek funding and feasibility for Improving crossing and intersection markings on Woodman and Patriot Ave.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

This is one of the main intersections for students crossing Patriot Ave to and from school.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

City and school staff, with funding from MnDOT.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

Improving crossing conditions makes walking and rolling easier and safer for people with disabilities. This intersection is also a key crossing to school for lower-income families and students.

Goal 8: Oak Street

PRIORITY: High

RECOMMENDATION

Consider adding parking and sidewalks on South Oak Street along ball fields and bus drop area; and seek ways to slow traffic on Oak Street.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

This is one of the main intersections for students crossing Patriot Ave to and from school.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

City and school staff, with funding from MnDOT.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

Improving conditions along this route makes walking and rolling easier and safer for people with disabilities. This intersection is also a key crossing to school for lower-income families and students.

Goal 9: Installation of Rapid Flashing Beacons

PRIORITY: High

RECOMMENDATION

Consider installing Rapid Flashing Beacons at certain intersections or crossings as this will get more kids outside walking before school and getting active with the potential of encouraging more kids to walk to school.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

This would potentially improve safety at several intersections.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

City and school staff, with funding from MnDOT.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

Improving crossing safety would potentially make walking and rolling safer for people with disabilities. This intersection is also a key crossing to school for lower-income families and students.

ENGAGEMENT

All Safe Routes to School initiatives should begin by listening to parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and seek to work with community organizations, to build intentional, ongoing engagement opportunities into the program structure.

Goal 1: Consider developing a walking school bus program that would include local PTA and school staff enabling local, vetted/verified/certified adults to walk or bike along with students along clearly identified route.

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Consider developing a walking school bus program that would include local PTA and school staff.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

This will get more kids outside walking before school and getting active with the potential of encouraging more kids to walk to school.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, and volunteers.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so by providing adult supervision to help students walk to school if their caregivers are not able or willing to walk with them to school.

Goal 2: When walking and biking isn't an option, consider identifying safe and strategic "Drop sites" for students to walk/bike to/from before and after school where they would then be picked up/dropped off by a school bus.

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Consider identifying safe and strategic "Drop sites" for students to walk/bike to/from.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

The unique locations of the schools poses barriers to walking and biking for students. Drop sites will increase the likelihood of more students becoming more active.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, and volunteers.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

Allows all students to participate in SRTS whether they typically get to school by bus, car, bike or foot. Encourages safety with a larger presence of students walking and adult supervision.

Goal 3: Consider working with PTA to increase engagement (high five Fridays).

PRIORITY: Medium

RECOMMENDATION

Consider working with PTA to increase school engagement activities such as developing a walking school bus program.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

Increasing engagement will build a positive school culture and happier students.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, SHIP Coordinator, and volunteers.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so.

Goal 4: Continue staggering start times between grades to even the traffic flow during peak hours.

PRIORITY: High

RECOMMENDATION

Continue staggering start times between grades to even the traffic flow during peak hours.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

This is currently being done and helps reduce congestion of cars and buses.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

This strategy will reduce traffic around schools and ensure students are walking or biking to school during daylight year-round.

Goal 5: Consider increasing law enforcement presence to encourage increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic when and where it’s safe to do so.

PRIORITY: Medium

RECOMMENDATION

Consider increasing law enforcement presence.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

This creates another layer of safety for walkers and bikers who may be intimidated by heavy traffic flow.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff and Law Enforcement.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so by supporting safety.

Goal 6: Seek opportunities to engage the public through developing events such as a bike giveaway in the community.

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Seek opportunities to engage the public through developing events such as a bike giveaway in the community and bike rodeos or safety courses.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

The more bikes there are in the community for kids, the more likely kids are to ride them to school.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, SHIP Coordinator, City Staff.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so by providing bikes to kids who may not be able to afford them.

EQUITY

Making an effort to ensure that Safe Routes to School initiatives are benefiting all demographic groups, in regard to safe transportation to and from school, where and when it is safe to do so.

