Plainville Safe Routes to School Master Plan

Middle School of Plainville and Toffolon Elementary School

Final Report

Prepared August 2011

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Introduction

Middle School of Plainville entrance

Toffolon Elementary School entrance

In Plainville, few school-age children who live in walking distance of school regularly walk or bike to school. Those who do face uncomfortable and, at times, unsafe conditions. An incomplete network of sidewalks and road crossings makes getting to school hard for pedestrians and cyclists; without such safeguards, heavy traffic and high speeds make it hazardous for them. These conditions explain in part why many parents feel it is necessary to drive their children to and from school. While understandable, this further exacerbates the problem by adding traffic to the streets, increasing congestion, air pollution, and safety risks. The result is that walking or biking to school become even less attractive.

Plainville is committed to changing student travel behavior by making it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school. This commitment sprang naturally from the town's efforts to improve children's health and increase environmental sustainability. In 2009, Plainville was one of 16 communities selected nationwide to receive a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to fight childhood obesity. The Wheeler Regional YMCA, the recipient of the grant, led the creation of the Healthy Plainville Initiative. Among its goals, the Healthy Plainville Initiative seeks to increase physical activity before, during, and after school. The formation of the Plainville Safe Routes to School Committee and the implementation of a Safe Routes to School program is a natural outgrowth of this initiative.

Process

The Healthy Plainville Initiative spearheaded the creation of the Plainville Safe Routes to School Committee, which brings together community representatives and town officials. Among the Committee's first actions was to work with consultants Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. (FHI) to prepare an audit of the area. The Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency (CCRPA) supported the effort through data collection and analysis. The culmination of these efforts is this document, the Plainville Safe Routes to School Master Plan (Plan), which outlines Plainville's commitment to support and promote safe, active transportation (walking and biking) for students of the Middle School of Plainville and Toffolon Elementary School.

Purpose

The Plainville Safe Routes to School Committee's mission is to identify mobility barriers and to implement community-, school-, and parent-based solutions that enable all children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bike to school in safety. In doing this, the Committee seeks to better the health and well-being of the town's residents, and to create a livable and more sustainable community.

Walk to School Day

School Description & Current Travel Characteristics

Figure 1: School Context

Location

The Town of Plainville is a suburban community located in central Connecticut. Situated midway between New Britain and Bristol and 14 miles southwest of Hartford, Plainville covers an area of 9.6 square miles. Originally part of Farmington, Plainville was first settled in 1657 and incorporated as a separate town in 1869. The opening of the Farmington Canal in the mid-1800s drew many residents to the area and fueled the growth of the town. Today, Plainville is home to just over 17,000 residents.

School Enrollment

Five public schools serve the Plainville community. These comprise three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Total enrollment for the Plainville Community Schools in the 2010-2011 school year was 2,440 students. This Plan focuses on two schools, the Louis Toffolon Elementary School and the Middle School of Plainville (see Figure 1).

Louis Toffolon Elementary School, located at 145 Northwest Drive, serves students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Students who attend Toffolon Elementary School live primarily in the western area of town. The enrollment

for the 2010-2011 school year was 366 students. The other two elementary schools, the Linden Street Elementary School and the Frank T. Wheeler Elementary School, serve the remaining K-5 students in Plainville.

The Middle School of Plainville is located across the street from Toffolon Elementary School, at 150 Northwest Drive. As the only middle school in Plainville, the school serves all students in grades 6 through 8. As of the 2010-2011 school year, the school had an enrollment of 575 students.

It is important to note that Toffolon Elementary School and the Middle School of Plainville are the primary focus of this Plan because of their proximity to each other. This proximity will allow most improvements to enhance travel conditions for students of both schools. Although this Plan only focuses on Toffolon Elementary and the Middle School of Plainville, given the community's commitment to promote safe, active transportation, it is hoped that this Plan will not preclude but rather spur the town's other schools to adopt similar plans and programs in the future.

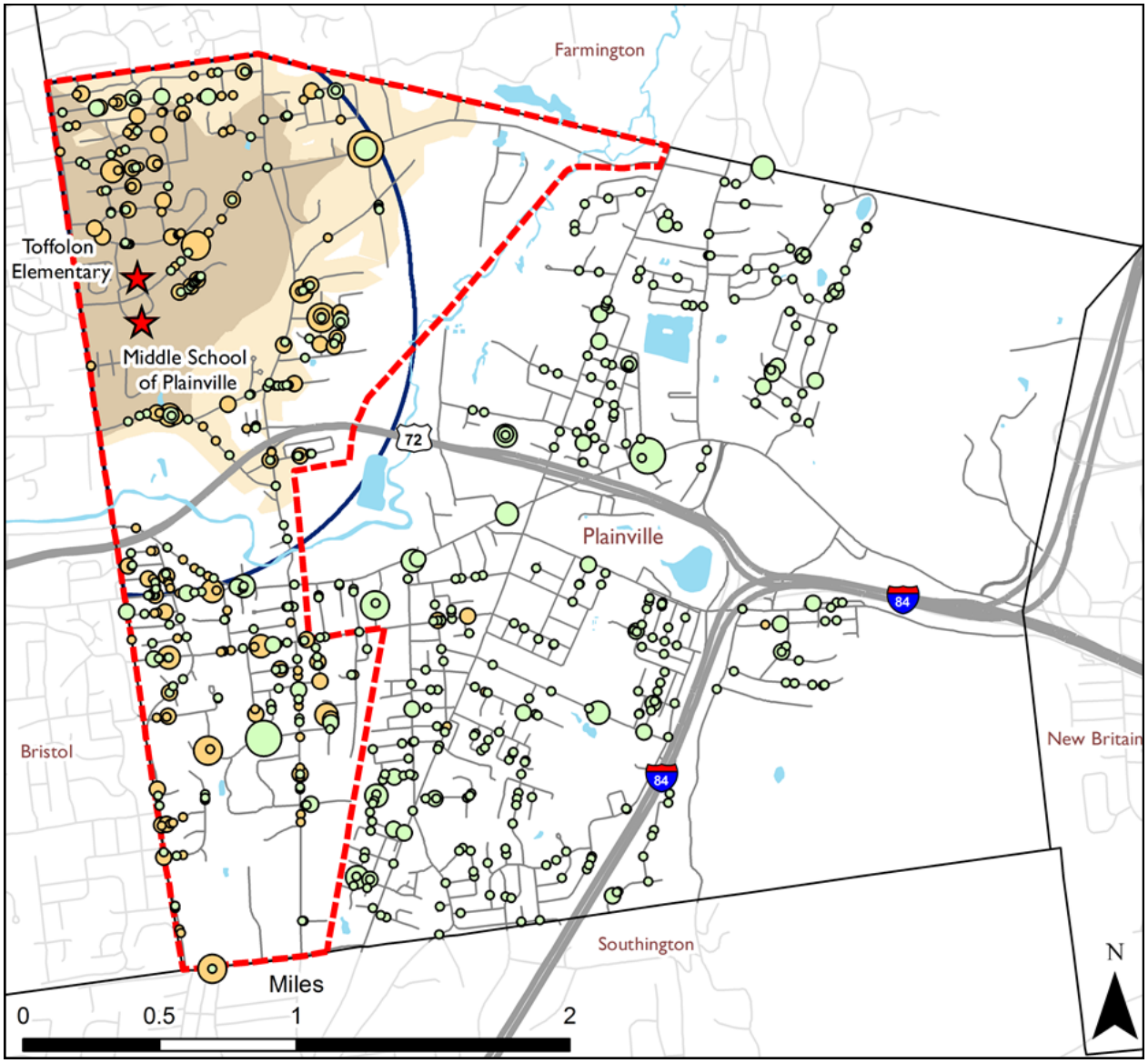
Students Within Walking Distance

The Plainville Safe Routes to School Master Plan primarily focuses on improvements within a 1 mile radius of the schools. However it also takes into account those students who live within 1.5 miles of the Middle School of Plainville. This is the distance deemed walkable by the Plainville Board of Education.

According to the most recent data, 45 middle school students, or 8%, live within 1 mile of school via the existing street network while 108 students, or 19%, live within a 1 mile radius. Going out just one half mile further, 87 middle school students, or 15%, live within 1.5 miles via the existing street network while 199 students, or 35%, live within a 1.5 mile radius. Currently, 97 elementary school students, or 27%, live within 1 mile via the existing street network while 205 students, or 58%, live within a 1 mile radius (see Figure 2, p. 5). All told, approximately more than one third or all students live within a 1 mile radius of the schools.

Toffolon Elementary School entrance

Figure 2: School Enrollment



Toffolon Elementary # of Students: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5+

MS of Plainville # of Students: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5+

School
Toffolon Enrollment Boundary
Water
Towns
Highways
Roads
One Mile Linear Distance
1 Mile Walking Distance
1.5 Miles Walking Distance

Middle School Students	#	%
Within 1 Mile Walking Distance	45	8%
Within 1 Mile Linear Distance	108	19%
Within 1.5 Miles Walking Distance	87	15%
Within 1.5 Miles Linear Distance	199	35%
Toffolon Elementary Students	**#**	**%**
Within 1 Mile Walking Distance	97	27%
Within 1 Mile Linear Distance	205	58%
Within 1.5 Miles Walking Distance	169	48%
Within 1.5 Miles Linear Distance	283	80%

Figure 3: Middle School Travel Modes

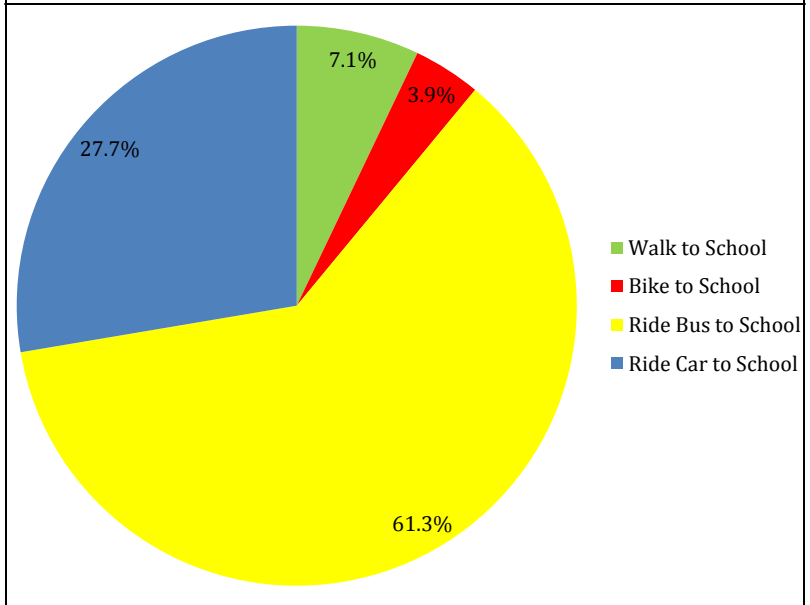
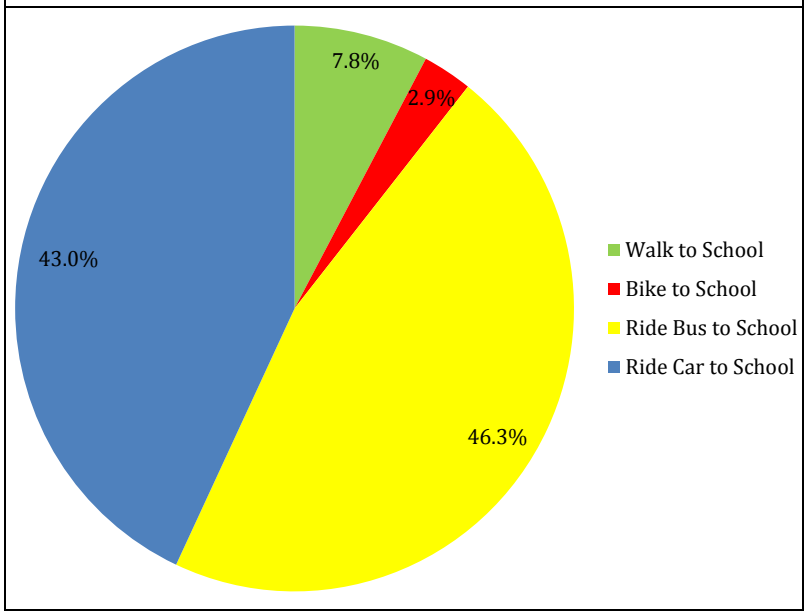


Figure 4: Elementary School Travel Modes



Current Travel Modes

Despite a large percentage of students living within walking distance (1 mile for elementary school students and 1.5 miles for middle school students) very few students walk or bike to school.

Surveys were distributed in July 2011 to parents about their children's travel habits. Parents were asked to indicate how many days each week their child walked, biked, rode the bus, or rode in a car to school. Responses revealed that most elementary and middle school students ride the bus or in a car to school, and that very few walk or bike to school.

According to the survey, 27.7% of middle school students ride in a car and 61.3% take the bus to school at least one day each week. In contrast, just 7.1% and 3.9% of middle school students walk and bike, respectively, to school (see Figure 3). The results for elementary school students were similar, with most students riding the bus or getting driven by parents: 43.0% of Toffolon students ride in a car, 46.3% ride the bus, 7.8% walk, and 2.9% bike to school (see Figure 4). In contrast, more than one third of students attending Toffolon Elementary School and the Middle School of Plainville live within a 1 mile radius of school. This indicates that, while current walking and biking rates may be low, there is great potential to increase them. By improving the physical environment, and strengthening education, encouragement, and enforce-

ment efforts, the Committee hopes to motivate more parents and students to take part in active transportation

Sign located behind Toffolon Elementary School

School Travel Policies and Hazard Bussing

The Plainville Board of Education's transportation policy states that bussing is only provided to elementary school students living 1 mile or more from school and middle school students living 1.5 miles or more from school, unless hazardous conditions exist (see Appendix A). Hazardous conditions vary by age group but may include the absence of a pedestrian crossing light or crossing guard where three or more streets intersect; any street or road which lacks sidewalks unless there are no sight obstructions; and proximity to railroad tracks unless there are physical barriers along the walking route. As a consequence of hazards identified by the local safety committee, some students who live within 1 mile of school are bussed. Improvements to conditions around the schools, specifically within 1 mile, will seek to address these hazardous conditions and will allow the Board of Education to revise its bussing lists.

The Board of Education has not yet adopted transportation policies which specifically outline biking and walking procedures, including appropriate places to enter and exit on school grounds, age restrictions, or special permission for biking to school. In fact, some signs on school grounds have been reported to confuse parents about the permis-

sibility of biking to school. The lack of a clear policy is probably a contributing factor to the low-levels of walking and biking to school.

