

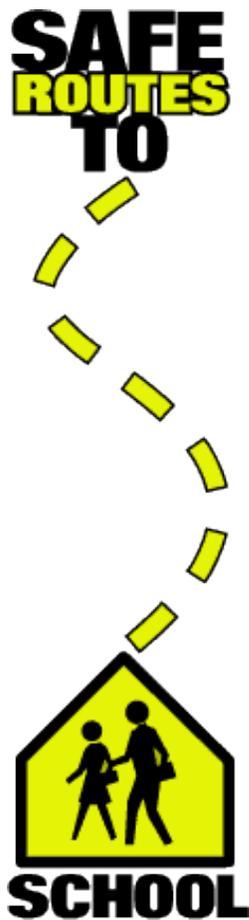
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PLAN

Kennedy Elementary School

June, 2013

Willmar Public Schools District 347

Willmar, Minnesota



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Safe Routes To School Plan

June 2013



Prepared for

Willmar Public Schools District 347

Prepared by

Mid-Minnesota Development Commission



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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

In 2012, the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) assisted the Willmar School District in successfully applying for funding to undertake Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plans for both elementary schools (Kennedy and Roosevelt) and the Willmar Middle School. Only school grades K-8 are eligible for program funding. The MMDC has continued to assist the Willmar School District in helping to prepare separate SRTS Plans for the three schools.

Purpose of Plan

The Purpose of this Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan is to provide a long range plan for providing both improved safety for children who walk or bike to school, and to encourage more parents and students that walking and bicycling can be a beneficial alternative to being driven to school. The top priority of this plan is working on improving safety through needed infrastructure improvements, educating students and adults, and through better enforcement measures. The plan is designed under the National SRTS Program that utilizes “The Five E’s” of SRTS planning: engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation. This plan includes recommendations from each of these five core areas.

The plan is a fluid document that should be reviewed yearly and revised when needed. Both the Willmar School District and the City of Willmar will need to work together with the help of various community partners to make progress on plan implementation. The SRTS Team that was formed in preparing this plan will need to stay active, and take the lead role for the plan’s oversight to see that progress is being made on the Action Plan components found in Section 4 of this plan. The SRTS Team will need to work with the School District’s other two SRTS Teams to implement those action steps that are best implemented through a citywide scope. The three SRTS teams also need to work together in determining overall priorities on what projects should be pursued first in seeking funding to achieve needed improvements.

What Is Safe Routes to School (SRTS)?

The Safe Routes to School Planning process purpose is to help create and implement a plan that will increase the number of children, who live within a reasonable distance, walk and bike to/from school. The implementation strategy will focus on infrastructure improvements, education, and enforcement activities to increase the safety level of students walking and biking to/from school. The strategy will also discuss promotional types of activities that will instill life-long habits that support physical activity and health. The SRTS plan is based upon the “5 E’s” of the National Safe Routes to School program, which include:

Education – providing the necessary materials to parents, educators, transportation providers, policy makers, and others regarding the benefits of students walking or bicycling to school;

Encouragement – providing opportunities to promote safe walking or biking through school and community level programs and incentives;

Engineering – identifying and correcting physical design deficiencies where children walk and bike to/from school, including pedestrian facilities, bike lanes, and street crossings;

Enforcement – ensuring that existing regulations regarding such issues as vehicular speeds and the clearing of walkways are enforced by the appropriate authorities;

Evaluation – reviewing the goals and initiatives of this SRTS program to benchmark progress over time and make adjustments that are necessary.

This plan will not require that students walk or bike to school, but rather will increase the desirability of choosing the walking and biking option as the plan’s implementation improves the physical, policy, and perceptual barriers that currently prevent students who are within a reasonable distance from the school.

SRTS is a federally funded program through legislation passed in 2005 as part of the past federal transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU. The program is administered on the state level by the Minnesota Department of Transportation. The new federal transportation bill passed in 2012 (MAP-21) did not fund a separate category of funding for the SRTS program, however, SRTS funding has been included in a new program called the Transportation Alternatives Program.

The SRTS program not only funds community efforts to prepare SRTS Plans, but also helps to fund implementation projects for those who have gone through the planning process in a competitive application process.

The three primary purposes of the national SRTS program:

- “To enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities to walk and bicycle to school;
- To make bicycling and walking to school safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and
- To facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.”

National Health and Physical Activity Trends

According to the National Centers for Disease Control (CDC), obesity now affects seventeen percent of all children and adolescents in the United States. “Since 1980, obesity prevalence among children and adolescents has almost tripled.” There is a need to focus attention on both promoting healthy eating and increased physical activity to fight these trends. The CDC in 2007 reported that nearly half of children aged 12 – 21 years are not vigorously active on a regular basis, and 14 percent of these young people report no regular physical activity at all.

Information from the US Department of Transportation shows that in 1969, approximately half of all the nation’s school aged children walked or biked to or from school, and almost ninety percent of students living within one mile of their school walked or rode their bikes to school. By 2001, these numbers dropped to where only seventeen percent of children walked or biked to school, and only 56 percent that lived within one mile. The 2012 SRTS survey of parents of Willmar School District children, K-8, demonstrated that only 13.8 percent of grade school children walk or bike to/from school, while Middle School students walk or bike to school at a 17.3 percent rate.

The CDC’s website (www.cdc.gov//childhoobesityod/basics.html) discusses the basics about childhood obesity and the consequences of childhood obesity. The CDC states the following:

Health Risks Now

- “Childhood obesity can have a harmful effect on the body in a variety of ways. Obese children are more likely to have –
 - High blood pressure and high cholesterol, which are risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD). In one study, 70% of obese children had at least one CVD risk factor, and 39% had two or more.
 - Increased risk of impaired glucose tolerance, insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes.
 - Breathing problems, such as sleep apnea, and asthma.
 - Joint problems and musculoskeletal discomfort.
 - Fatty liver disease, gallstones, and gastro-esophageal reflux (i.e., heartburn).
 - Obese children and adolescents have a greater risk of social and psychological problems, such as discrimination and poor self-esteem, which can continue into adulthood.

Health Risks Later

- Obese children are more likely to become obese adults. Adult obesity is associated with a number of serious health conditions including heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers.
- If children are overweight, obesity in adulthood is likely to be more severe.”