Goal 1: Consider ways to ensure that low-income neighborhoods have equal access to public facilities including bike/ped facilities to schools when and where it’s safe to do so.

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Seek opportunities to ensure all neighborhoods have equal access to public facilities such as identifying gaps in the sidewalk network like the gap between Rasmussen Road and Pequot Terrace Estates.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

To ensure equal access to public facilities.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, City staff.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so.

Goal 2: Continue to pursue ADA compliance and consider the development of an ADA plan.

PRIORITY: Medium

RECOMMENDATION

Continue to pursue ADA compliance of the built environment and consider the development of an ADA plan for each City.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

To improve access, inclusivity, and safety.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, SHIP Coordinator, and volunteers.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so by ensuring equitable access and ADA compliance.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Generating enthusiasm and creating a culture of walking and biking that results in increased walking and bicycling for students through events, activities, and programs.

Goal 1: Consider increasing the presence and usage of Crossing Guards to increase pedestrian safety.

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Consider increasing the presence and usage of Crossing Guards to increase pedestrian safety.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

To continually improve the safety for students by providing adult supervision crossing high volume and high speed roadways that would be considered hazards by parents and school staff.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, Local Law Enforcement and volunteers.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so by providing adult supervision crossing high volume and high speed roadways that would be considered hazards by parents and school staff.

Goal 2: Consider ways to partner with the Brainerd Lakes Area (BLA) Towards Zero Death (TZD) Coalition on ways to raise awareness and increase walking and biking when and where it's safe to do so.

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Consider how a partnership with the Brainerd Lakes Area (BLA) Towards Zero Death (TZD) Coalition might lead to coordinated events to provide safety education and potentially lead to infrastructure improvement recommendations.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

To improve safety for students who walk, bike, or drive to school

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, TZD, and city staff.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so by increasing awareness of the challenges faced by both drivers and pedestrians.

Goal 3: Consider ways that High Five can be instrumental in encouraging the development of a culture of walking and biking safely.

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Continue to promote the High Five Friday's. program that promotes a school culture of positivity.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

To develop a culture of walking and biking safely by promoting a positive school culture.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, Parent Teacher organizations, SHIP Coordinator and volunteers.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so
By encouraging and developing a culture of walking and biking safely.

Goal 4: Continue field trips that encourage biking.

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Continuing field trips that encourage biking and utilize use of a bike fleet.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

To develop a culture of walking and biking safely to area destinations.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, SHIP Coordinator, Parent-Teacher Organization, bike advocates and volunteers.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so
by allowing all students in the class to ride a bike regardless if they have access to one at home.

Goal 5: Seek ways to continue to provide or enhance driver, bicycling, and pedestrian safety curriculum.

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Seek ways to continue to provide or enhance driver, bicycling, and pedestrian safety curriculum such as Walk!
Bike! Fun!

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

To promote safety for students with increase knowledge for drivers in the community and safe skills for students walking and biking

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, Law Enforcement, Volunteers.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so by providing rules of the road safety training so that all students have access to the same information.

Goal 6: Consider formally implementing or celebrating walk to school and or bike to school days.

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Consider formally implementing or celebrating walk to school and or bike to school days.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

To develop a culture of walking and biking safely.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, SHIP Coordinator and volunteers.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy available to all students to encourage more students walking and biking to and from school or other destinations when it is safe to do so.

Goal 7: Consider increasing law enforcement presence to encourage increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic when and where its safe to do so.

PRIORITY: Medium

RECOMMENDATION

Consider increasing law enforcement presence to encourage increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic when and where its safe to do so.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

To promote safety for students.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, local law enforcement.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so.

EDUCATION

Providing students and the community with the skills to walk and bicycle safely, educating them about benefits of walking and bicycling, and teaching them about the broad range of transportation choices.

Goal 1: Provide education on winter walking safety.