Arrival/Dismissal Procedures

Middle School of Plainville

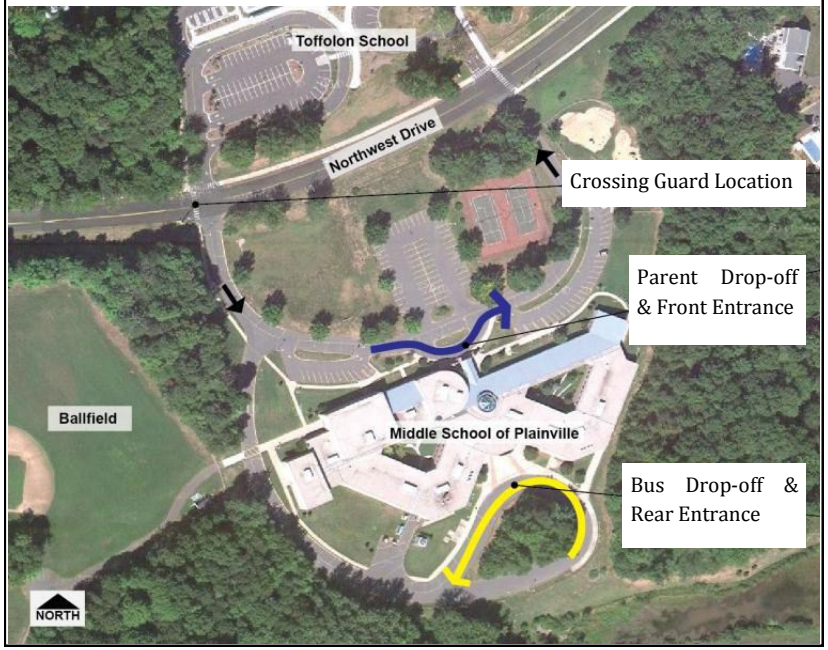
School begins at 8:00 AM. Doors open at 7:30 AM for staff. Students arrive between 7:50 and 8:00 AM. School ends at 2:45 PM.

A large, one-way driveway with one separate entrance and exit each is located in front of the school. A small loop off this driveway is used by parents to drop their children off (see Figure 5). Parents may also park in the lot in front of the school. Failing to heed posted notices and signs, parents often park the entire driveway length during arrival and dismissal times. This often results in confusion, congestion, and safety hazards for pedestrians. A smaller driveway off the main driveway extends to the rear of the school. This driveway is used by busses to drop students off who then enter the school through the rear doors.

Students who walk to school typically travel from points north and east of the school. An asphalt path provides a direct connection between Toffolon Elementary School and the neighborhoods to the north. Many students coming from the north use this path. Those arriving from the east use a sidewalk that runs along the northern side of Northwest Drive. Once students coming from either direction approach the school zone, they may use one of two crosswalks over Northwest Drive to the middle school. One crosswalk is located west of the school, on the western side of the entrance drive. The other is east of the school, on the eastern side of the exit drive. Students observed crossing Northwest Drive tended to use the western (entrance drive) crosswalk. A crossing guard is positioned here, and a sidewalk extends from the crosswalk to the front of the school, providing a safe path for the students.

Students who bike to school can park their bike at either the front of the school in a small bicycle rack or at the rear of the school, where two larger bicycle racks are located.

Figure 5: Middle School Circulation (Source: FHI)



Many students who bike were observed entering the middle school through the rear doors. This may be due to the greater availability of bicycle parking there.

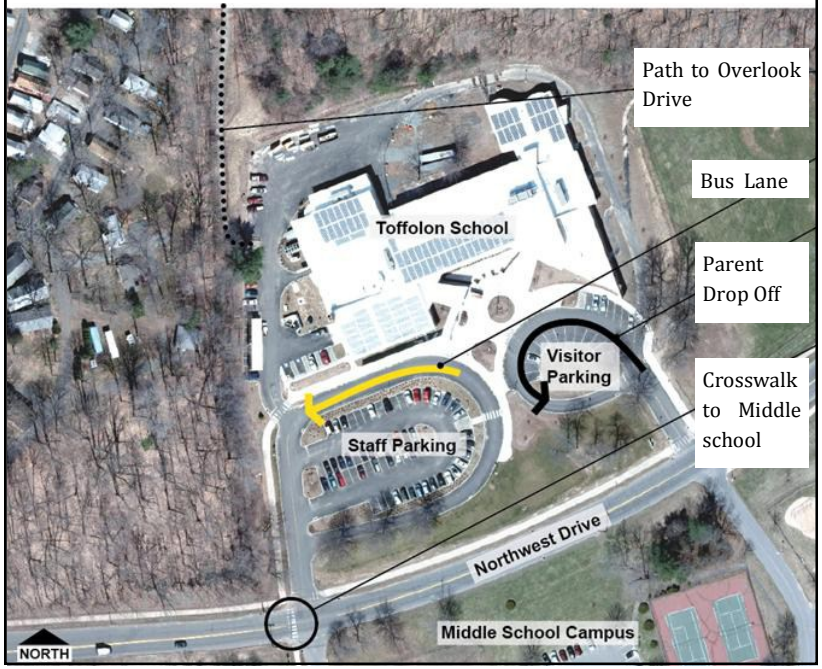
Toffolon Elementary School

Toffolon Elementary School begins at 8:50 AM and ends at 3:30 PM. Students who do not take the bus are instructed not to arrive before 8:30 AM.

The school was recently updated. As part of this project, circulation on school grounds was reengineered to improve safety and traffic flow. There are two separate driveways leading to the school (see Figure 6). The first lies to the east of the school. It leads to a visitor parking lot with a loop encircling the parking area. Parents are instructed to park in the visitor parking lot when dropping off or picking up their children. Site visits revealed that not all parents follow this rule; some were observed stopping in the driveway and double-parking while they picked their children up from school. The second driveway to Toffolon Elementary School is on the west side of the school and leads to a staff parking lot. This parking lot is surrounded by a loop that is used by busses for picking up and dropping off students. While the parking lot is intended for staff, again, during site visits, parents were observed waiting in this parking lot to drop off and pick up their children.

A crosswalk extends across Northwest Drive from each driveway on the road to Toffolon Elementary School. One crosswalk is located at the eastern side of the entrance to the visitor parking lot. The other is due west of the entrance to the staff parking lot and bus drop-off area. A crosswalk also extends over each of these driveways. The crossing guard stationed at the crosswalk to the entrance to the Middle School of Plainville is subsequently repositioned at the crosswalk at the eastern side of Toffolon Elementary School that leads to the visitor parking lot. Students crossing here then use a sidewalk that extends

Figure 6: Elementary School Circulation (Source: FHI)



along the driveway to the visitor parking lot to enter the school through the front doors. There is also a bike rack located at this entrance.

Travel Supports

In addition to the crossing guard who assists middle and elementary school students during arrival and dismissal times, a crossing guard is also in place midday for morning kindergarten dismissal at 11:40 AM and afternoon kindergarten arrival at 12:40 PM. On occasion, adult monitors also stand on the path behind Toffolon Elementary School during arrival and dismissal for the elementary school. These provide additional supervision for students.

Students crossing Northwest Drive (Source: FHI)

Middle School bus drop-off (Source: FHI)

While some of the streets surrounding the schools have a well-connected network of sidewalks and crossings, others lack pedestrian and bicycle facilities. This can make biking or walking to school an uncomfortable and unsafe option. Even where infrastructure is adequate, other barriers may dissuade or prevent children from walking or biking. To quantify their impact, the Committee identified all routes students would likely take to school and cataloged barriers along the way. With this information, the Committee was then able to determine what form improvements should take and where they should be located in order to benefit the most students and thus have the greatest impact

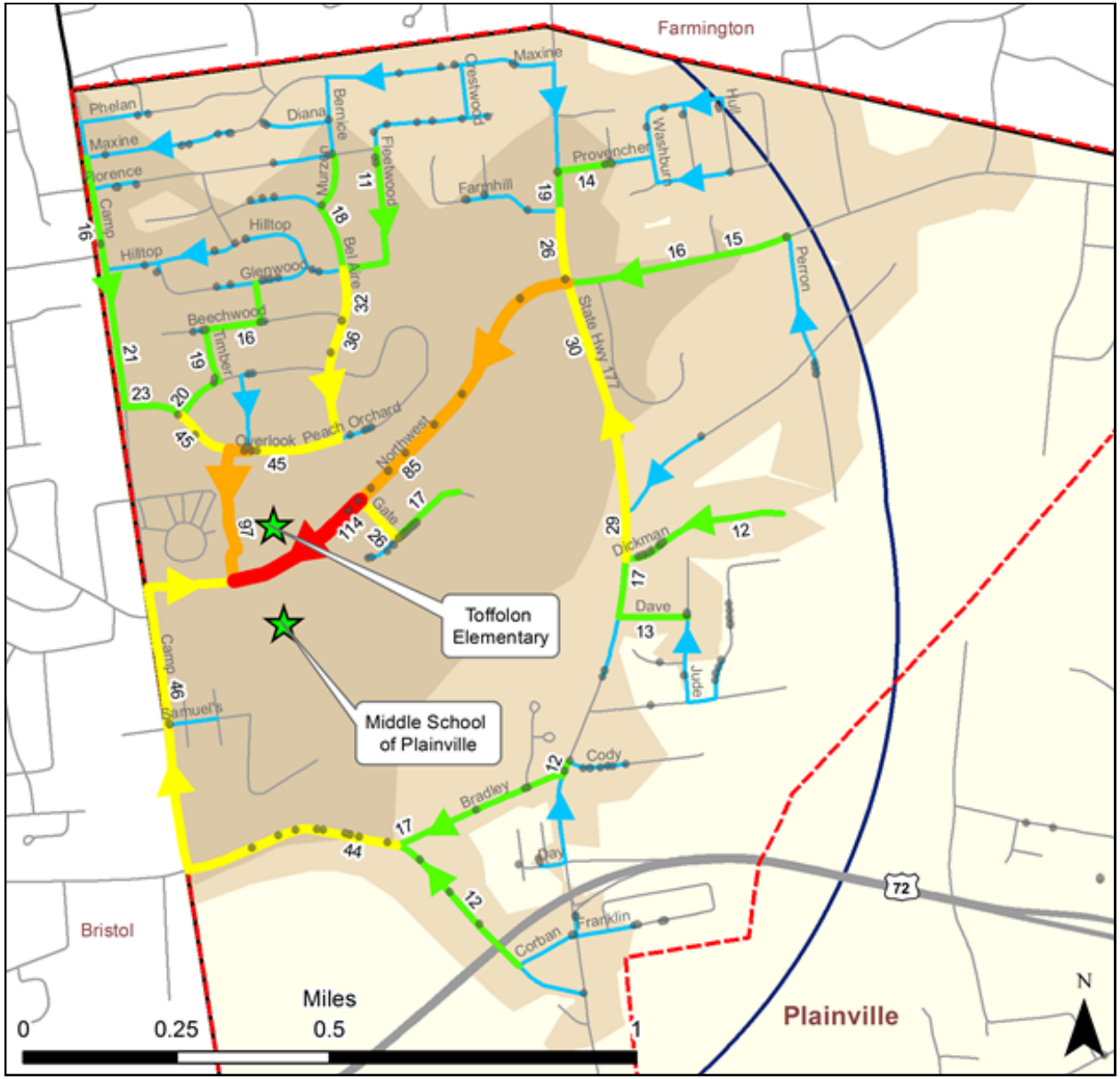
Walking and Biking Routes to School

The map on the following page (see Figure 7, p. 12) shows how many students would travel along each road segment if all students who live within 1 mile of the schools via the existing street network walked or biked to school. The calculations assume that all students follow the shortest path from home to school. Students traveling from the neighborhoods north of the schools are an exception. Their routes were calculated via the asphalt path behind Toffolon Elementary School as opposed to routing them down Camp Street and onto Northwest Drive. Road segments shown in red would be traveled by the most students, provided all students in walking distance walked or biked to school; those in blue, by the least. Each segment is labeled with the number of students who would use that route to school. Given that middle school students who live more than 1.5 miles from school and elementary students who live more than 1 mile from school are bussed, the map differentiates between route segments that fall between 1 mile and 1.5 miles via the existing street network (area shaded light beige) and those that are within 1 mile (darker brown) of the schools.

This analysis indicated which segments would be the most heavily traveled and therefore where improvements should be concentrated to have the greatest impact. It found that if all students who live in walking distance walked or biked to school, a total of 114 students would travel along Northwest Drive, many originating from neighborhoods to the east, specifically from those adjacent to Route 177. Secondary, highly-trafficked routes include the path behind Toffolon Elementary School and the roads north of the path; a total of 97 students would travel along these routes and the path to reach the schools. These highest-demand areas became the areas of highest priority for the SRTS Committee.

In conjunction with this analysis, the physical conditions of pedestrian and cyclist facilities in the area were examined, paying particular attention to the routes that would receive the highest use.

Figure 7: Student Walking Routes to School



Walking Routes

# of Students

- 1 - 10
- 11 - 25
- 26 - 50
- 51 - 100
- > 100

- Student Addresses
- School
- Toffolon Enrollment Boundary
- Roads
- 1 Mile Linear Distance
- 1 Mile Walking Distance
- 1.5 Miles Walking Distance
- Plainville

This map shows how many students use each walking route to and from the Middle School of Plainville and Toffolon Elementary School. The number of students on each route was calculated by aggregating each student's shortest path to school. Only students who lived within 1.5 miles of the schools were used in the analysis.

Sidewalk and Intersection Inventory

Sidewalks, intersections, and crossings in the school zone and surrounding neighborhoods were inventoried in July 2011 to identify areas in need of improvement.

Sidewalks

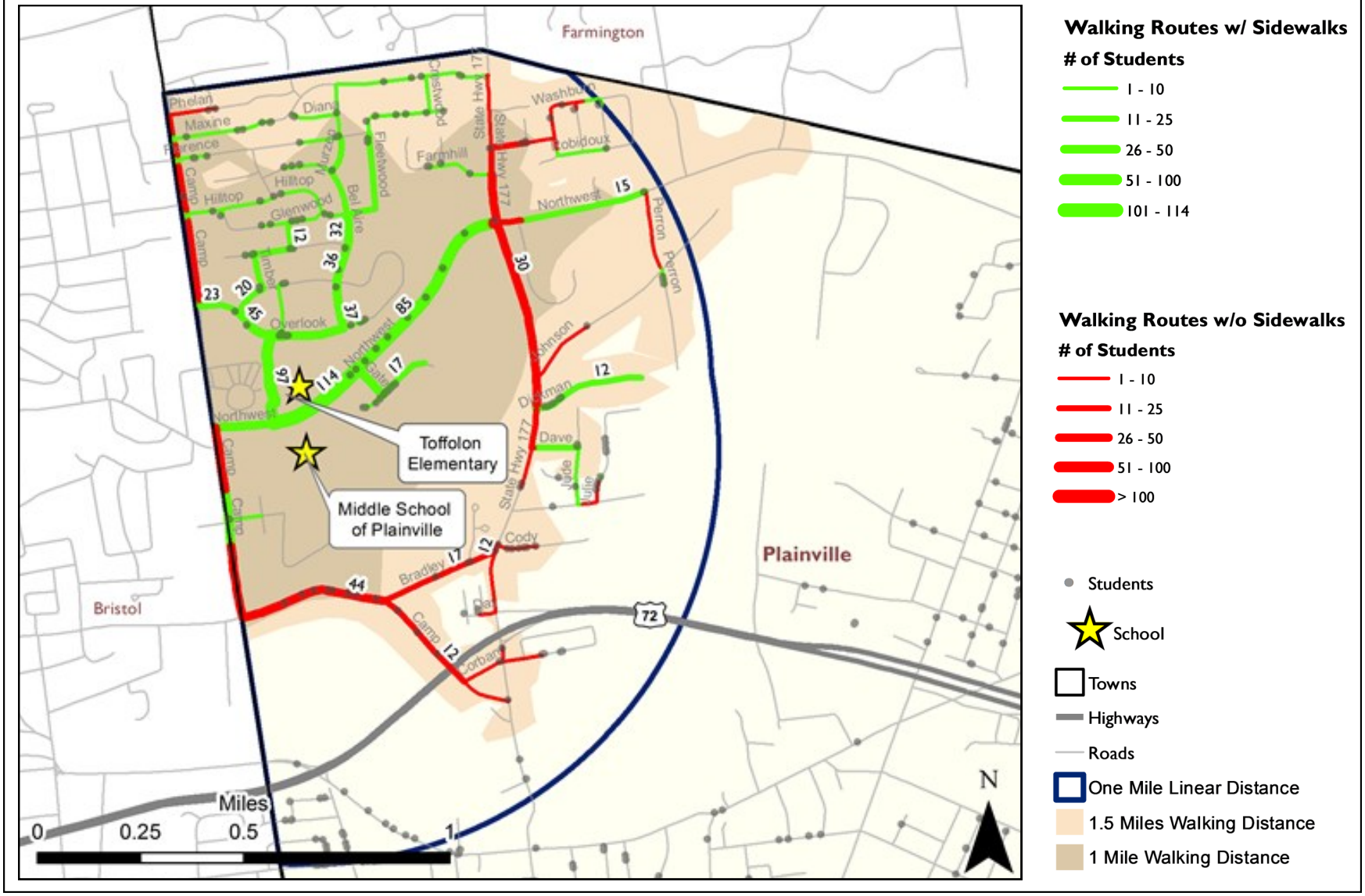
The inventory revealed an extensive network of sidewalks in the neighborhoods to the north of the schools (see Figure 8, p. 14). Sidewalks here are well-connected and provide access to both schools via the asphalt path behind Toffolon Elementary School.