The benefits of regular physical activity, including walking and biking to school are numerous. Children build and maintain a healthy lifestyle, while directly helping to control weight, build lean muscle, reduce fat, and foster positive social, emotional, educational, and personal development. Research shows that starting an active lifestyle at an early age is crucial for children for their health now and into adulthood.

SECTION TWO: WILLMAR SCHOOL DISTRICT'S SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL VISION AND GOALS

The Safe Routes to School Teams from Kennedy Elementary, Roosevelt Elementary, and the Middle School all met together at the beginning of the planning process to craft a Vision Statement that would guide the development of all three SRTS Plans.

Willmar SRTS Vision Statement

The Willmar School District and the City of Willmar will offer a dynamic long-term strategy to create a safe and enjoyable environment for children to walk and bike to and from school, while increasing driver awareness, and educating and encouraging children and their parents to develop a more healthy and independent lifestyle.

Goals for the Safe Routes to School Programs:

To help achieve the Vision Statement the three SRTS teams also discuss various goals for the Safe Routes to School Program. The primary goals that were discussed are as follows:

- Help foster physical activity of the students and take steps to improve their health and wellness.
- Overcome the notion that walking and biking are not viable options for travel to and from school.
- Learn what corrective measures are needed to establish safe walking and bicycling accommodations within all three of the schools' walk and bike zones, and work toward resolving these issues.
- Provide peace of mind to parents of students in the School District of Willmar by:
 - developing a safe network of bike and pedestrian routes in the City of Willmar;
 - educating and encouraging students to use these routes for their safety, health, and enjoyment, and
 - provide the necessary monitoring and enforcement of these routes to ensure safe and lawful practices and behaviors of all users.
- Provide a continuing process to evaluate, adjust plans as needed, and move forward to make progress on meeting the SRTS Vision Statement.

Unify the School District, City of Willmar, and all other stake holders to work together to make progress on meeting the SRTS Vision Statement.

SECTION THREE: EXISTING CONDITIONS, CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

(Description of the School, City, and the Travel Environment)

Willmar Public School District

Roosevelt Elementary School is one of two elementary schools in the Willmar School District, ISD 347. All schools in the district are located in Willmar, Minnesota. The school district's population estimate in 2011 was 25,941, which has risen 5.7 percent since 2000. The 2011 household count for the district is 9,893, which has declined by 2.9 percent since 2000. In recent years, the district has seen a large increase in its minority population, particularly with persons of Hispanic/Latino and Somali decent. The 2011 estimate shows 4,645 persons of Hispanic or Latino origin lived in the district. Medium Household income in 2011 was estimated to be \$46,687.

The school district's territory takes in the City of Willmar, surrounding townships, and also includes the small cities of Pennock, Blomkest, and Kandiyohi. A school district map is shown in the Appendix.

Student enrollment in the Willmar Public School District is 4,079 students. Student ethnicity breakdown is as follows:

<u>Student Ethnicity</u>	<u># of Students</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
American Indian	22	0.5%
Asian	30	0.7%
Hispanic	1,246	30.5%
Black	279	6.8%
White	2,438	60.0%
Other	64	2.0%

The following is the school district's Mission Statement: "Preparing all students for a successful tomorrow." The district's goals are to:

- Improve student lives
- Achievement for ALL students
- Fiscally responsible stewardship
- Strengthen school/community relationships to improve learning for ALL students.

Willmar Public Schools Wellness Policy

The Willmar Public Schools Wellness Policy is a district wide policy. The Policy was first adopted in 2006, with last revisions in 2012. The purpose of the policy is “to assure a school environment that promotes and protects students’ health, wellbeing, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.” The first part of the policy is primarily devoted to healthy eating. This summary of the policy will focus on physical activity. The Wellness Policy is posted on the School District’s web site.

Physical activity is first accomplished through Physical Education (P.E.) for all students K-12. All students include students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings. Students receive regular physical education that meets or exceeds state requirements. The physical education curriculum is coordinated with health education curriculum. The policy states that students should spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

The policy also discusses the integration of physical activity into the classroom setting. “Classroom health education will reinforce the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle and reduce sedentary activities such as watching television.” The policy discusses physical activity in classrooms, recess, and before and after school programs and interscholastic sports programs.

The policy also discusses communications with parents. The School District will provide information to families about the importance of healthy eating and daily physical activity. At this time, the Wellness Policy does not discuss Safe Routes to School, and does not promote walking or bicycling to and from school.

Willmar School District’s Policy on Transportation of Public School Students

The school District’s transportation (bussing) eligibility of resident students will be highlighted in this section. Upon the request of the parent or guardian, the school district shall provide transportation to and from school, at the expense of the school district, for all resident students who reside two miles or more from the school, “except for students whose transportation privileges have been revoked or have been voluntarily surrendered by the student’s parent or guardian.” The school district reserves the right to provide transportation to students within the two-mile zone where they think the purpose to do so is appropriate. Within the two-mile zone, if space is available, students can be picked up along bus routes for a fee.

City of Willmar

The City of Willmar serves as a regional center for a large geographic area in west central Minnesota. The community is located near the center of Kandiyohi County and shares borders with Willmar, Dovre, Green Lake, and Kandiyohi Townships. U.S. Highways 12, 71, and State

Highway 23 are the three major roadways. Willmar is situated near numerous lakes, with Foot, Willmar, and Swan Lakes all being located inside the City's corporate limits. The city encompasses 13.52 square miles.

According to the 2010 Census, the City of Willmar had 19,610 residents, which was approximately a 6.4 percent increase from the 2000 Census. The most recent population estimate shows 22,126 persons. The median household income in the community is \$36,961, which is less than the state's \$48,695 figure. The 2009 American Community Survey shows an estimate of 3,118 children between 5 to 17 years of age living in the city, and an estimated population of 1,315 residents 80 years old and older. The 2009 American Community Survey also shows that an estimated 16.14 percent of Willmar's population had incomes below the poverty level. In addition, 2,414 of the community's 7,458 households had incomes below \$25,000.

In 2011, the City of Willmar adopted a City Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. This plan was reviewed and utilized as part of the SRTS planning process. There are needs presented in that plan that are also addressed in this document. The one City policy worth discussing in this plan is the Snow Removal Policy. The City has a policy that all public sidewalks must be cleared of snow and ice 24 hours after a snowfall ends. The policy goes into more detail than stated here. The enforcement of this policy has not been very strong at this time. If complaints are sent in, action by the City will occur however.