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Provide education on winter walking safety.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

To promote safety for students in winter conditions on icy or poorly maintained sidewalks and curbs, cold weather, and low light conditions with shorter days.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, Law Enforcement and volunteers.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so by providing equal access to safe bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Goal 2: Provide general education for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrian safety rules of the road by expanding on bike safety rules of the road.

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Provide general education for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrian safety rules of the road by expanding on bike safety rules of the road.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

To promote safety for students and a culture of walking and biking.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, TZD Coalition, SHIP Coordinator, Law Enforcement and volunteers.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so that could provide education in different languages or modes that are more relevant to priority populations.

Goal 3: Consider using Minnesota's Walk!Bike!Fun! curriculum training for educators, community members, and students.

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Consider using Minnesota’s Walk!Bike!Fun! curriculum training for educators, community members, and students to provide a comprehensive approach to safety education for all students in the school district

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

To promote safety for students through increase knowledge of traffic safety and a culture of walking and biking.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, SHIP Coordinator, Local Bicycle Groups, and volunteers.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so by ensuring that all students in the school district will have access to learn to ride a bike and safe skills for walking and biking to school.

Goal 4: Consider creating a pickup and drop-off cheat sheet for individuals without local knowledge as this program is developed and progresses.

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Consider creating a pickup and drop-off cheat sheet for people who are new to the area or unfamiliar with the process.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

To promote safety for students and people of all ability levels and a culture of walking and biking.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, City Staff, County Staff and volunteers.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so by seeking to reduce transportation inequities where they may exist and by bringing the built environment up to ADA standards.

Goal 5: Continue to seek ways that Community Education programming beyond age 6 can be instrumental in increasing walking and biking when and where its safe to do so.

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Continue to seek ways that Community Education programming beyond age 6 can be instrumental in increasing walking and biking when and where its safe to do so.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

To promote safety for students and a culture of walking and biking by providing additional awareness and education opportunities that reinforce other strategies taught in school or community TZD efforts.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, community education and volunteers.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so.

EVALUATION

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

Goal 1: Complete student tally forms for grades k-12 annually.

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Complete student tally forms for grades k-12 annually.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

To help school staff, and elected decision makers understand how many students are walking and biking to and from school.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so by ensuring that accurate data on students who are walking to and from school is being kept.

Goal 2: Complete parent survey forms for k-12 regularly

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Complete parent survey forms for k-12 annually.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

To promote safety for students and a culture of walking and biking by providing the opportunity for parents to provide input, and for school staff and elected leaders to understand concerns and issues relating to safe travel to and from school.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so.

Goal 3: Review and make annual updates as necessary to the Safe Routes to School Plan.

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Review and make annual updates as necessary to the Safe Routes to School Plan as strategies are implemented and as other barriers are identified through evaluation and engagement activities.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

To continue to meet the safety needs of the students as improvements are made.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, SRTS planning team, TZD Coalition, SHIP Coordinator, and volunteers.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

It will be an inclusive strategy to get more students walking and biking to and from school when it is safe to do so.

Goal 4: Continue to meet as a Safe Routes to School task force regularly i.e., quarterly, bi-annually, or annually.

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Continue to meet as a Safe Routes to School task force regularly i.e., quarterly, bi-annually, or annually.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

This plan lays out a lot of goals and strategies and it will be important to have a group of volunteers meet regularly to continue to maintain momentum, track progress and make recommendations to the school board going forward in order to promote safety for students and a culture of walking and biking.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, SRTS Planning Team, Law Enforcement and volunteers.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

This recommendation will address equity by ensuring all community members' voices are heard.

Goal 5: Review crash reports

PRIORITY: Low

RECOMMENDATION

Review all relevant accident reports.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

To promote safety for students and a culture of walking and biking by continuing to improve our understanding of the evolving barriers to students walking and biking to and from school.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

School staff, Law Enforcement, and volunteers.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

This recommendation will assist staff and decision makers by highlighting where potential risks exist and where accidents are happening regardless of the populations being served.

Appendices

Appendix A – Parent Survey

Appendix B – In-Class Student Tally