Neighborhoods east of the schools, including Provencher Drive and others adjacent to Route 177, also have good internal sidewalk connectivity. However, sidewalks there do not extend to Northwest Drive but terminate abruptly at Route 177, which lacks sidewalks. High traffic volumes and speeds make it unsafe for students who live off Route 177 to walk or bike to Northwest Drive, which provides access to both schools.

Sidewalks are also missing along sections of Camp Street. The northern part of Camp Street, from Northwest Drive north, lacks sidewalks. Sidewalks are also absent on Camp Street from Northwest Drive south to Samuel's Crossing. However, there are plans for a path to be installed linking a sizable, new residential development on Samuel's Crossing to the middle school, which it abuts. (This lessens the need to install sidewalks on this section of Camp Street, as it is expected that students approaching from the south will cut through Samuel's Crossing to get to school via the path.) The third section of Camp Street that lacks sidewalks and may be targeted for sidewalk construction is to the south of the schools and runs from the intersection of Camp Street and Washington Street to Route 177. Given the complete absence of pedestrian facilities along Camp Street, even though the area is within 1 mile of the schools, bussing is provided for students.

Sidewalk along Northwest Drive

Figure 8: Sidewalk Inventory



Intersections

While continuous, unbroken sidewalks are important to pedestrian safety, safe walking also requires good crossings. The inventory of the area uncovered several deficiencies (see Figure 9, p. 16). These include intersections with faded and nonexistent crosswalks.

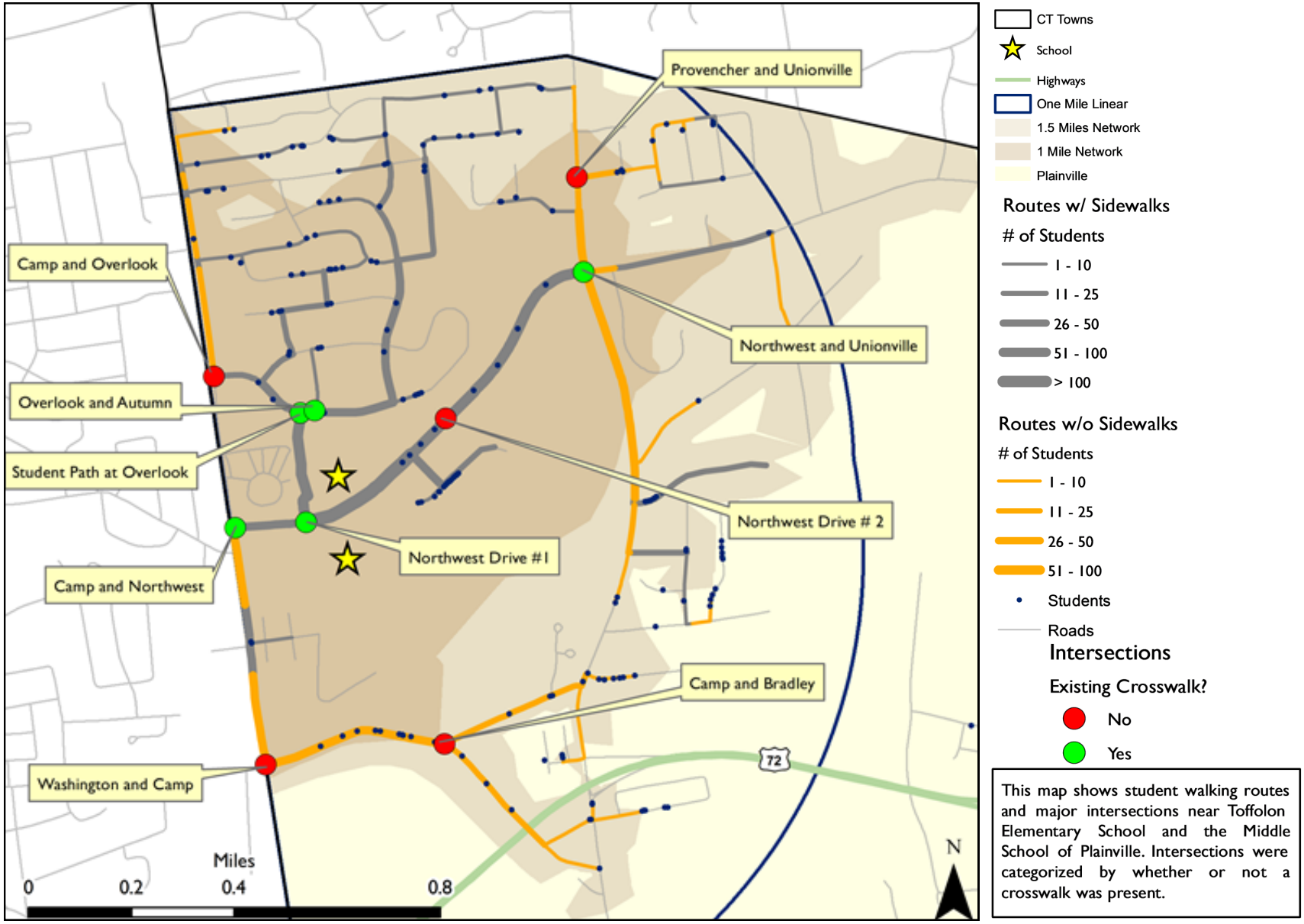
Intersections lacking crosswalks include Provencher Drive and Route 177 to the east of the schools and Camp Street at Bradley and Washington Streets south of the schools. The intersection of Camp Street and Overlook Drive north of the schools also lacks a crosswalk.

Faded crosswalks were also found. The two crosswalks in front of the schools crossing Northwest Drive and the two crosswalks across the school driveways to Toffolon Elementary School are extremely faded. The remaining crosswalks in the area, including those in the neighborhood to the north of the schools, were found to be in good condition.

Several intersections were found to have supports beyond crosswalks, such as pedestrian crossing signals. However, deficiencies in other facilities on the same route may disincline students from using these crossings. For instance, while the intersection of Route 177 and Northwest Drive has a pedestrian signal, the sidewalk terminates on the eastern side of Route 177. Students using the signal to cross Route 177 headed east thus confront a hazardous situation. Similarly, students traveling westbound on the sidewalk on the northern side of Northwest Drive must cross Camp Street. While there is a pedestrian crossing signal at this intersection, crosswalks do not connect to sidewalks. These deficiencies should be addressed to make the area safer for students walking and biking to school.

Toffolon Elementary School crosswalk

Figure 9: Intersection Inventory



This map shows student walking routes and major intersections near Toffolon Elementary School and the Middle School of Plainville. Intersections were categorized by whether or not a crosswalk was present.

Traffic

Sidewalks and marked, signalized crossings are important to pedestrian safety. However, even with these supports, parents may be hesitant to allow their children to walk and bike to school if they believe the route to have high motor vehicle traffic. A perception that vehicles are traveling at excessively high speeds compounds this reluctance. To assess both the volume of traffic and the speed of vehicles traveling past Toffolon Elementary School and the Middle School of Plainville, traffic counters were placed on Northwest Drive from June 28 to June 30, 2011.

The figure on the following page (Figure 11, p. 18) charts the vehicles traveling on Northwest Drive. Over 9,000 vehicles were recorded during this period, with a peak in eastbound traffic from 6:30 AM to 8:00 AM and a westbound peak in the afternoon from 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM. The morning peak corresponds to when students would be traveling to school, while the afternoon peak occurs when students would be concluding after-school activities and walking home.

The counters also logged vehicle speeds. The chart to the right (see Figure 10) shows the number and speed of vehicles traveling past the counters. During the observation period, the majority of vehicles on Northwest Drive traveled at speeds exceeding the posted speed limit: three in five vehicles (58%) were clocked traveling 40 miles per hour or faster, exceeding the posted speed limit of 25 miles per hour in the school zone and 35 miles per hour outside of the zone. These high speeds are a cause for serious concern. (The risk of death to pedestrians in an automobile collision increases exponentially with speed: while approximately 95% of adults hit at 20 MPH survive, only 5% do at 40 MPH. Given children's smaller, more fragile bodies, the risks are even higher for them.) The lack of sufficient pedestrian and cyclist supports in the area further exacerbates these concerns.

Figure 10: Northwest Drive Vehicle Speed

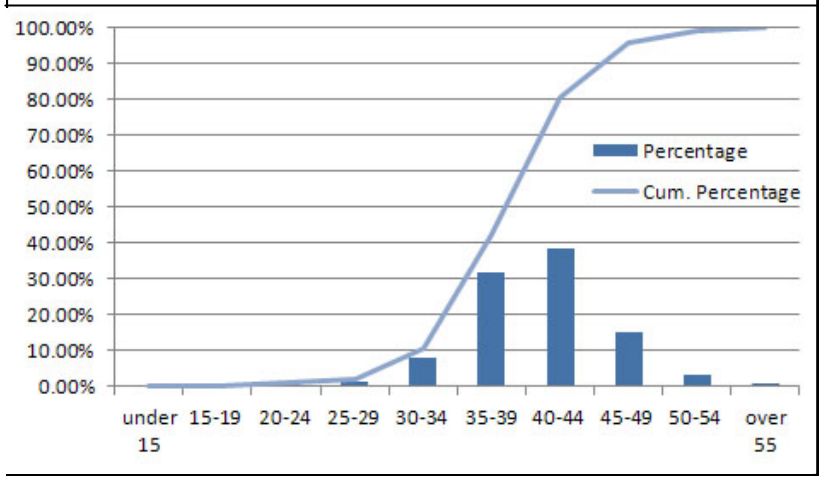
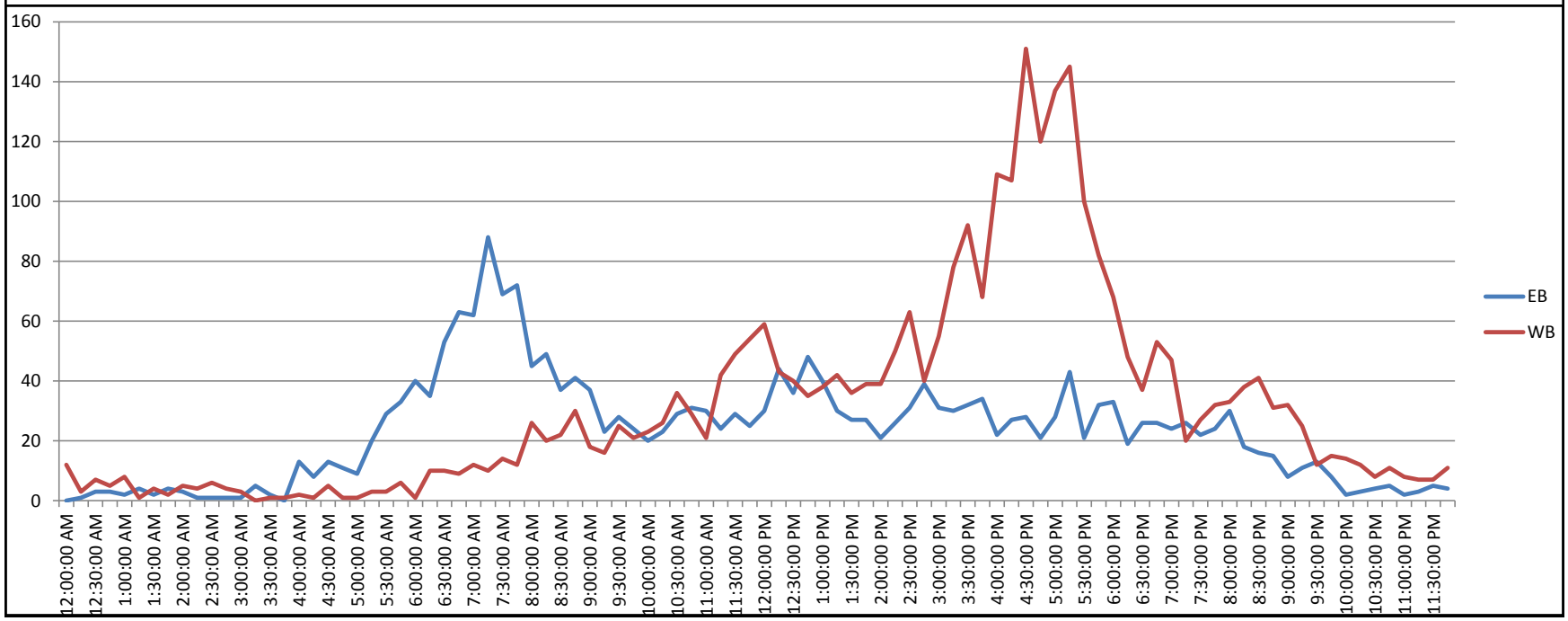


Figure 11: Northwest Drive Vehicle Volume



The Public Input Process

Walk to School Day

Data collection and analysis is important to understanding travel patterns of students. However, it alone does not tell the whole story. To better understand the factors influencing parents' decisions to allow, or alternatively, to disallow, their children to walk or bike to school, input was solicited by gathering feedback following Walk to School Days and through surveys.

Walk to School Days

The Plainville Community Schools held multiple Walk to School Days in the Spring of 2011. The Middle School of Plainville held three Walk to School Days on April 8th and 29th and on May 27th and Toffolon Elementary School held two Walk to School Days on April 29th and May 27th. These events targeted both students who live within walking distance and those who take the bus. Students who typically take the bus were dropped off at designated locations and walked the remaining way to school. They were chaperoned by school faculty members, administrators, school board members, and members of the Healthy Plainville Coalition. The image to the left shows students dropped off at the entrance to the path behind Toffolon Elementary School. Accompanied by an adult, they then walked the remaining way to school.