The City of Willmar added a new section to their Comprehensive Plan in 2012 when it completed a Trails and Pedestrian Plan Addendum. The plan laid out priorities for both off road trails and on road bikeways. The Plan also set priorities for pedestrian improvements within the community.

Kennedy Elementary School

Kennedy Elementary school is located at 824 7th Street SW. The school is located in a fairly centralized area on the City's west side. The school is located in an area that is surrounded by residential neighborhoods in an older section of the community. The school building at one time was home to the Willmar High School, and thus the property still has athletic fields utilized for football, track, and other sporting events. The school is located approximately six blocks southwest of the city's downtown commercial district.



Kennedy Elementary has an enrollment of 984 students. The school has grades kindergarten through 5th grade. The population by grade is as follows: Kindergarten 182 students, First Grade 166 students, Second Grade 149 students, Third Grade 167 students, Fourth Grade 167 students, and Fifth Grade 153 students.

Kennedy Elementary does not have any rules regarding students if students walk or bicycle to and from school. The school, through its information it supplies to parents, does encourage that kindergarten students are too young for riding bicycles to school.

Accident Information

City of Willmar Accident Data

There are no hot spots for concern when it comes from analyzing vehicle accidents involving pedestrians or bicyclists. During the past ten years, records show that these accidents have occurred randomly throughout the entire community. Some busy streets had more accidents involving bicycles and pedestrians than other streets in the community. First Street, Willmar Avenue, Trott Avenue, Becker Avenue, and Highway 12 had the most accidents. While it is likely that not all instances have been reported to the Minnesota Department of Transportation State Aid Crash Tool Data site that was reviewed, the ten year record shows only two accidents that involve children going or coming from school in the ten year time frame of the review. One of these accidents occurred on the Middle School property. This accident happened to a 13 year old female, who was at fault for darting into traffic in the parking lot back in 2009. The other accident that may involve a child going to school happened at the intersection of 7th Street SW and Willmar Avenue. The Bicyclist was 14 years old, and the driver was 16 years old. The driver was distracted and caused the accident. The Accident occurred in September of 2008 at 7:46 a.m.

During the period that was reviewed (2002 through 2012) there were a total of 93 accidents in Willmar that involved both a motor vehicle and a pedestrian or bicyclist. Fifty-three involved bicyclists and 40 involved pedestrians.

There were 14 accidents that involved both bicycles and vehicles with bikers between the ages of 5 years old and 14 years old during the period reported. Of these 14 accidents, 12 (86%) occurred at intersections. Ten of the 14 accidents were the bicyclists fault alone, 2 were the motorist's fault and 2 accidents were of joint fault between the participants. There were an additional 7 accidents involving children biking ages 15 to 18 years old, of which 6 happened at intersections. Three bicycle accidents occurred to children under 5 years old, none at intersections. All three of these accidents were the fault of the child.

Pedestrian involved with accidents between the ages 5 to 18 totaled 12 children during the 10-year time period studied. Of these accidents, 8 of the 12 were the full fault of the pedestrian. Two accidents were where both were at fault, one was solely the fault of the motorist, and the other case is an unknown cause. Many of these accidents to children were the result of playing and darting out in front of a motor vehicle or playing in the street.

When looking at pedestrian and bicycle accidents involving motor vehicles, it is shown that 25 percent of the reported accidents had driver distractions involved and close to 10 percent had distractions of the pedestrian or bicyclist. For example a pedestrian or biker may have been playing loud music on headphones.

Vehicle Accident History for the Kennedy Elementary Walk Zone

When looking at all accidents involving motor vehicle during 2002 through 2012, it is possible to identify intersections with a greater accident history than others, and streets with in general where traffic is higher and more accidents have occurred. While these accidents do not involve bicyclists or pedestrians, they do show areas where more awareness of potential walking and biking concerns are. Because the data includes ten years of traffic accidents there are accidents that occur most everywhere you look. We will focus attention to intersections with an accident history of an average of 2 or more accidents per year.

Kennedy Elementary School's walk zone is approximately one-half mile in radius. The school walk zone does not include walking across two of Willmar's most dangerous and busy streets, Highway 12 and First Street. Accident history shows that the streets with the most accidents within the school's walk zone are Willmar Avenue SW, 7th Street SW, and Kandiyohi Avenue SW. All three of these streets border on the school's property, but all three also have crossing guards to assist children with crossing. Willmar Avenue has the most accidents over other streets within the walk zone. Another street that has a somewhat higher accident history is Trott Avenue SW, which is located four blocks north of the school's property. This Street however, does not have a bad accident history west of 7th Street SW. Trott Avenue SW has a much higher accident count within the central business district where there are far fewer housing residences. A couple of other streets with a somewhat higher accident history than other residential streets in the area are 4th Street SW and 5th Street SW, with 4th Street having a slightly higher accident count. More accidents occur within or near the central business district.

Intersections with the greatest accident history (2002 -2012 data):

- Kandiyohi Avenue SW and 5th Street SW had 33 reported accidents.
- Minnesota Avenue SW and 4th Street SW had 29 reported accidents.
- Willmar Avenue SW and 5th Street SW had 25 reported accidents.

- Kandiyohi Avenue SW and 7th Street SW had 24 reported accidents.
- Willmar Avenue SW and 7th Street SW had 20 reported accidents.
- Willmar Avenue SW and 15th Street SW had 17 reported accidents.