Two school busses from the middle school participated, for a total of approximately 60 students. All elementary school busses participated, for a total of over 200 students. Many parents and students responded positively to the events. There are plans to hold more walk to school days, with approximately one held per month, and to expand the event to include all school busses.

Parent Survey

Input was also collected through e-mails sent to parents of students at both schools. The e-mail linked to a website which contained a survey. The surveys were distributed in July 2011 and were accessible for one week. Responses were provided by 53 and 44 Middle School and Toffolon Elementary School parents, respectively. (See Appendix B for a copy of the survey.)

Survey description and principal findings

The survey asked parents to supply basic demographic information about their children, including what grade they are in and how far they live from school. Parents were also asked about travel patterns. Questions on travel included how their children currently travel to and from school, the factors which influence their decision to drive their children to school if they drive them, and what changes would increase the likelihood that they would allow their children to walk or bike to school. Parents were given the opportunity to provide additional comments and suggestions.

The survey revealed that most students ride the bus or drive to school. According to the survey, 61.3% of middle school students ride the bus to school while 27.7% are driven. Similar proportions of elementary school students use motorized transportation to reach school: 46.3% ride the bus while 43.0% are driven to school. Only 7.1% of middle and 7.8% of elementary school students walk to school; a mere 3.9% of middle and 2.9% of elementary school students bike to school.

Factors influencing current mode choice

Several factors were cited most by middle school parents as influencing their decision to drive their children to school or have them take the bus. Middle school parents most frequently responded that cars go too fast, there are no sidewalks or the sidewalks are broken, and intersections and crossings are unsafe. They also responded that bad weather and climate, the distance lived from school, not enough other people walking or biking, and too much traffic influenced their decision to drop their children off at school or have them take the bus (see Figure 12, p. 22).

Elementary school parents had similar responses. Many parents replied that cars go too fast, there are not enough other people walking or biking, and there are no sidewalks or the sidewalks are broken. The distance from school, too much traffic, and no or too few crossing guards

were also factors cited by elementary school parents (see Figure 13, p. 23).

Taken together, both middle and elementary school parents identified the speed of cars, the lack of sidewalks or broken sidewalks, and unsafe crossings and intersections as principal obstacles to their children walking and biking. They also cited too much traffic, no or too few crossing guards, and not enough other people walking and biking as obstacles. Many of these parental concerns are supported by the data, which confirmed discontinuous sidewalks, intersections lacking crosswalks, high traffic volumes during arrival and dismissal times, and cars traveling too fast on Northwest Drive.

In terms of bad weather and climate, many parents indicated that the biggest problem is snow-covered sidewalks in the winter months. Although town ordinances mandate homeowners or property owners adjacent to a sidewalk to clear the sidewalk within twenty-four hours of a snowfall, under penalty of fine, they do not specifically state that snow and ice must be removed by 8 AM, when students walk to school. Without consistently clear sidewalks, it is difficult for students to safely walk to school.

Some parents listed other factors that influenced their decision to drive their children to school or have them take the bus. Violence and crime was mentioned by 23.5% of both middle and elementary school parents. Some parents communicated that during the time their children would be traveling to school most people have already left for work. With fewer people in the neighborhood, children are less supervised and perceived as being more vulnerable to fall victim to crime. According to the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data, in 2009 Plainville reported a violent crime rate (violent crimes include murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) of 69.7 compared to 298.7 for Connecticut. While per capita rates are below the state average, such facts may not change parents' perceptions and allay their concerns.

Changes that could increase walking and biking rates

Changes that parents stated would increase the likelihood that their children would walk or bike to school reflect their concerns. For instance, middle school parents responded that they would like to see more people walking and biking, more sidewalks, and safer crossings. They also identified less traffic, more room for their children to ride their bike, and slower vehicle speeds as critical changes that are needed. Elementary school parents had similar responses. They wanted to see more people walking and biking, slower cars, and more sidewalks. Safer crossings and less traffic were also identified as changes that would be needed.

These responses were collated to create a list of changes that would increase the number of parents allowing middle and elementary school students to walk or bike to school. The list included more people walking or biking,

Figure 12: Middle School: Reasons parents drive or have children take the bus

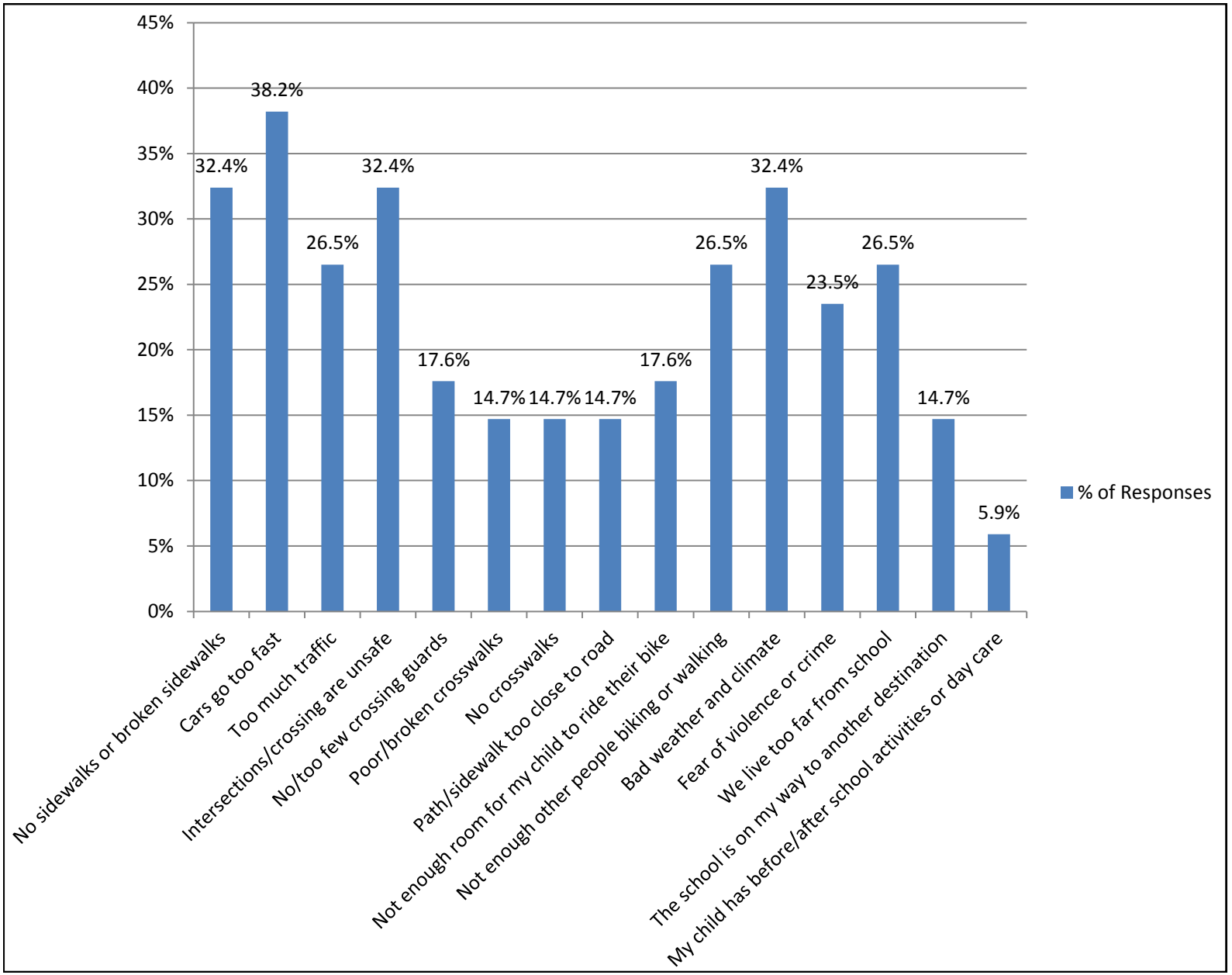
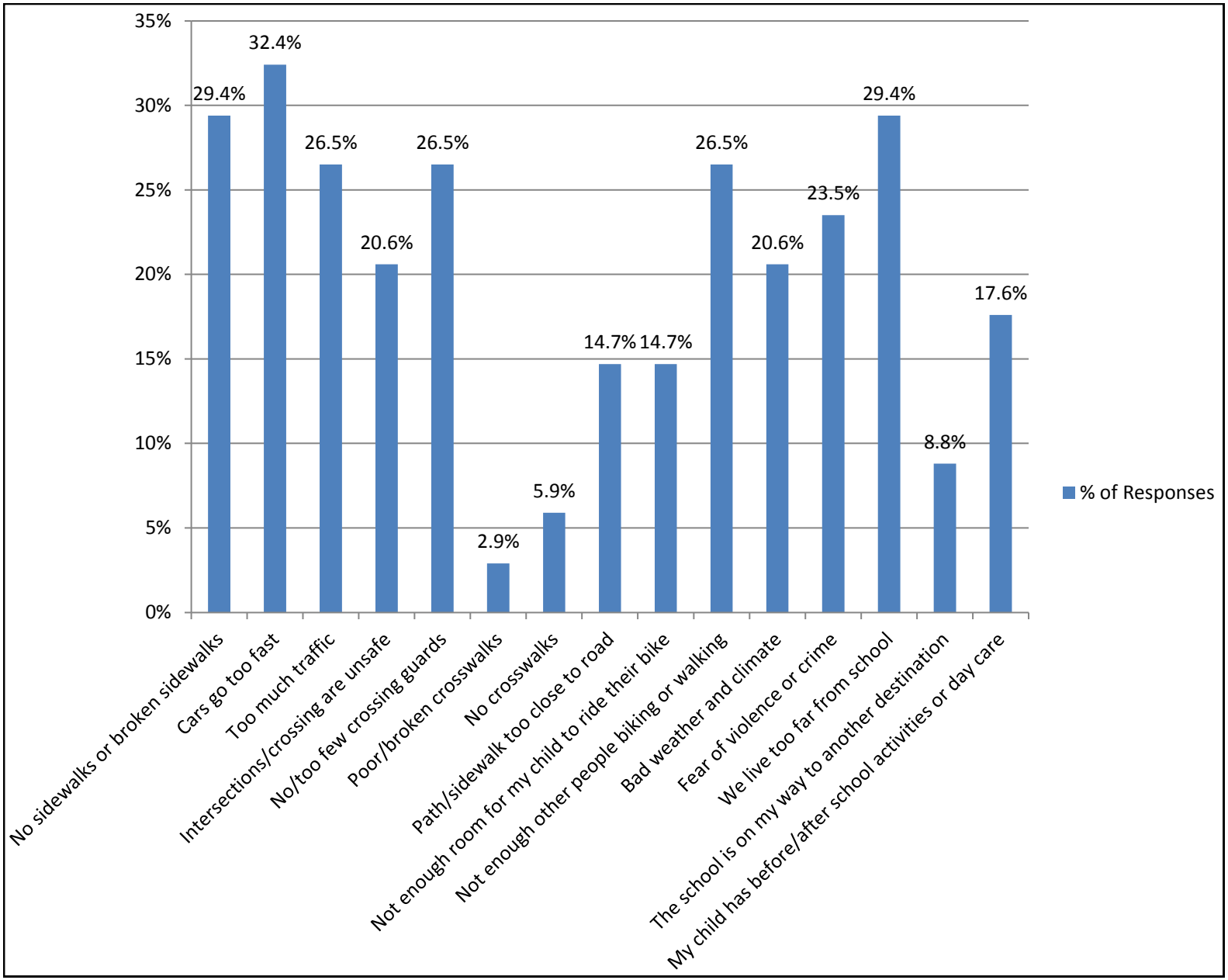


Figure 13: Elementary School: Reasons parents drive or have children take the bus



Parent Comments

"In bad weather my child is driven to school. During this school year, my child did not have a "walking partner", therefore walked less to school. I think there is safety in numbers and do not allow my child to walk alone."

"At 8:30 AM most people in our neighborhood have left for work. I do not feel it's safe for my children to walk to school alone."

"Northwest Drive has a wide safe bike path, however getting from my home to it especially during AM rush hour traffic would be suicide and once past Wheeler Clinic the traffic is aggressive even with two schools on the street and a crossing guard."

"Northwest Drive is in need of stop signs before each of Toffolon schools' entrances and at the intersection of Northwest Drive and Northgate road to stop, slow down traffic and make this a safe school zone. Commuters use this as a by-pass for Route 6 and speed along excessively."

"Camp Street does not have sidewalks so it is not safe to walk or bike to school. Riding or walking on the side of the road is not safe at all considering how fast people drive on Camp Street and Northwest Drive. We need sidewalks badly, as well as stop signs at intervals on Camp Street to slow people down."

"I would love to see more sidewalks! My son would love to ride his bike to school."

more sidewalks, safer crossings, less traffic, slower cars, and more room for children to ride their bike.

Public Meetings

The Safe Routes to School program was also discussed at Pioneering Healthy Plainville meetings held in April, May and September of 2010 (see Appendix C for meeting minutes). During these meetings, the idea to pursue a Safe Routes to School program in Plainville was conceived. Participants agreed that increasing physical activity before, during and after school through initiatives including a Walking School Bus program and improvements to pedestrian infrastructure, was critical to enhance the well-being of students.

These meetings led to the establishment of the Plainville Safe Routes to School Committee. The Committee met once a month beginning in February, laying the groundwork for a Safe Routes to School program. Early action included the planning of the Walk to School Days that took place in the Spring of 2011.

Obstacles to Active Transportation

Following the collection of data through walking audits, site visits, and the public input process, the Plainville Safe Routes to School Committee identified obstacles to active transportation.

Sidewalks and Sidewalk Connectivity

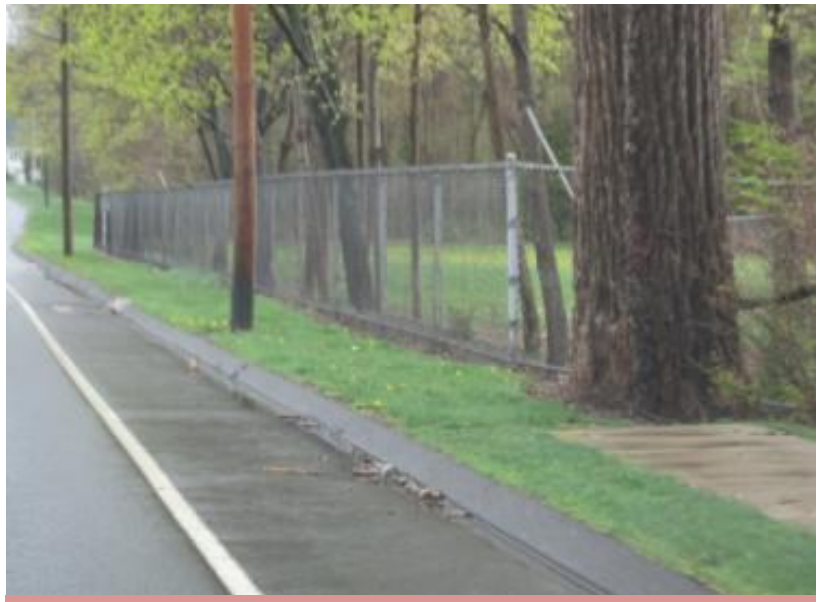
Sidewalks, specifically sidewalk connectivity, was one of the most frequently cited obstacles to active transportation. The current sidewalk network, while extensive and well-connected in some areas, is nonexistent in other areas. Routes lacking sidewalks include:

- Route 177 from Provencher Drive and Farmhill Drive south to the intersection with Northwest Drive.
- The east side of Camp Street from Phelan Street to Overlook Drive.
- The east side of Camp Street from Samuel's Crossing south to Washington Street.