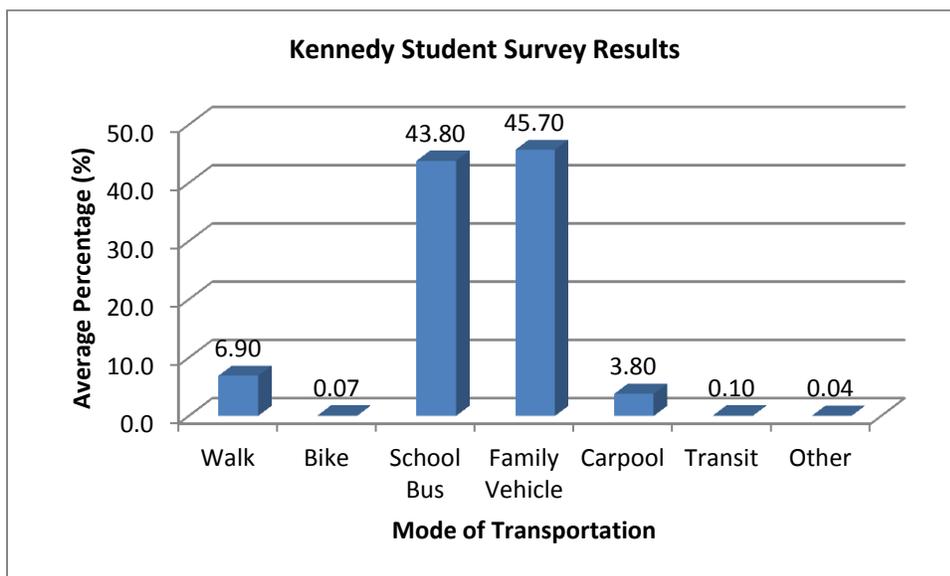
Parent Survey and Student Tally

This section discusses what safety issues, attitudes, and barriers may exist within the community. The school conducted both parent surveys and in classroom student tallies as part of this planning process. This survey information, along with the route assessment evaluations, provide a baseline assessment and as a starting point for future deliberation, monitoring, and evaluation.

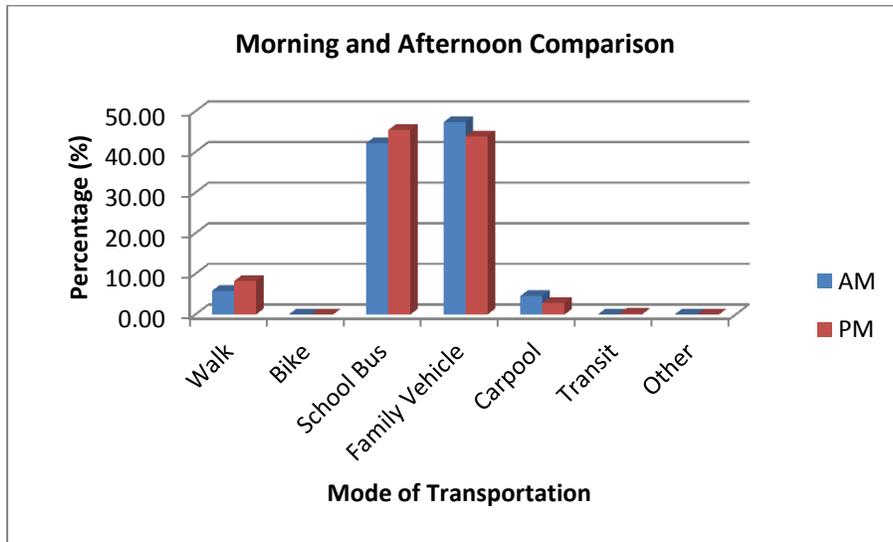
A complete analysis and results of the surveys can be found within the appendix of this plan. The student tally and the parent survey instruments were developed by the National Center for Safe Routes to School. Student Tallies were administered by teachers during the school week. The parent survey was brought home by students and was written in English, Spanish, and Somali. The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission tabulated the results of both surveys.

Student Tallies

Student Tallies were conducted in the middle of January, 2013. The in classroom surveys were conducted in both the morning and afternoons during the middle of the school week. The survey tallies had 28 classrooms that participated. All five grades were included within the surveys, but there was more participation in the K – 2nd classrooms, which may have skewed the results somewhat. As the tallies were conducted in January, the results would have fewer students walking and biking than in the warmer fall or spring months.



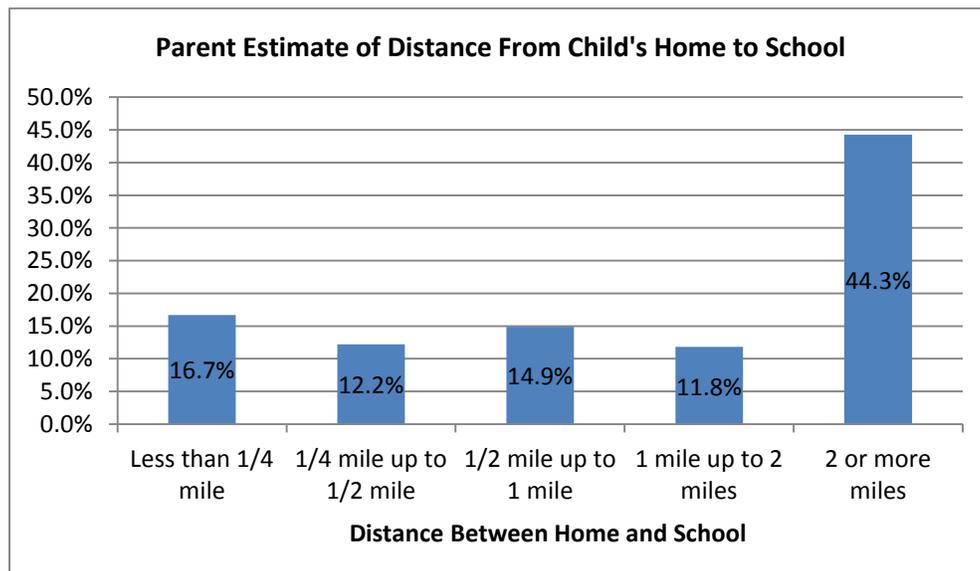
The above graph shows that both family vehicle and school bus are the two most frequently utilized modes of transportation to and from Kennedy Elementary School. In the middle of winter, approximately 7 percent of the students walk or bike to school.