In other areas, sidewalks exist but are poorly connected, with gaps and breaks. This poses a hazard to all pedestrians but has a particularly negative impact on disabled students. Routes which have poor sidewalk connectivity include:

- The east side of Camp Street along Northwest Park, from Samuel's Crossing to Northwest Drive (see image below).
- Northwest Drive across Route 177 (Despite a signalized crosswalk, once students cross Route 177 headed east, there are no sidewalks or other pedestrian facilities; see image on pg. 26).

Given that the lack of sidewalks and poor connectivity was frequently cited as deterring many students from walking and biking to school, improvements should target sidewalk construction in critical areas to increase connectivity. Through such improvements, students living within



Camp Street sidewalk stops at Northwest Park (Source: FHI)

1 mile of school who are currently bussed because of inadequate pedestrian infrastructure, including those who live in neighborhoods off Route 177, will be able to walk to school.

Safety at Intersections and Crossings

Unsafe intersections and unsafe crossings were identified as top parental concerns. An audit of the area supported this finding. Despite a crossing guard program run by the Plainville Police Department and the presence of several crosswalks in the area, many crossings are substandard. These include:

- The two crosswalks across Northwest Drive between Toffolon Elementary School and the Middle School are very faded and poorly visible to motorists.
- The two crosswalks across both driveways to Toffolon Elementary School are faded.
- The intersection of Camp Street and Overlook Drive does not have a crosswalk.
- Provencher Drive crossing Route 177 does not have a crosswalk.

Crosswalks at intersections are not the only factor to be considered when addressing safety concerns. Many parents expressed a concern regarding too few crossing guards in the area. Currently there is only one crossing guard positioned in front of the schools to help students cross Northwest Drive. Aside from this crossing guard,

Faded crosswalk on Northwest Drive (Source: FHI)

Sidewalk stops after crossing Route 177 (Source: FHI)

there are no other crossing guards in the area to help students.

Traffic Speed and Volume

Both elementary school parents and middle school parents indicated that the speed of cars was a factor influencing their decision to drive their children to school or have their children take the bus. Observations of Northwest Drive and data gathered from the traffic counts support this concern. Northwest Drive has a speed limit of 35 miles per hour and a speed limit of 25 miles per hour in the school zone. According to traffic data, approximately 11% of cars counted were traveling at, or under, these speeds. 58% of cars were traveling above 40 miles per hour. Northwest Drive is approximately 36 feet wide with a slight downward slope headed eastbound from Camp Street toward Route 177. This equates to 18-foot wide travel lanes. (Interstate highway lanes are 11-12 feet in comparison.) Taken together with a lack of curves, unobstructed views, and nonexistent traffic calming devices, such broad lanes practically beg motorists to exceed the speed limit.

Traffic volume was also identified as an obstacle to walking and biking. Traffic counts indicate heavy traffic on some road segments in the area. From June 28 to June 30, 2011, 9,361 vehicles traversed the monitored section of Northwest Drive. In the morning, many motorists head east on Northwest Drive to reach Route 177; this peak occurs at the same time as children's journey to school. In the afternoon, the pattern reverses, with motorists heading west towards Bristol. This corresponds to when after-school activities and sports let out. Some of this traffic is attributable to parents dropping off and picking up their children. Enabling more students to walk and bike to school through better safety, infrastructure, and education may eliminate some of these trips and thus reduce traffic by the schools. However, due to the function of Northwest Drive as a commuter route, additional enforcement may be needed.

While Northwest Drive is a concern for parents, surrounding roads were noted to be problematic as well. Route 177, located east of the schools, is a heavily traveled road that serves motorists from the surrounding region. Running north-south, many people take 177 to get to Route 72, which leads to Interstate 84 and Route 9. Washington and Camp Streets, located south and west of the schools, are also busy roads, used by motorists traveling east to Route 177 and west to Bristol. These roads are under study and targeted for congestion mitigation and safety improvements. These upgrades could complement improvements that are part of the Safe Routes to School program.

Too Few People Walking and Biking

A concern of elementary and middle school parents was that too few people walk or bike. This was supported by an audit of the school area during arrival and dismissal times, which revealed few students walk or bike to school. The void of people on streets raised safety concerns. Without fellow walkers or bikers, there is no one to come to children's aid should something happen. As one parent noted, many residents in the neighborhood have already left for work by the time children would walk or bike to school. Fears about crime are not supported by data, which show crime rates in town to be below the state average. Increased supervision and education about street smarts could help alleviate parents' concerns about security. In addition, addressing other obstacles to active transportation, such as sidewalk connectivity and intersection safety, could attenuate this problem by encouraging less security-conscious parents to let their children walk or bike to school, thereby solving the problem of empty streets.

Distance to School

Many parents indicated that the distance between home and school was too great to allow their children to walk or bike to school. 26.5% and 29.4% of middle and elementary school parents, respectively, cited this as an obstacle. While this may be true for some students, 97, or 27% of, elementary, and 45, or 8% of, middle school students live within 1 mile of the schools via the existing street network. An additional 42 middle school students, or 7%, live from 1 mile to 1.5 miles of the school, which according to Board of Education policy, is a walkable distance in the absence of hazards for that age group. Once adequate infrastructure and additional supports are implemented, the distance may seem less of a barrier and more students may be likely to walk and bike.

Weather and Climate

Both middle and elementary school parents voiced concern about the weather, particularly over the winter months. Perhaps recalling the record snowfall this past winter, parents responded that sidewalks were often blanketed in snow and ice. The Town of Plainville requires all sidewalks to be cleared within 24 hours of snowfall. Per ordinance, violators face a fine. Enforcement of this policy would mitigate this obstacle. If desired, the policy could also be revised to stipulate that sidewalks be clear in time for school arrival in the morning.

Action Recommendations

To address the obstacles described above, the Plainville Safe Routes to School Committee considered a multitude of solutions. After careful analysis and consultation, the Committee has selected the following recommendations for improving the conditions around the schools in order to make active transportation a safe and attractive option:

Engineering

Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Crossings

A primary parental concern was the speed of cars. Observations by the Committee and traffic data on Northwest Drive support this concern. To slow cars and improve the condition around the schools to make it safer for all students, the Committee recommends the installation of traffic calming devices and pedestrian facilities on Northwest Drive. The design concept includes the following :

- Install medians on Northwest Drive, one on the eastern edge and the other on the western edge of the school zone (Priority: high)
- Install two raised crosswalks crossing Northwest Drive, one at each driveway to the schools (Priority: high)
- Repair crosswalks across the driveways to Toffolon Elementary School (Priority: high)
- Narrow Northwest Drive in the school zone by bumping out the grass strip on each side of the road in front of the schools (Priority: medium)
- Paint white striping on each travel lane to visually narrow the lanes in areas where bump-outs are not feasible (Priority: high)
- Install additional speed limit and school zone signs (Priority: high)

Improvements to the school zone will slow cars and make crossings shorter and more visible, making the area safer not only for students, but for all pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. Due to the breadth and depth of their benefits, the Committee recommends implementation of all of the

Northwest Drive, looking east

above-listed improvements. (See Figure 14, pg. 31 of Northwest Drive in its current condition and Figure 15, pgs. 32-33 of the proposed redesign.)

Install Sidewalks

A lack of sidewalks and poor sidewalk connectivity were identified as obstacles to active transportation. There are five areas identified by the Committee that lack sidewalks:

- Camp Street, extending from Phelan Street to Overlook Drive (Priority: low)
- Camp Street, from the intersection with Northwest Drive to Samuel's Crossing (Priority: low)
- Camp Street, extending from Samuel's Crossing south to the intersection with Washington Street and eastbound to Bradley Street out to Route 177 (Priority: low)
- Route 177, from Provencher Drive and Farmhill Drive south to the intersection of Route 177 with Northwest Drive (Priority: medium)
- Northwest Drive, from the intersection with Route 177 eastbound to connect to the multi-use trail (Priority: high)

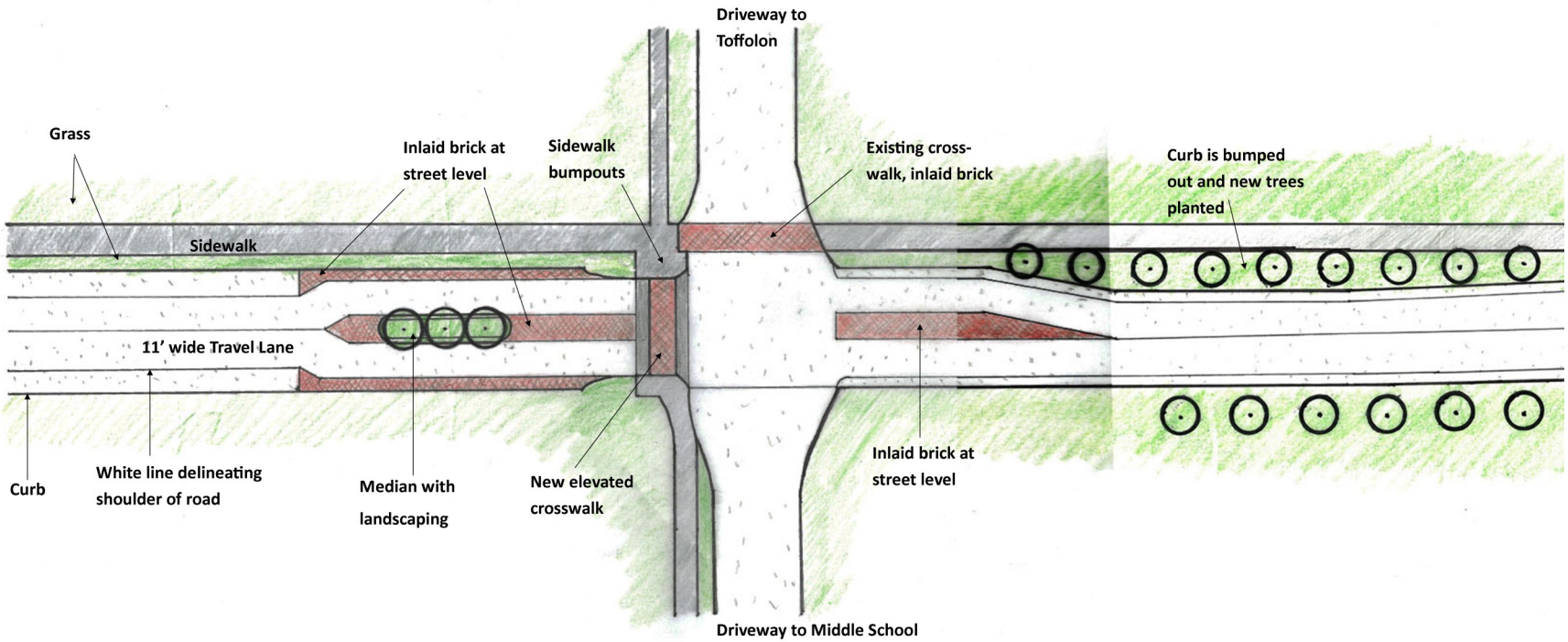
The Committee evaluated each area by considering which route would receive the highest use by students if sidewalks were installed; they also considered the likelihood that the route would result in an increase in active transportation when additional factors, such as traffic volume and speed on the adjacent road, were taken into account. Following careful analysis and in-depth discussion, it was determined that sidewalk installation in some areas would better serve students than sidewalk construction in other areas.

First, it was found that sidewalks along Camp Street from Phelan Street to Overlook Drive would not get much use. Despite the presence of school-age children in this area, given the extensive network of sidewalks on the neighborhood streets north of the schools and the concerns parents voiced about traffic volumes and speeds, the Committee concluded that parents would be more likely to send their children along these streets rather than on Camp Street. Even with sidewalks, given the heavy traffic on Camp Street, parents would likely continue to perceive it as significantly less safe than the quiet neighborhood streets to the east (which already boast an extensive sidewalk network). Due to the lack of demonstrable benefit, sidewalk installation along this route was given a low priority.

The Committee also examined sidewalk installation on Camp Street from the intersection with Northwest Drive to Samuel's Crossing. Based on audit and on survey results, the Committee determined that students approaching from the south would likely take the shortest route to school, either through Northwest Park or using the path

Figure 14: Northwest Drive School Zone

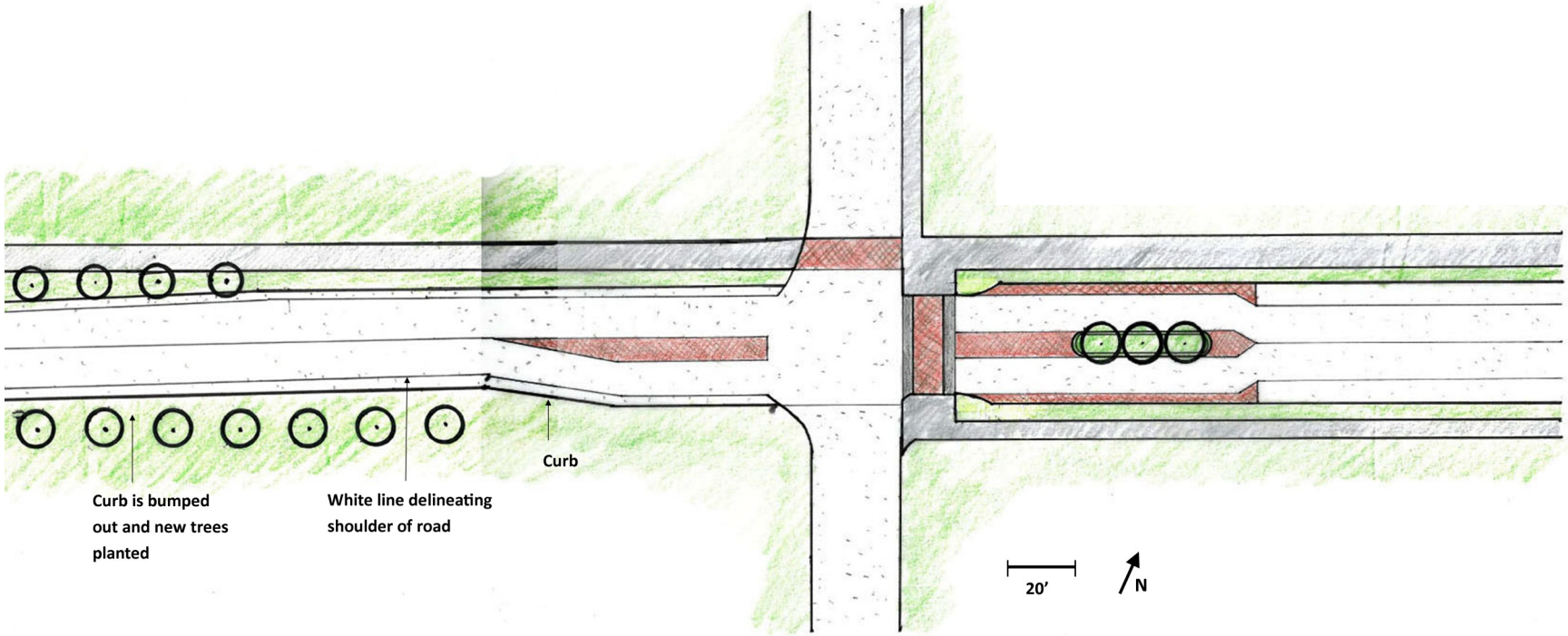
Figure 15: Northwest Drive Redesign Concept



slated to connect Samuel's Crossing with the Middle School of Plainville. (This path will be installed in the near future.) Therefore a sidewalk from Samuel's Crossing extending north to Northwest Drive would receive little use and was given a low priority.