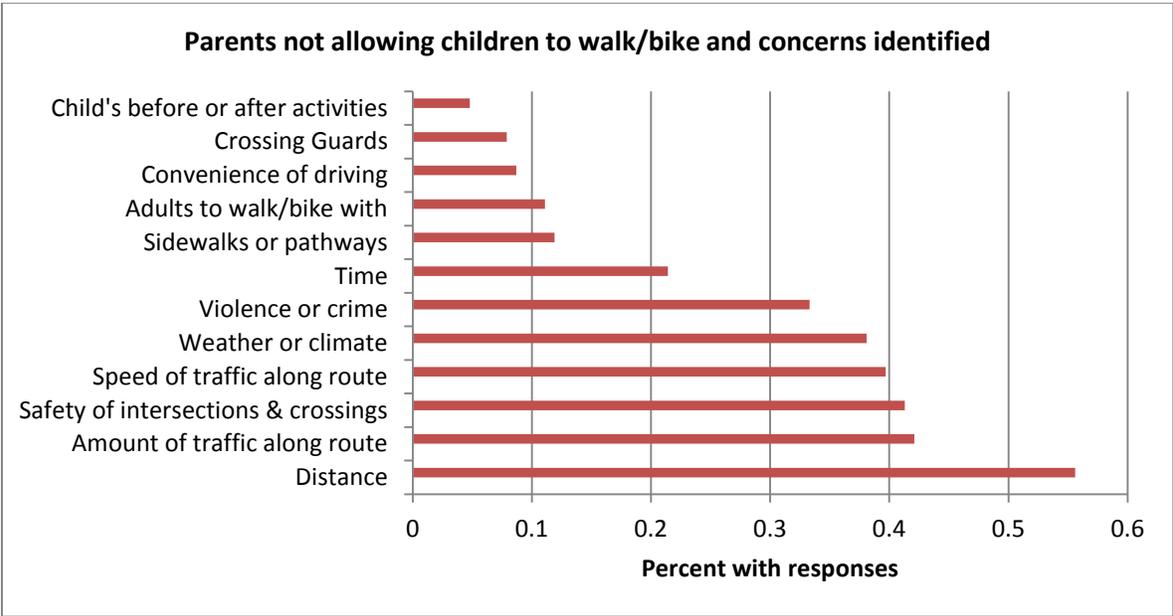
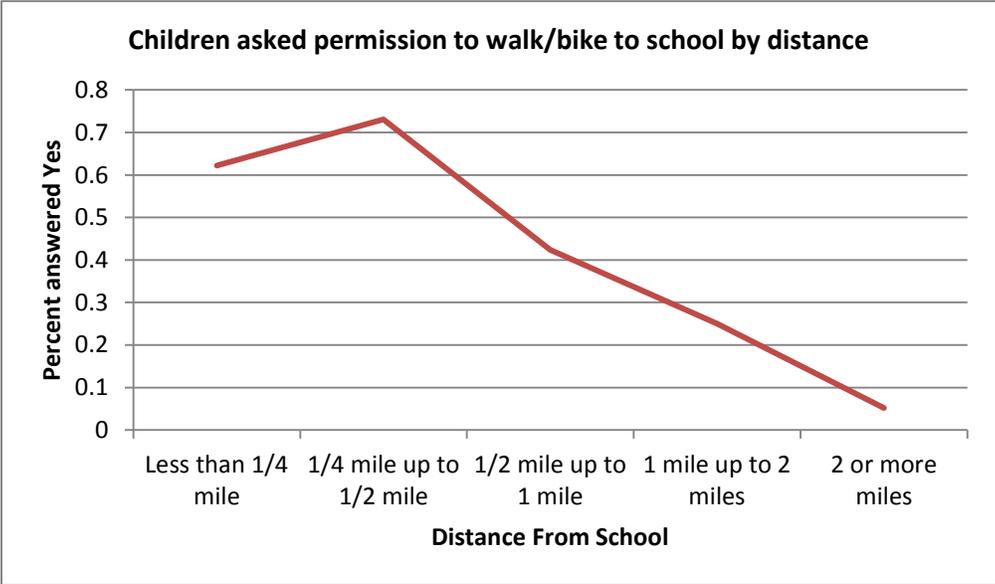
The above graph shows that more children walk home in the afternoon than arrive by walking in the morning. In the morning, the family vehicle is the most often used mode of transportation, while in the afternoon the school bus is the most often used.

Parent Survey Result Highlights

The parent survey was conducted in the late fall of 2012. A total of 227 surveys were returned, with a fairly well distribution representing all five grades and about an equal number of boys and girls represented.



The above graph shows that approximately 29 percent of the children attending Kennedy live within the one-half mile walk zone. Approximately 56 percent live one mile or more from the school. The classroom student tally and the parent survey both show similar results on the mode of transportation used for children getting to and from school. It is no great surprise to find that those that live closer to school have a much greater likelihood to walk or bike than students that live further distances. The survey showed that a majority of children that live within the walk zone have expressed interest in walking or biking to school as shown in the below graph. This information shows that if the parents can be shown that safety improvements are made, and if perceptions can be changed, there is opportunity for more children walking and biking to and from school.



On the survey, parents were asked what factors were they concerned about with allowing their children to walk or bike to school. Those families that lived far from the school site were most likely to state that the distance factor prohibits their children from walking or biking. Amount of traffic, dangerous intersections, and speed of traffic were the most common worries of parents at all distances from the school. The above graph shows the parents attitudes of the reasons why they do not want their children to walk or bike to school.

The last three questions on the parent survey asked opinions on walking and biking to school. The vast majority of survey respondents (77%) view that the school currently takes a neutral view on either encouraging or discouraging children to walk or bike. More parents think the school encourages walking and biking as opposed to discouraging them.

Fifty-five percent of parents also took a neutral opinion on if walking or biking to school is fun or boring for children. Over 36 percent of the parents believe that walking and biking to school is fun or very fun, while 8.5 percent think that children walking or biking to school is boring or very boring. Seventy-two percent of the parents believe that walking and biking to school is a healthy or very healthy activity. Twenty-two percent were neutral on the healthy question, and only five percent thought that walking and biking to school were unhealthy activities. Comments show that those who answered it being unhealthy believe it is so because of the safety dangers that exist.

Kennedy's Travel Environment

There are streets on three sides of the school property. The front side of the property faces east, and is located on 7th Street SW. 7th Street SW is classified as a minor arterial street. On the south side of the school property is Willmar Avenue SW, which is also classified as a minor arterial. On the north side of the property is Kandiyohi Avenue SW, which is classified as a collector street. With the three bordering streets all major roads for the community, comes fairly significant traffic volumes. 7th Street SW has over 4000 annual average daily traffic (AADT) counts in front of the school. Willmar Avenue SW has a 7,200 AADT count bordering the school's property. Kandiyohi Avenue has an AADT count of 1,550 bordering the school's property.

Within the designated walk/bike zone for Kennedy Elementary are a couple of other designated collector streets. The first is Trott Avenue which is located 3 blocks north of the school. The AADT is shown as 5,500 vehicles to the east of 7th Street. The count would be lower as you head west. Fifth Street SW is also designated as a collector street. It is located two blocks east of the school site. The AADT for the portion of the road directly east of the school is approximately 2,300 vehicles. South of Willmar Avenue the AADT is 2,450 vehicles.

Some designated local streets within the school zone also have higher AADTs than typical local streets. Eleventh Street between Willmar and Kandiyohi Avenues has an AADT range between 1,450 and 1,600 vehicles. South of Willmar Avenue on 7 1/2 Street the AADT is 1,150 vehicles. Ninth Street SW south of Willmar Avenue has an AADT of 1,000 vehicles.

All the streets in the vicinity of the school have 30 mph speed zones. 7th Street has a school speed zone of 20 mph during arrival and departure times. The school speed zone has the proper signage and flashers.

The school is surrounded by neighborhoods, and is thus landlocked for any expansion of bus facilities or parent drop-off and pick up locations. Solutions to problems will need to utilize current parking lot and area streets that are in place.

The school's main parking lot is located on the south side of the building, with three access points off 7th Street SW. It includes a small separate parking location for handicapped parking near the south entrance doors. There is an additional parking lot on the rear, south side of the school.

The School District buses children that live over two miles from the school site at no cost. Parents that live within this two mile zone may pay to have their children bussed from designated pick-up and drop-off locations along the bus routes. Busses utilize 7th Street SW for unloading children in the morning and utilize the southern parking lot (with designated space) for afternoon pick-up. There is no curb side pick-up in the parking lot, however, buses do not drive away until all buses are loaded and they leave together.

In the morning buses are staggered enough to allow a good flow of unloading of children. Several buses can be unloaded at the same time at the curb side with sidewalks connecting to



the school's front door. Only buses are supposed to park in the designated street location, but there are occasions where parents do not follow rules and drop children off in this location. This would be a big problem if more parents started to disobey this rule. In the afternoon buses are loaded together using the south parking lot.

Details will be discussed in the section describing the parent survey and student tally, however, there is a large

number of parents that both drop-off and pick-up their children. There are a higher percentage of student drop-offs than afternoon pick-ups.

Parents of kindergarten and first graders have a drop-off and pick up location in the rear parking lot. This is close to where these children have their classrooms. There is a circulation of cars in the parking lot with children being picked up and let out at curb side. Older children with K – 1 siblings can also be dropped off and picked up in this location.

For grades 2-5 parent drop off is in the south parking lot. There are instructions given to parents on how to enter and leave the facility at the beginning of the school year. Children are dropped off curb side and utilize the south-side doors. Flow would be better if parents would drive a little forward along the curbside to let their children out. This would allow several cars at once to be unloaded safely. The designated pick-up location for grades 2-5 is on the back side of the school along the east side of 8th Street.

The parent pick-up of children is not ideal. It is very congested. 8th Street and Rice Street form a circular route with Kandiyohi Avenue as the only connecting street. The southern parking lot, that acts as a pick-up location for grades K – 1 has its entrances off



Rice Street. It forces a lot of cars into a small area. Some parents picked-up their children on 8th Street on the west side of the street, which forces their children to cross the busy street. Many were crossing without supervision at mid-block. Cars exit 8th Street onto Kandiyohi Avenue where there is a crossing guard stationed, assisting children both walking across 8th Street heading west and across Kandiyohi Avenue, heading north. This adds to the slowing down of cars on the street waiting for walking children to cross the streets.

Some parents drop-off and pick-up their children on side streets other than designated locations. This seems to occur on the streets on the east side of 7th Street and on the back north side on the north side of Kandiyohi Avenue. In both instances there are crossing guards that help them cross busy 7th Street and Kandiyohi Avenue.

In the morning, children come in the front and south-side entrances. Some children stand outside back doors until someone lets them in. When school is let out the back doors are open for use.

Currently there are a small percentage of students that walk or bicycle to school. Details on how many are given under the discussion of the survey results. The discussion on the identified needs and solutions for walking and biking is discussed below. With the school being bordered by busy streets, the bicycle environment for young bicyclists is not ideal.

The school has four locations where it utilizes adult crossing guards in both morning and afternoon arrival and departure times. The locations of the crossing guards are:

- Grace & 7th Street
- Kandiyohi Ave. & 7th Street
- 8th Street and Kandiyohi Ave.
- 7th Street and Willmar Ave. (As not many cross this busy street the crossing guard sits in their car until needed.)

Many of the neighborhood streets surrounding the school have sidewalks, however there are a few key streets that do not have sidewalks, or have sidewalks on only one side of the street. As the school is located in an older section of the community, many of the sidewalks are not as wide as today's standard widths.

Kennedy Elementary School



-  Missing Sidewalks
-  Crossing Guard Locations
-  Proposed Pathway
-  Bus loading & unloading
-  Bicycle Racks
-  Disabled Parking
-  Proposed Marked Crossing

Kennedy Elementary School's SRTS Needs Discussion

Engineering Needs and Measures Discussion

Sidewalk Needs

On the north side of the school property, along Kandiyohi Avenue, the sidewalk is in need of repairs. Tree roots have caused the sidewalk to heave up and break along a stretch of the sidewalk.

Directly east of the school's property there are several (east to west) avenues that lack sidewalks, or only have a sidewalk on one side of the street. Rice Avenue is split by the school property. The east side of the school has the Avenue termini at 7th Street at the location of the School's front doors and a current crossing guard location. The missing sidewalk on the south side of Rice Avenue would make this primary school walking route safer. To the South of Rice Avenue are Grace and Robbins Avenues. Both of these avenues lack sidewalks on both sides of the road. Robbins Avenue would be the better candidate for a sidewalk construction as Grace Avenue pedestrians need only walk one block to the north to travel east utilizing the one sidewalk on the north side of Rice Avenue.

On the west side of the school there is a connecting one-block segment of Rice Avenue and 10th Street that needs sidewalks. The Termini of Rice Street is 8th Street that fronts the back side of the school. Unless a child lives on Rice Street students are encouraged to walk west on Kandiyohi Avenue, as it has sidewalks on both sides and the school has posted a crossing guard at 8th Street and Kandiyohi Avenue.

To address the narrow width sidewalks in the older neighborhoods around the school, The City should have a policy that when sidewalk stretches need to be replaced they are upgraded to today's standard widths. In addition, the school needs to encourage the City to better enforce removing snow from area sidewalks.

Pathway Needs

In 2009, Kennedy Elementary School submitted an unsuccessful SRTS application for a pathway from the Willmar Avenue and 9th Street SW T-intersection to the school. The project at the time also included a trail loop to be used to teach students about the benefits of walking and bicycling.