Next the proposal to install sidewalks along Camp Street from the intersection with Washington Street extending to Bradley Street and out to Route 177 was examined. With parents citing traffic as a concern, the traffic volume and speed on these roads exceeds what the Committee deemed to be an acceptable level at which parents would be comfortable allowing their children to walk or bike, even if there were sidewalks. In addition, there are ongoing projects to address traffic in this area, including a proposal to install one or more roundabouts and attendant supports. As such, the Safe Routes to School program will benefit from improvements in this area, and it is unnecessary to target this area for improvements within the scope of this plan.

Based on the analysis of all potential sidewalk projects, the Committee determined that the two remaining pro-



posals, sidewalk construction along Northwest Drive from Route 177 to the multi-use trail and along 177 from Provencher Drive south to Northwest Drive, are the highest priorities. These projects would deliver the greatest benefit. Both would allow students who live east of Route 177 to walk or bike to school, using the newly constructed signalized crosswalk at the intersection of Route 177 and Northwest Drive. From there, students could follow the existing sidewalks on Northwest Drive to either school. The projects will also address the issue of sidewalk connectivity by extending the sidewalk on Northwest Drive, which terminates on the eastern side of 177 northward and eastward, connecting it with residential sidewalks and the town's multi-use trail.

Improve Path Behind Toffolon Elementary School

The path behind Toffolon Elementary School provides a convenient connection from neighborhoods north of the schools to the schools. However given partly overgrown vegetation and a lack of visibility, parents are hesitant to let their children use the path. With the potential for approximately 97 students to travel along this path, improvements to the path would be very beneficial in sup-

porting safe, active transportation. Recommended changes to the path include:

- Install cameras on the path that will be monitored during arrival and dismissal times (Priority: high)
- Clear vegetation and limb trees to establish clear sight lines (Priority: high)

Install Signs and Active Transportation Facilities

Given that some areas currently have extensive sidewalk networks and crosswalks, an increase in walking and biking could be facilitated through the addition of signs marking the safest route to school along these routes. Furthermore, the installation of additional facilities would help increase the number of students participating in active transportation. Recommendations include:

- Install signs marking Safe Route to School, including a sign that marks the entrance to the path behind Toffolon Elementary School (Priority: high)
- Install additional bicycle racks at Toffolon Elementary as need permits (Priority: low)

Enforcement

Increase Supervision at Crossings

Parents identified unsafe intersections and crossings as concerns and factors that need to be addressed in order to increase the likelihood that they would allow their children to walk or bike to school. To increase safety at intersections, recommendations include:

- Evaluate current crossing guard program to assess the placement of crossing guards in order to maximize their effectiveness (Priority: high)
- Organize a group of parent volunteers to assist with crossing (Priority: high)

Speed Enforcement

To be most effective, the traffic calming solutions that are recommended to slow traffic should be combined with increased enforcement. Therefore the Committee recommends:

- Increase police patrol in the school zone during arrival and dismissal times (Priority: high)

Education

Student and Community Outreach

Educating both students and parents about safe, active transportation is a critical component of the Safe Routes to School program. Recommendations include:

- Teach pedestrian safety to students (Priority: high)
- Distribute pamphlet detailing the benefits of walking and biking (Priority: high)

- Have a bike rodeo and helmet drive to teach students bicycle safety (Priority: high)

Encouragement

Events and Programs

The implementation of targeted events and programs will help to create excitement surrounding active transportation and also ensure the sustained success of the program. Recommendations include:

- Continue Walk to School Days and expand to once a month (Priority: high)
- Start a Walking School Bus program (Priority: medium)
- Develop and implement a remote drop-off and walk system for bus riders (Priority: low)
- Create maps of recommended route to school and distribute to students. A larger version of the map may also be placed in the foyer of both schools (Priority: high)

Policies

To ensure that active transportation is an integral component of the schools' travel plan and that all students are aware of proper walking and biking procedures, it is important that there are explicit policies that support walking and biking. Students should also be informed of appropriate places to bike and walk on school grounds. To achieve this, the Committee recommends:

- Amend transportation policy or adopt new policy to clearly outline walking and biking procedures both to school and on school grounds (Priority: high)

Evaluation Plan

Strategy	Explanation	Priority	Time Frame	Students Affected	Cost	Partners	Change Expected	What will be measured	How/when it will be measured
Engineering									
Install traffic calming devices/Northwest Drive Redesign	Two medians and raised crosswalks will be installed on Northwest Drive, the road will be narrowed and new crosswalks will be installed across the driveways to Toffolon	High	Short Term	100%	TBD	Town Engineer, Town Planner, Town DPW	Cars will travel at slower speeds and more students will cross the street safely at these points	Speed of cars and the number of students crossing Northwest Drive	Traffic counters will be placed on Northwest Drive and a count of pedestrians using the crossing will be conducted after the redesign is complete
Install sidewalk on Northwest Drive	A sidewalk will be constructed along Northwest Drive to connect Route 177 to the multi-use trail to the east	High	Short Term	16+	TBD	Town Engineer, Town Planner, Town DPW	More students will walk and bike from the neighborhoods to the east of the schools	Number of students walking and biking along Northwest Drive	Count of pedestrians and bicyclists will be conducted after the sidewalk is installed
Improve path behind Toffolon Elementary School	Cameras will be installed on the path and vegetation will be trimmed to increase visibility	Medium	Medium Term	97+	TBD	Town DPW, School Administration	More students will use the path to travel to school from neighborhoods north of the schools	Number of students traveling on the path	Count of path users following the improvements
Post signs marking safe routes	Install signs showing the safest routes to school. One sign marking the path behind Toffolon will also be installed	Medium	Short Term	100% of students within walking distance	TBD	Town DPW	More students will bike and walk to school along the designated routes	Number of students walking and biking to school	Count of students using active transportation after the signs are installed
Install sidewalk on Route 177	A sidewalk will be constructed along Route 177 from Provencher Drive to the intersection with Northwest Drive	Low	Long Term	26+	TBD	Town Engineer, Town Planner Town DPW	More students will walk and bike from the neighborhoods adjacent to Route 177	Number of students walking and biking along this route	Count of pedestrians and bicyclists at the intersection of Northwest Drive and Route 177 after the sidewalk is installed
Install sidewalk on Camp Street	Sidewalks will be installed on Camp Street, from Phelan Street to Overlook drive, from the intersection of Northwest Drive to Samuel's Crossing and from Samuel's Crossing south	Low	Long Term	46+	TBD	Town Engineer, Town Planner, Town DPW	More students will walk and bike from the neighborhoods west and southwest of the schools	Number of students walking and biking along these routes	Count of pedestrians and bicyclists will be conducted after the sidewalk is installed
Additional bicycle racks	Install additional bicycle rack at Toffolon Elementary School	Low	Long Term	100% of students within walking distance	In-kind	Plainville DPW	More students will bike to school	Number of bicycles parked at the rack	Count number of bicycles parked at the rack after installation
Speed limit/ School zone signs	Install signs to enforce the speed limit in the school zone on Northwest Drive	High	Short Term	100%	TBD	Plainville DPW	Fewer drivers will speed on Northwest Drive	Count of vehicles and speed	Traffic counters will be placed on Northwest Drive following the installation of the signs

Strategy	Explanation	Priority	Time Frame	Students Affected	Cost	Partners	Change Expected	What will be measured	How/when it will be measured
Enforcement									
Increase the number of crossing guards	Organize a group of parents who would volunteer to help students cross the street	High	Short Term	100% of students within walking distance	Minimal	SRTS Committee	More students will walk and bike to school because crossings will be safer	Number of volunteers helping students cross and the number of students walking and biking to school	Count of students walking and biking to school after implementation of additional crossing guards
Examine current crossing guard program	Re-examine the current location of crossing guards to see how effectiveness can be improved	Medium	Medium Term	100% of students within walking distance	Minimal	SRTS Committee, Plainville PD	Re-position or add crossing guards to assist students cross the street	The location and/or number of crossing guards	Map the location of crossing guards
Speed Enforcement	Increase police patrol in the school zone during arrival and dismissal times to condition motorists to drive the speed limit	Low	Short Term	100%	TBD	Plainville PD	Fewer cars will speed through the area and more parents will be likely to let their children walk or bike to school	Assess patrol times along Northwest Drive and surrounding roads	Collect information from Plainville Police about speed enforcement, distribute survey to parents regarding changes in travel for children following the increase in patrols

Strategy	Explanation	Priority	Time Frame	Students Affected	Cost	Partners	Change Expected	What will be measured	How/when it will be measured
Education									
Teach pedestrian safety	Students will be taught pedestrian safety and how to seek safety in response to dangerous situations	High	Short Term	100%	Minimal	Plainville PD, SRTS Committee, School Administration	Equipped with the proper skills, more children will walk to school	Number of students walking to school	Count number of students walking to school and distribute travel survey following the implementation of the programs
Benefits of active transportation pamphlet	Develop and distribute a pamphlet to be included in school mailings outlining the benefits of walking and biking	High	Short Term	100%	Minimal	SRTS Committee, School Administration	More children will walk and bike to school and parents will be more supportive of such activities	Number of students walking and biking to school	Count number of students walking and biking to school and distribute travel survey following the implementation of the improvements
Bike rodeo and helmet drive	Hold a bike rodeo and helmet drive to educate students about bike safety	High	Short Term	100%	Minimal	Plainville Police Department, Bicycle Alliance	More children will bike to school	Number of students biking to school	Count number of students biking to school following the bike rodeo

Evaluation Plan Continued

Strategy	Explanation	Priority	Time Frame	Students Affected	Cost	Partners	Change Expected	What will be measured	How/when it will be measured
Encouragement									
Walk to School Days	Continue Walk to School Days and expand to once a month	High	Ongoing	100% of students within walking distance	Minimal	SRTS Committee, School Administration	More children will walk to school on the designated days	The number of children walking to school	Count of students who participated in the event
Walking School Bus	Develop and implement a Walking School Bus program	Medium	Medium Term	100% of students within walking distance	Minimal	SRTS Committee, School Administration	Parents will be more likely to allow their children to walk to school other children are walking	Number of students participating in the Walking School Bus	Count number of walking school busses and the number of students who participate in the program
Remote Drop-off and Walk System	Develop and implement a program where school busses drop off bus riders who then walk the remaining way to school	Low	Long Term	100% of bus riders	Minimal	SRTS Committee, School Administration	More students will walk to school	Number of busses participating in the program and the number of students on each bus	Count number of busses and the number of students who are a part of the program
Map of walking and biking routes	Distribute map of safe routes to walk and bike to school to parents and students via school mailings. Map will also be posted in the entrance to the schools	High	Short Term	100%	Cost of postage	CCRPA, School Administration	With more parents and students informed of the safest routes, more students will walk or bike to school	Number of maps distributed and the number of students walking or biking to school	Count number of students walking or biking to school
Implement or amend transportation policies	Clarify policies regarding biking and walking to school as part of the Board of Education's Transportation Policy	High	Medium Term	100%	None	School Administration, Board of Education	More students will be likely to walk or bike to school if the policies regarding active transportation are clarified	Number of students walking or biking to school	Count number of students walking/biking and compare to the number getting dropped off

Plan Partners

The Plainville Safe Routes to School Committee is joined by members of the Plainville community who are committed to building a safe walking and biking environment and promoting both a healthier student body and environment.

Our Safe Routes to School Master Plan has been endorsed by the following representatives:

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Appendix A: School Transportation Policies

Section **(3000) Business**

Policy Name Transportation

Policy Number 3541

Date Approved 10/10/1989

Date Revised 10/12/2004

Date Revised

Date Revised

Date Revised

Policy The Board of Education will provide transportation for students under provisions of state law and regulations. The Superintendent of Schools shall administer the operation so as to:
1. provide for maximum safety of students.
2. supplement and reinforce desirable student behavior patterns.
3. assist students with mobility impairments or special needs appropriately.
4. enrich the instructional program through carefully planned field trips as recommended by the staff
Parents may be reimbursed for transportation of eligible students whenever such practice is more economical or convenient.
Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
10-220 Duties of Boards of Education.
10-220c Transportation of children over private roads
10-186 Duties of local and regional Boards of Education
14-275a Use of standard school bus required, when.
14-275b Transportation of mobility impaired students.
14-275c Regulations regarding school busses and motor vehicles used to transport special education students.

Section **(3000) Business**

Policy Name REGULATION - Transportation

Policy Number 3541 REG

Date Approved 10/10/1989

Date Revised 2/14/2005

Date Revised 11/30/07

Date Revised

Date Revised

Policy **Transportation**

The Board of Education will, in a manner consistent with Section 10-186 of the Connecticut General Statutes, furnish by transportation or otherwise, school accommodations so that each child over five and under twenty-one years of age who resides within the jurisdiction of the Board and is not a graduate of high school or vocational school (or who is not otherwise legally excluded from school) may attend the public schools maintained by the board pursuant to Section 10-220 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

1. Definitions

A. "School transportation" means the procedure, program or fully effective and implemented plan by which a pupil is conveyed, at public expense, whether by use of publicly owned equipment or by contract to or from his/her residence to or from the school in which he/she is enrolled by the Board.

B. "Walking distance" means the linear measure of a prescribed or authorized pedestrian route between the pupil's

residence and his/her school from a point at the curb or edge of a public road or highway nearest the pupil's residence to the nearest allowable access of the school or the bus pickup area; or the route from the point on the public thoroughfare nearest the residence to the school bus (or vehicle) embarkation point (bus stop) established by the Board.

C. "One mile walking distance" means a reasonable measurement of a route to be traversed extending from the point of measurement at least 5,280 feet.

D. "Grade K" means kindergarten, or a school program appropriate to a beginning student under age six.

E. "Raised walk area" means (1) a sidewalk or (2) a portion of the right of way at least three feet wide, usually parallel to the traffic lanes, which may be paved or unpaved, distinguished by some elevation above the street pavement level and marked by curbing, drainage ditch, grass area, fencing, apart from and independent of any white line safety markings along the street pavement.

F. "Walking route," means the most direct route which the child would normally be expected to travel between his/her residence and the school to which he/she is assigned by the Board.

G. "Hazard" means (1) exposure to molestation considered morally degrading or physically harmful, or (2) an unsafe thing or condition or a possible source of peril, danger, duress, or difficulty presenting a problem the solution of which is beyond the ordinary capability of a child of a given age or attainment or including specifically the following:

(1) A walking route along a street or road having an adjacent or parallel raised walk area is a hazard where any of the following conditions exist along said walking route:
(a) Speed limits for motor vehicles are in excess of forty miles per hour and there are no pedestrian crossing lights or crossing guards or other safety provisions at points where students must cross said street or road in going to and from school;
(b) The usual or frequent presence of any nuisance, such as open manholes or construction; snow plowed or piled on the raised walk area making such areas unusable; loading zones where entrances and exist where cars are crossing raised walk areas at speeds in excess of five (5) miles per hour, and the like, including such nuisance which is dangerous or attractive to normal children;
(c) For students under age ten, or enrolled in grade K through 3, absence of pedestrian crossing light, or crossing guard where three or more streets intersect, and at a street crossing where there are no stop signs or crossing guards and the traffic count during times that pupils are walking to or from school exceeds sixty vehicles per hour at the intersection.
(d) For students over age ten, or enrolled in grades 4 through 12, absence of a traffic light, or stop sign, or crossing guard at street crossings where three or more streets intersect, and have an average traffic count which exceed 120 vehicles per hour during the time that children are walking to and from school.

(2) Any street, road, or highway which has no sidewalks or raised walk areas shall be deemed unduly hazardous for students enrolled in grades K through 8, unless all of the following conditions are met:
(a) There exists no line-of-site obstruction caused by a hill, curve, structure, outcropping, land form, planting, snow bank, or other obscuring object or structure which may be

safely negotiated by vehicles only at speeds under fifteen miles per hour.
(b) The line-of-sight visibility together with posted speed limits permit vehicular braking/stopping distances in accordance with the Connecticut Drivers Manual.
(c) Man-made hazards including attractive nuisances are absent.
(d) The roadway available to vehicles, when plowed free of snow accumulation, has a minimum width of twenty (20) feet.

(3) Any walkway or path in an area adjacent to, and parallel to railroad tracks shall be considered a hazard unless suitable physical barriers along the walking routes are present, and fixed between the tracks and the walking route (such as guard railings). Tracks that carry moving trains during hours that students are walking to or from school will be deemed hazardous unless the following conditions exist:
(a) A crossing guard is present; or,
(b) An automatic control bar is present at crossings used by children under age ten, or a bar, or red flashing signal light is operational when the crossing is used for students over ten years of age.

(4) A lake, stream, culvert or waterway will be deemed a hazard in the absence of a fence or other suitable barrier fixed between the walking route and the water.

(5) Any street, road, walkway or path designed as a walking route for school students which passes through an area which has a history of aggressive acts or molestation resulting in actual or threatened physical harm, or moral degradation, during the hours when students ordinarily walk to and from school.

(6) A situation shall be considered hazardous wherein students under the age of twelve, or enrolled in a grade kindergarten through grade six, are required to walk to or from school or to or from a bus stop at any time prior to one-half hour before sunrise or after one-half hour after sunset.

2. Duties of the Superintendent
It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent of Schools or designee to manage and supervise the school transportation service and, in connection therewith, to do the following:

A. Determine eligibility for school transportation in accordance with these guidelines and Section 10-186 of the General Statutes.

B. Establish school transportation routes and designate locations for pickup points (bus stops).

C. Develop, circulate and enforce codes of behavior for those children who are transported to and from school via school transportation.

D. Develop procedures for responding to requests pertaining to matters of school transportation or other school accommodations.

E. Give due consideration to requests for extension of school transportation service.

F. Perform all other duties and responsibilities related to the furnishing of school accommodations by school transporta-

tion or otherwise in a manner consistent with Section 10-186 of the Connecticut General Statutes or these guidelines.

3. Eligibility for School Transportation
Students will be eligible for school transportation if one or more of the following criteria is present:

A. The walking distance for the student is in excess of the guidelines established by the Board which shall not exceed the following maximum distances:

(1) For students enrolled in grades K through 3, up to one (1) mile;

(2) For students enrolled in the equivalent of grades 4 through 8, at middle schools or junior high school, up to one and one-half (1 ½) miles; and,

(3) For students enrolled in grades 9 through 12, up to one and one-half miles through age 15; ages 16 and over, two (2) miles.

B. The walking route does not exceed the limits set forth in paragraph (A), but presents a hazard; and the hazard is not eliminated by and abated by the Board.
C. The student has a mobility impairment, is developmentally delayed or a preschool student.

Reasonable transportation or prescribed walking routes or the sum of both shall not exceed one hour each way from home to school or returning.

4. Eligibility for Out-of-town Transportation

A. Any resident of the school district under twenty-one years of age who is not a high school or vocational school graduate and who is attending an area state vocational school shall be eligible for transportation.
B. A student who is placed by a Planning and Placement Team for Special Education reasons in either a public or private educational institution out-of-town shall be provided transportation as required by law.

5. Appeals

Any parent, guardian, student at majority, or any agent or officer whose duty it is to compel the observance of the laws concerning attendance at school may appeal any administrative decision concerning school transportation in the following manner:
A. Discuss the matter with the principal of the school to which the student is assigned.
B. If no resolution is reached under (A) above, discuss the matter with the coordinator of transportation or designee.
C. If no resolution is reached under (A & B) the coordinator of transportation will encourage parent(s) and/or guardian(s) to put a request in writing c/o Town Safety Committee, One Central Square, Plainville, CT 06062.
D. If no resolution is reached under (C) above, discuss the matter with the Superintendent of Schools.
E. If no resolution is reached under (D) above, the parent, guardian, student at majority or agent or officer will be informed of the right to a hearing before the Board of Education.
Any parent, guardian, student at majority, or officer whose duty it is to compel the observance of the laws concerning attendance at school, who believes that the Superintendent, or

his/her designee, is not furnishing school accommodations, by transportation or otherwise, to himself or herself or to his/her child in a manner consistent with the laws of the State of Connecticut or these regulations may, in writing, request a hearing before the Board to show the Board the manner in which the superintendent has so failed to furnish such accommodations. The Board shall hold a hearing within ten (10) days following receipt of such request.

The hearing before the Board will be in compliance with the provisions of Sections 4-176 to 4-180a and 4-181 inclusive of the Connecticut General Statutes.
A stenographic record or tape recording shall be made of such hearing. The Board shall make finding within 10 days of the hearing.

6. Routes and Services

Regard for the safety of students is a basic element of these regulations. Transportation is provided for the following students:

A. Elementary students living one mile or more from school

B. Middle school students living one and one-half miles from school.

C. Senior high school students under age sixteen living one and one-half miles from school.

D. Senior high school students sixteen years of age and over living distances from school of over two miles. Exceptional cases are to be brought to the attention of the Board.

E. The Superintendent is empowered to provide transportation for children who live in areas that are hazardous as far as walking to and from school is concerned. The local safety committee has identified these areas.

F. Exception to the above limits shall be made in the case of students with mobility impairments presenting a certificate from a registered physician.

G. Students shall walk to the designated bus stop up to the following maximum distances:

(1) Elementary - 1 mile
(2) Middle School - 1.5 miles
(3) High School - 2 miles age 16 and over; 1.5 miles under age 16

Bus stops may be located at more frequent intervals to reduce student congestion at the stops, or for other reasons of safety as determined by the Board.
School transportation services are provided exclusively for the benefit and safety of the student population, and are to be used only in support of programs authorized by and under the auspices of the school board.
Children may ride busses other than their own only at the convenience of the school district in accordance with bus safety regulations. A written request must be submitted by the parent to the principal of the school for his/her official approval each time a child is to take a bus other than his/her regular one.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-76d re transportation for special education program services

10-97 Transportation to vocational schools
10-186 Duties of local and regional boards of education re school attendance. Hearings. Appeals to state Board. Establishment of hearing board
10-220 Duties of Boards of Education
10-220c Transportation of children over private roads. Immunity from liability
10-273a Reimbursement for transportation to and from elementary and secondary schools
10-280a Transportation for pupils in nonprofit private schools within school district
10-281 Transportation for pupil in nonprofit private schools within school district
Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes (continued)
14-275a Use of standard school bus required, when
124-275b Transportation of mobility impaired students
14-280 Letters and signals to be concealed when not used in transporting children. Signs on other vehicles.

Section **(3000) Business**

Policy Name Routes and Services

Policy Number 3541.3

Date Approved 10/10/1989

Date Revised 10/12/2004

Date Revised

Date Revised

Date Revised

Policy Routes and Services

The Superintendent shall direct the study of bus routes in order to provide the safest, shortest routes, which will get all students to school in the most economical way. Routes shall be arranged in such a way as to equalize, as nearly as possible, the length of routes and busloads and to provide for the full use of busses. Arrangements shall provide each student transportation to school within the prescribed time limits. As a guideline, bus routes shall begin no earlier than 45 minutes before school opens and students shall not be in transit from school more than 45 minutes.

Bus routes shall not overlap unless absolutely necessary. When more than one bus travels on an arterial highway, each bus shall be assigned a certain portion of the route and all children within this section shall ride the bus to

which they are assigned. Only one bus shall cover one particular road unless overloading occurs.

Three copies of each official route shall be made prior to the opening of school. One copy shall be sent to the driver and one to the building administrator of the school. The third copy shall be kept on file in the Director of Finance and Operation's office. The official bus route shall not be extended or changed until such proposed change has been checked to determine whether it meets all rules and regulations pertaining to safety, efficiency and economy.

Busses shall not go off the main bus route to pick up children unless the distance is one-half mile or more. Students shall not be allowed off the bus until they reach their approved destination.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-97 Transportation to Vocational Schools

10-186 Duties of local and regional Boards of Education re school attendance

10-220 Duties of Boards of Education

10-220c Transportation of children over private roads

10-233a and 10-233c Suspension of pupils

Section (3000) Business

Policy Name Routes and Services

Policy Number 3541.3

Date Approved 10/10/1989

Date Revised 10/12/2004

Date Revised

Date Revised

Date Revised

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Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-97 Transportation to Vocational Schools

10-186 Duties of local and regional Boards of Education re school attendance

10-220 Duties of Boards of Education

10-220c Transportation of children over private roads

Section (3000) Business

Policy Name REGULATION Routes and Services (Transportation)

Policy Number 3541.3 REG

Date Approved 10/10/89

Date Revised 12/13/04

Date Revised 11/30/07

Date Revised

Date Revised

Policy Routes and Services (Transportation)

Mileages have been established according to studies made by the Police Department using police cruisers to clock the proper distances. The following is a list of streets, by school, from which pupils will be transported either by reason of distance or hazard.

1. Linden Street School

Distance: Pickney Ave., Sunset, Field, Paul, Gilberte, Spring St., East St., south of intersection of East, and Shuttlemeadow and adjoining streets.

Hazard: All Grades: Streets on west side of Whiting (odd numbers), all streets including and adjoining Ledge, White Oak and Woodford Ave., Ext.

Hazard: Kindergarten: Whiting (even 120-150) East St.

(122-270) all streets including and adjoining Arcadia, Tomlinson, Dewey and K-5: East side of Arcadia Avenue.

2. Wheeler School

Distance: New Britain Ave. (156 up), Colonial Ct., Metacomet and adjoining streets, Norton Place, Whiting (#83 & up), all streets including and adjoining Whiting and East Street from Tomlinson Ave. south.
Hazard: All Grades: Cassidy Dr., Cleveland St., Cleveland St. Ext. Cooke ST, odd 1-69, 301 up, even 2-244, 406 up, Farmington Ave, even 2-62, odd 1-149, 355 up, even 346 up, Hardwood Dr. Lewis St., Maiden Ln. Milo Rd., Norton Pl. Ext, Roberts St., Ext, Usher Ave, Woodside Ln.
Hazard: Kindergarten only: Reliance Rd., Betsey Rd., Raffi Dr.

3. Toffolon School

Distance: Camp St., (0-260), Florence, Maxine, Phelan, Kari, Shirley, Schenone, Diana, Crestwood, Fleetwood (0-23), Bernice, Unionville Ave. and adjoining streets, Johnson Avenue, Perron Rd., Dickman, Don, Dave, Jude, Cody, Bradley, King, Bruce, Corban, Day, Helen, Young, Franklin, North Washington, Austin Place, Forestville Ave., Bohemia and adjoining streets.
Hazard: K-3 only, Rosewood Dr #4-9, Schenone CT

4. Middle School

Distance: All ride except certain portions of upper Camp Street and the following: Autumn Ln., Beechwood Rd., Bel-Aire Dr., Bernice Ct., Crestwood Dr., Diana Dr., Fleetwood Dr., Florence Ln., Glenwood Dr., Glenwood Pl., Hilltop Rd., Kari Dr., Maxine Rd., Murzen Ln., Phelan St., Overlook Ave., Peach Orchard Hill, Rosewood Dr., Schenone Ct., Shirley Ct., Timber Hill Rd., Timber Ln.

5. Senior High School

Distance: All ages: North Washington St and all adjoining streets, Perron Rd., Johnson Ave., Unionville Ave. and all adjoining streets, Camp St., and all adjoining streets, Redstone Hill, Skyline Dr., and Hollyberry Lane.
Hazard: All Ages: Farmington Ave, Cassidy Dr., Cooke St., Pinnacle Acres, Reliance Rd., New Britain Ave., Metacomet Rd., Ledge Rd., White Oak Ave. and adjoining streets, South Washington St., South of Prior Ave., and all adjoining streets; Forestville Ave., #9-up. Distance: Under age sixteen (1 ½ miles): Bohemia St., (1-79) (232-304), West Main St., Hughes St., Wilson St., Beckwith Dr., Prentice St., (20 up).

Parents Walkability and Bikeability Survey

Questions about the school routes for your children

1. a. What grade is your child in? circle 6 7 8
2. b. What is your address?* _____

   *this data will only be used for informational purposes for the Safe Routes to School Program

3. Is the child for whom you are filling this out male or female? circle male female

4. How many children do you have in Kindergarten through 8th grade? 1 2 3 4 5 6 6+

5. What is the intersection nearest your home? Example: Main Street and West Street

6. How far does your child live from school?
   a. Less than ¼ mile
   b. ¼ mile up to ½ mile
   c. ½ mile up to 1 mile
   d. 1 mile up to 2 miles
   e. More than 2 miles
   f. Not sure

7. How many days a week does your child: Circle the number of days below
   a. Walk to School 1 2 3 4 5
   b. Bike to school 1 2 3 4 5
   c. Ride the bus to school 1 2 3 4 5
   d. Ride in a car to school 1 2 3 4 5

8. If you drive your child to school, why do you choose to do so? Check all that apply:

O	No sidewalks or broken sidewalks	O	Not enough room for my child to ride their bike
O	Cars go too fast	O	Not enough other people biking or walking
O	Too much traffic	O	Bad weather and climate
O	Intersections/crossings are unsafe	O	Fear of violence or crime
O	No/too few crossing guards	O	We live too far from the school to bike or walk
O	Poor/broken crosswalks	O	The school is on my way to another destination
O	No crosswalks	O	My child has before/after school activities or day care
O	Path/sidewalk too close to road	O	Other _____

9. Has your child asked you for permission to walk or bike to school? Circle: Yes No

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

Select a grade between K -8: ____ grade or ____ I would not feel comfortable at any grade

11. What changes would make you more likely to allow your child to walk or bike to school? Check all that apply:

- O More people walking or biking
- O More sidewalks
- O Sidewalks that aren't broken
- O Safer crossings
- O More crossing guards
- O Less traffic
- O Slower cars
- O More space between the sidewalk and cars
- O More room for my child to ride their bike
- O A safer environment in regards to crime and violence
- O Nothing- I like to drive my child because it's safe
- O Nothing- I like to drive my child because it's easy
- O Nothing- We live to far from the school to bike or walk
- O Other

12. Do you have any other comments or ideas? _____
_____
_____

Parents Walkability and Bikeability Survey

Questions about the school routes for your children

1. a. What grade is your child in? circle 1 2 3 4 5
2. b. What is your address?* _____

   *this data will only be used for informational purposes for the Safe Routes to School Program

3. Is the child for whom you are filling this out male or female? circle male female

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5. What is the intersection nearest your home? Example: Main Street and West Street

6. How far does your child live from school?
   a. Less than ¼ mile
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   c. ½ mile up to 1 mile
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O	Path/sidewalk too close to road	O	Other _____

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- O A safer environment in regards to crime and violence
- O Nothing- I like to drive my child because it's safe
- O Nothing- I like to drive my child because it's easy
- O Nothing- We live to far from the school to bike or walk
- O Other

12. Do you have any other comments or ideas? _____
_____
_____

Appendix C: Meeting Minutes

Plainville Pioneering Healthier Communities

Minutes: April 14, 2010 meeting

Toffolon Elementary School

Attendance: Marco, Mark, Roberta, Kris, Colin, Rob, Jim.