The proposed new trail specifically addresses the needs of students traveling to and from school on foot or by bike from the neighborhoods to the southwest of the school campus. Because of barriers surrounding and within the campus, these students currently travel a long, indirect, and rather unpleasant route. The school has a chain-link fence that encloses the

school's stadium, thus children cannot cut across the fields to the school. The existing conditions discourage more students from walking and biking and prevent walkers. The proposed trail would be lighted and would significantly shorten the current route children now must take to travel to/from school. The shortened school length would add many additional houses that would be within the school's walk zone. The project would call for a marked crosswalk at Willmar Avenue and 9th Street SW. There would be a need to have a crossing guard at the new crosswalk when and if it is constructed.



This picture looks north at the school grounds, and is a view of the route of the proposed trail as it nears the school. The stadium is on the right side of the photo. The trail will run to the back door of the school. *Note* the “desire-line” in the grass, showing that people are already using this route, though it is not accessible and is impassable in the winter.

Marked Crosswalks

Directly behind the school at the corner of 8th Street and Rice Avenue there is a need for a marked crosswalk. The only marked crosswalk location currently is the intersection of 8th and Kandiyohi. Children utilizing Rice Avenue or children being picked up on the west side of 8th Street would be provided a safer crossing if it were marked. Children would be better directed to where to cross with the marked crossing, as some children currently will cross mid-block to go to waiting vehicles to pick them up. The 8th Street and Rice Avenue intersection is only a two-legged intersection as school property is both on the east and south sides. Here is a picture of this corner.



An additional possible location for a crosswalk would be the T-intersection of 7th Street and Robbins Street. This would not be recommended until Robbins Avenue has a sidewalk, and if a

crossing guard was posted at this intersection. If these safety features all were to happen it would encourage more parents living along this street to allow their children to walk to school.

Another way to improve safety at the intersections with marked crossings and crossing guards on 7th Street, and also Kandiyohi Avenue, is to construct curb extensions, also known as bump outs. This will help calm traffic as well as give pedestrians a shorter distance to travel within the traffic zone.

Parking Restriction Needs

The view of oncoming traffic could be enhanced for crossing guards if intersections where they are located would extend the no parking zone back an additional car length from the intersections. This would open up the field of sight for the crossing guards, pedestrians, and for



those driving. Another place to restrict parking would be the two street parking spaces that are located on Rice Avenue that are between the two backside parking lot entrances. Vehicles exiting the parking lot, which is also utilized as a pick-up/drop-off site for kindergarten and 1st graders, could have a better line of site for both pedestrians and motor vehicles by restricting parking at this location. The picture is showing cars parked in this location.

Congested Traffic

There are not many options for the congested traffic that occurs with children being dropped off or picked up by private vehicles. The school is located in the middle of old neighborhoods that were not designed to handle large volumes of traffic at the same time. One possible approach to investigate is utilizing an option of a remote safe parking area near by the school and allowing the children to walk the remaining short distance to and from the school. The route utilized would need to be one of the streets which currently have sidewalks and crossing guard assistance at the school site. If a proper location could be found and promoted, it could allow children to get some exercise and lower the traffic congestion closer to the school. Below are a couple of pictures showing traffic on 8th Street and Kandiyohi Avenue.



Intersection Lighting

Some intersections around the school could use more lighting according to school staff. The Kandiyohi Avenue and 7th Street intersection was specifically mentioned. City light poles generally are located near intersections, and cannot be easily moved. Willmar Municipal Utilities have been studying new LED street lights. Sometime in the upcoming years they will both decide on the product they like and it will make economic sense to make the switch over to the new technology. It is hoped that when the new lighting system is installed in future years lighting will improve over the older technology. Educating children to wear reflective clothing will also be part of the safety solution.

ADA Needs

The schools front door is currently not handicapped accessible as there is a small step located where students enter/exit the front doors. The Southside doors are handicapped accessible and are where most handicapped individuals would choose to enter the building. However, the front doors should also be accessible with the construction of a ramp to remove the step. The door should also have an activator for the door to open by pressing a button.

Bike Racks

The current location of the school's bike racks is in a good location on the southeast side of the building near the entrance doors. The position of the bike racks is directly behind the school's handicapped parking lot. There has been one occasion when an elderly driver drove through the lot and hit a bike rack. Fortunately this occurred when no pedestrians or bicyclists were present. A



more pronounced curb throughout the length of the parking lot and the bike racks would help this situation.

Enforcement, Education, and Encouragement Discussion

The needs and strategies for the SRTS Plan dealing with the categories of enforcement, education, and encouragement are all interrelated. There will be some planned measures that can easily fit and be discussed within more than one of these three categories. All three categories must be worked on together to reach the vision for this plan.

While the needs for engineering solutions are different at each Willmar School District site, the enforcement, education, and encouragement goals are basically the same. Because of this, there will be opportunities for the two elementary schools and the middle school to work together in some of action measures discussed below. The middle school may have greater differences in how it goes about encouraging and educating their students than the two elementary schools due to the age differences in the children.

In moving forward to implement SRTS Plans at each of the three school sites involved with SRTS, the SRTS Teams at each school will need to work with the other teams. Time, effort, and costs can be shared in working on some shared action steps together. For example, if someone is brought in to talk to children at a SRTS educational assembly, it can be arranged that the person could visit all three schools on the same day. SRTS media campaigns can be coordinated together between the three SRTS Teams as another example. In preparing the three SRTS plans for the Willmar School District, an effort has been made to keep each school aware of what the other school's strategies are so that coordination is thought about upfront. Many of the same strategies and action steps discussed in all three plans are similar to allow this helpful coordination to occur.

Enforcement Needs and Measures

The primary purpose of SRTS enforcement strategies is to deter unsafe behaviors of motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists and to encourage all road users to obey traffic laws and share the road safely. Enforcement measures are not only the responsibility of the local police, but with the school and the community at large as well. Enforcement measures go hand in hand with education and safety awareness measures that are also discussed within this plan.

Through the various needs identification steps taken in preparing this plan there have been unsafe behaviors that have been identified for streets around the school and on the school campus. Speeding is a concern on the streets surrounding the school, particularly on 7th Street, and Willmar and Kandiyohi Avenues. Particular attention is needed to be paid to the school's designated school speed zones. Studies show that speed matters when it comes to determining

if a pedestrian lives or dies in an accident. “At 20 mph, a pedestrian has a 5 percent chance of dying if he/she is hit by a car. At 30mph, the chance of dying increases to roughly 45 percent. If a pedestrian is hit by a motor vehicle traveling 40 mph, the risk of dying increases to 85 percent.”