Guests/new members: Kelli Wallace, Kids in the Middle; Jim Bondi, Foodservice Director- Plainville Schools; Barbara Moore, State PHC

1. New members and guest introductions:

2. I handed out and we discussed the Community Action Plan (CAP)

We identified objectives (A's within the CAP), based on groups previous highlights, ie:

Improve access to healthy foods

Increase physical activity in schools

Improve town infrastructure

We discussed some Policy, System and Environmental Change strategies for the above objectives, ie:

Create a Community Garden

We discussed whether we needed to conduct a CHLI for the above.

Some thought it was important to do so, regarding the Community Garden, in order to find out if residents wanted it.

Group discussed in length and detail about the Community Garden:

Would it be used by population we are trying to serve?

Would there be enough space for use by the Food Pantry?

Would people be willing to donate produce to Food Pantry?

In order to provide foods to Pantry, convenient stores, product/ site would have to be approved.

7. A sub committee was formed by Kris, Colin and Jim C. to look further into a community garden

8. Jim Bondi explained that Plainville's school meals meet and/or exceed the state and federal government's nutritional requirements. Whenever possible local produce is purchased and used.

Jim B. provided the following web sites that contain fun nutritional activities/facts for Middle School students:

http://kitsap.wsu.edu/nutrition/smart_facts.htm

http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/mar10/obesity0310.pdf

http://www.bam.gov/sub_foodnutrition/fuelup.html

http://www.bam.gov/sub_physicalactivity/index.html

I requested members to think of a Community Name and Mission Statement and send suggestions to Chris Pallatto.

From: chris pallatto [chris.pallatto@ghymca.org]
Sent: Thursday, May 20, 2010 2:55 PM
To: plainvillefoodpantry@yahoo.com; Foody, Paul (GE Indust, ConsInd); fbc@snet.net; Kelli Wallace; kdargen-io@kba-architects.com; Marco Palmeri; Mark Devoe; Colin Regan; silli-manr@plainvilleschools.org; Roberta Brown
Subject: Notes, Votes, and Next Steps

Hi all-

Please review the follow **notes from our 5/19/10 meeting**. There are a couple items that need action as well, so don't skim…

1. We decided to adopt the CT Statewide PHC Mission Statement: "To eliminate childhood obesity by increasing healthy eating and physical activity in schools and the Plainville community."

2. We modeled our three primary goals after the statewide group as well as follows:

a. Increase physical activity before, during and/or after school.
b. Increase physical activity opportunities in the community.
c. Increase access to healthier foods.

3. We need to name our collaborative. Our intent is to have an enduring brand that represents our group from this point forward as we begin our work. The names on the table for all to vote on are:

a. Healthy Plainville
b. Healthier Plainville
c. Healthy Plainville Community Initiative
d. Healthier Plainville Community Initiative
e. Plainville on the Move
f. HAPPY (something about Health, the word Plainville, Kris is committed finding an acronym).
g. _____ insert an alternative suggestion here.

4. Please send your vote or suggestion to me by Monday, May 24th.

5. At our June meeting we would like to discuss, identify, refine, and prioritize our change strategies for the objectives listed in #2 above. The following is our latest pass. It is very important that you be prepared to discuss your thoughts at the June meeting.

1: Increase access to healthier foods:
Community Garden
Work with Food Pantry to improve the quality of donations
Healthier food choices at local convenience stores
Increase community awareness and education
Work with local business to improve menu options

2: Increase physical activity opportunities in the community:
Pedestrian friendlier neighborhoods
Bike lanes
"Rails to Trails"
Improve zoning & regulations on new development approval
Create business-supported network for community initiatives
Local races (Petit 5k) have kids component

3: Increase physical activity before, during and/or after school:
"Walking school bus"
Physical activity "bursts" in curriculum
Explore grants for physical activity "add on" for school day
Creation of a standing school wellness committee that includes student leaders.

6. Kris is meeting with Our Lady of Mercy shortly to discuss their experience with the Community garden. The committee discussed briefly the important of determining the feasibility of a community garden via a CHLI assessment or other research prior to committing to the project. Here are a couple of resources from the Statewide PHC and Roberta Brown from the Rudd Center at Yale: www.gbfb.org – Greater Boston Food Bank, which has community gardens connected to their food banks.
http://www.communitygarden.org/learn/starting-a-community-garden.php - American Community Gardening Association
Next meeting is June 16, at 11:45 am at the YMCA.

PHC Meeting Minutes:

September 29, 2010

In attendance: Marco, Chris, Collin, Suzie, Roberta, Kelli, Rob, Kris

- Suzie from Food Pantry:
  - Working to improve quality of donations
    - Explored possibility of accepting donations from restaurants/grocery stores
    - Storage issues- refrigeration, etc.
  - Offer Cooking and/or Nutrition educational classes at the Pantry
  - Increase monetary donations to purchase high-quality fruit and vegetables
  - Working on vouchers for farmers market, Big Y, Gnazzo's, Zarella Farms
    - Would be great to get a Farmers Market in Plainville
  - Issue of food stamps not providing fruit/vegetable vouchers (WIC does).
    - Something to tackle on a state-wide level at some point.
  - AMP radio- good PR for Pantry and PHC at local gas stations
    - Suzie will make contact to initiate this.
- Marco shared article re: visiting chefs to raise awareness/ education about healthy cooking- chefs from "Hell's Kitchen"
  - Possibility of contacting CT Restaurant Association to hold such event
    - First & Last Restaurant does Cooking classes/ demonstrations we may be able to build off of
    - Community-wide educational healthy cooking class held at Pantry to bring together community & schools.
- Rob talked about Activity Based Curriculum
  - Walking clubs (at recess)- all 3 elementary schools participate
    - Kid's Marathon- very successful
    - Issue: recruiting consistent adult supervision
      - Ask PTO, or parents that come to have lunch with their child
      - Students receive rewards for their laps, and then eventually a t-shirt (promotes program)
    - P.E. is re-doing curriculum- new Department Head Adam Murphy from MSP
      - Looking to add activity-based curriculum to PE, not to the rest of the day
      - Suggestions include: "Music minute"- hear a song and dance for a minute
        - Easy, and non-invasive for classroom teachers
        - ABC: Activity Burst in the Classroom
- Chris discussed handout- short term plan- what do we want to accomplish in the next 3-6 months?
  - Show community what we're doing
  - Marco- photos of "Crack Bridge" near PHS
    - Currently thought of as unsafe due to poor visibility on bridge, as well as reputation for risky behavior occurring at/near bridge

Possibility of working with GE to trim or remove trees to improve line of sight on bridge

Purchase solar lights for bridge?

More students could walk to school if bridge was more pedestrian-friendly

Possibility of bridge becoming a Boy Scout or Eagle Scout project

Discussion of intersection at Northwest Drive & Rt. 177 - not safe to cross due to missing walk signal

Collin discussed some of the walking routes/paths around town

We can create promotional material for Plainville families to raise awareness of Plainville's "walkability" and increase physical activity levels

Recap of our short term goals:

Fix "Crack Bridge"

Kris, Suzie & Marco

Walk signal at Northwest & Rt. 177

Jim & Marco

Establish and identify walking/biking routes in Plainville

Collin & Kelli

Vouchers for fruits and vegetables at Big Y, Gnazzo's, Zarella Farms

Suzie

AMP Radio- promote "Healthy Plainville" and Food Pantry

Suzie

Walking clubs/ "Kid's Marathon"

Rob & Kelli

Adding activity to curriculum

Roberta

Next meeting:

Wednesday, October 27th at 12:00pm at Toffolon

Plainville Safe Routes to School
Meeting at the Wheeler YMCA: Brainstorm Possible Solutions
July 19, 2011

Those in attendance:

Marco Palmeri: Health Department
Sgt. Charles Smedick: Plainville Police Department
Chris Pallatto: Wheeler Regional Family YMCA
Foster White: Healthy Plainville
Rich Carmelich: Plainville Community Schools
Jim Caron: Faith Bible Church
Kris Dargenio: Community Volunteer
Susie Woerz: Plainville Food Pantry
Mark DeVoe: Town of Plainville
Roberta Brown: Plainville Youth Services
Robert Lee: Plainville Town Manager
John Bossi: Plainville Engineering
Abigail St. Peter: CCRPA
Kristin Thomas: CCRPA

Engineering

Boulevard and Raised Crosswalks

To calm traffic, it was suggested Northwest Drive be converted into a boulevard-type street, with an island added in front of the schools. The island could be nicely landscaped with trees and vegetation, enhancing the aesthetics of the school zone and giving the area a campus atmosphere.

Raised Crosswalks

If the boulevard is constructed, part of the plan could include raised crosswalks, constructed so that they cross at either end of the island or in the middle. This would make the area more comfortable for pedestrians to cross (refuge) and also slow traffic.

**Even if the island is not constructed, installing raised crosswalks may still be considered to both slow traffic and to increase safety for pedestrians crossing Northwest Drive.

Improvements to path behind Toffolon: 97 students

The path behind Toffolon provides a safe travel corridor for students. However currently with a lack of adult supervision and overgrown vegetation around the path, some parents are reluctant to let their child walk down the path. It was suggested that if the path is straightened and the vegetation is cut back creating a clear line of sight from the top of the path to the bottom, parents may feel more comfortable allowing their children to use the path. These changes would also make one monitor more effective (you would not necessarily need two people supervising the path, one at the top and one at the bottom or in the middle and could instead just have one person maybe in the middle).

Sidewalks along Route 177 from Provencher Drive and Farmhill Drive south to Northwest Drive: 26 students (this includes 14 students who would use a sidewalk along Provencher extending to Route 177, 19 students who would travel along Route 177 from Provencher to Farmhill, and when joined with additional students from Farmhill, this would make a total of 26 students using the stretch of sidewalk from Farmhill to Northwest Drive).

Traffic was also perceived to be a deterrent for students walking along this road, even if a sidewalk was constructed. It was suggested to construct additional separation from the road and if possible, position a crossing guard at the new crosswalk that has been painted across Route 177. It was also noted that it would be difficult to make a sidewalk connection to the multi-use path nearby because of a conflict with a landowner.

Path connecting Samuel's Crossing to the Middle School: 46 students (assuming those who would use the sidewalk along Camp Street from Samuel's Crossing to Northwest Drive would instead be diverted onto the path).

A sidewalk along Camp St. to Northwest Drive is unnecessary if Samuel's Crossing is linked to the Middle School along the sewer line easement—currently the developer has plans for additional units and the extension of the road. This path could be used by students to reach the Middle School and would be much quicker than them walking past the baseball field to Northwest Drive.

Sidewalk along Camp St. to area north of Northwest Drive: 16 students (Maxine to Hilltop) 21 students (Hilltop to Overlook) (the 21 students on the Hilltop to Overlook segment include those 16 students who would begin at Maxine and walk down Camp St—it is assumed once they reach Overlook, they would walk down Overlook to the path behind Toffolon)

This proposal was received with mix feelings. Some thought the traffic along Camp St. would deter students from walking and believed it would be preferable if students were routed through the neighborhoods behind Toffolon. However others suggested that a sidewalk along the stretch might be good, additional separation (wooden posts and beams) might be needed though.

Crosswalks

It was agreed crosswalks in the school zone need to be repainted with a paint that would better withstand the elements. However if the boulevard is constructed and the crosswalks raised, this won't be necessary.

Additional Signage

It was proposed that additional signage may be needed to remind motorists that they are in a school zone. This would help slow drivers.

Enforcement

Supervision on path behind Toffolon: cameras or adult monitors

During the meeting it was acknowledged that there is not always adult supervision on the path behind Toffolon. Because this is a concern for parents, adults could be positioned on the path or cameras could be installed. It was suggested that the cameras could even be streamed to the web so parents could monitor as their child walked down the path.

Additional crossing guards

Ideally additional crossing guards would be positioned throughout the area, particularly at the corner of Northwest Drive and Route 177 if sidewalks are constructed in this area. However funding may make this challenging.

Education

Driver outreach

It was suggested that one way to combat speeders would be to educate drivers about the speed in the school zone. As one person pointed out, many people speeding in the area live nearby.

Teach pedestrian and bicycle safety to students

The police currently have a bike officer who is invited into schools to educate students about bike safety. This program should continue.

Educate parents and students about benefits of walking and biking: map of safe routes

It was suggested that a pamphlet can be included in school mailings that go out in August detailing the benefits of walking and biking. This would help educate them and also offer encouragement. The pamphlet could include a map highlighting routes that have sidewalks, crosswalks, crossing guards, etc. This would show parents safe routes that their child could take to school.

Bicycle Friendly Community

Partner with the bicycle community in Plainville to provide additional outreach and education.

Encouragement

Start a walk to school day

There are efforts to have a walk to school day once a month

Start a walking buddy/walking school bus program

Incentives to walk/bike to school

It was suggested that students would respond well if they were given incentives to walk/bike to school. We could talk to the principal about including it in their Positive Behavior Support Program.

Plainville Safe Routes to School

SRTS Solutions

Plainville Municipal Center

July 26, 2011

Marc Palmeri

John Bossi

Mark DeVoe

Rich Carmelich

Francis Pickering

Kristin Thomas

Abigail St. Peter

Engineering:

- Construct median/island with raised crosswalks on Northwest Drive (will look into cost based on different design scenarios)- High

- Install path along Northwest to connect the multi-use trail to Route 177- Medium

- Improve path behind Toffolon: Install cameras (The town would cut back vegetation to increase visibility)- Medium

- Post signs that mark the Safe Route to School route (along with a sign at the entrance to the path behind Toffolon)-Medium

-Install bike rack at Toffolon

** All engineering solutions (with the exception of trimming vegetation and installing an additional bike rack at Toffolon) would be presented in the application to be considered for SRTS funding.

Enforcement

-Organize group of parents who could help kids cross street- High

-Re-examine current location of crossing guards, see how efficiency could be maximized (in-kind from town)- Medium

-Increase police patrol in school zone (town)-Low

Education

-Teach pedestrian and bicycle safety (Plainville Greenway Alliance has program, Plainville PD Bike Rodeo, etc.)- High

-Distribute pamphlets outlining benefits of walking and biking- High

Encouragement

-Continue walk to school day—expand to once a month- High

-Start a walking school bus program-Medium

-Start a remote drop-off and walk system for bus riders- Low

-Distribute incentives for walking/biking (part of Positive Behavior Support System)- High

-Distribute map of walking and bicycling routes (CCRPA could create)- High

-Implement/Amend transportation policies to include walking/biking-High

SCHOOL BUS

PEACE