Another enforcement concern is for motorists to follow the laws regarding yielding to pedestrians. All city street intersections are crosswalks, not just the marked crosswalks. The law unfortunately is often ignored. Concerns are also with motorists obeying crossing guards at the four posted locations. Also motorists need to make full stops at the marked stop signs on the streets near the school. Additionally, motorists need to obey laws regarding passing stopped school buses.

Kennedy Elementary also has some problems with motorists parking in locations where it is prohibited, often to either pick up or drop off their children. This problem both involves not following state and city parking laws, but also not following on-school-property parking rules. Of particular concern at Kennedy is that some parents ignore the no parking area along 7th Street that is designated and signed as a bus drop off zone only, to drop off their children.

Pedestrian and bicyclist poor behaviors are also a concern when it comes to traveling to and from school. While steps to correct these problems will be mainly addressed under education, it is proper under enforcement measures to stop children when seen not obeying laws to point out their errors, and take the appropriate corrective measures.

City Police Department Enforcement Measures

Discussions with the Willmar Police Department show their willingness to be a partner in the Safe Routes to School initiative. The Police Department already takes an active role in working to provide a safe environment for students both at school and at commuting to and from school. School Resource Officers are assigned to Willmar schools to assist with safety, enforcement, and safety education needs. Willmar Police also already provide a stepped up presence of patrols around the schools during the primary times when students are traveling to and from the schools. In addition, the police have set up a reporting program for both school bus drivers and crossing guards to utilize if they witness drivers not following traffic laws. All complaints are followed up on, and there have been tickets issued as a result.

As it is the case with many communities, the City budget restraints have an impact on the amount of assistance the Willmar Police Department can provide. The Department has seen cutbacks in their budget, and thus they have limits on how much service they can offer. The Department no longer is able to afford providing bike patrols and the Community Service Officer position was dropped.

With these budgeting limits being said, the Police Department is willing to work with the school and community if there is a desire to begin a progressive ticketing and media campaign. The Police Department can assist with the media efforts with placing news about the program on their internet and Facebook sites as well as utilizing the local television access channel. The Department does reserve the right to give out tickets as they determine are necessary, meaning they will not always give warnings to law violators during the beginning of the program. A progressive ticketing campaign involves first a full community awareness of safety needs and to discuss stepped up enforcement measures. Warning tickets followed by actual traffic citations are also part of the program. It should also be pointed out that a zero tolerance policy should be kept for those caught speeding within a school's speed zone.

The Willmar Police Department currently owns two portable speed trailers. They are willing to place these trailers at key locations from time to time to assist with SRTS enforcement efforts.

Lastly, the Willmar Police Department wants to be contacted and be made aware of any safety concerns the school has, and with any regular traffic violations being seen at a particular location. They will step up patrol action in areas where it is determined to be needed.

School and Community Enforcement Measures

As described above under "Roosevelt's Travel Environment" section, the school provides crossing guards in front of the school to cross 19th Avenue. The crossing guards do not only make it safer for the students in traveling to/from school, but also leads to more parents feeling comfortable about their children walking or biking to school. Proper annual education of the crossing guards need to be continued. Currently the crossing guards have proper flag equipment, but do not have safety vests that would assist in their visibility. This should be on the priority list of needs to purchase the clothing. To increase visibility at the non-intersection crosswalk location, crossing guards could possibly carry flashing lighted signs.

School staff is also stationed outside observing and assisting with both student arrival and departure. The staff help ensure that students follow proper safety measures on the school's property.

There are a couple of community enforcement programs that are available, and should be investigated to determine if volunteers are available and willing to participate. On the neighborhood level, surrounding the school, some homeowners may put up yard signs or stickers to encourage drivers to slow down. Signs could possibly be designed and made ready by art classes at the schools. Another possible program would have parent volunteers who drop off and/or pick up their children at school to agree to be part of a "pace car" program. A pace car program uses volunteers who take a pledge to follow speed limits, stop at stop signs, and

obey other traffic control devices and school rules. The pace cars slow traffic down by modeling good behavior.

Education and Encouragement Needs and Measures

Education and encouragement will be discussed together as they work hand in hand, and the activities involved often address both areas. Roosevelt Elementary School will play an important role with these activities, but other organizations in the community will also play important roles. The Kandiyohi County YMCA, the Kandiyohi County Department of Public Health, and Willmar Community Education and Recreation are three important partners in providing both education and encouragement for healthy living and lifestyles. Education not only involves children, but parents and the community at large, especially focusing on safe driving behaviors.

YMCA Assistance

The Kandiyohi County YMCA, located in Willmar, is a willing partner with the Safe Routes to School Program. They have agreed to work with the schools to provide youth learning and encouragement opportunities in the programs that they operate. In April, the YMCA holds their Healthy Kids Day. It is a free event that is open to all children Pre-K through 5th Grade, but requires an adult to participate with a participating child. The program is designed to help keep children's minds and bodies active during the summer months. Teaching bicycle safety is always part of the event. Willmar Police Department Officers assist with the effort.

The YMCA offers a Summer Day Camp Program for K – 6th Grade aged children. Each day different activities are planned for the children that have enrolled in the program. The YMCA is always looking for good activities for the Day Camp, and is willing to consider adding some SRTS activities that will both educate on safety and encourage walking and bicycling.

The YMCA has participated in the past with a Downtown Becker Market Family Bike Ride event. They are very willing to participate in such events in the future. The YMCA's Healthy Family Home web site provides a variety of useful articles and information to promote and educate on healthy living. The Heart and Sole Running Club is open to children 9 – 14 years old that want to be part of a run for fun group, and get into the sport of running. The Club runs for 8 weeks during the year. The Youth Fitness program meets twice a week for six weeks, and is designed for youth ages 10 to 15 years old to gain a competitive edge in their respective sports by providing participants with increased strength and endurance through workouts using resistance and polymetric based training. The free Active Teens Program is open to 7th grade and older aged children and is designed to orient participants to the Y's Wellness Center cardio and strength training equipment.

Willmar Community Education and Recreation (WCER)

The City and School District have a Joint Powers Agreement in operating the Willmar Community Education and Recreation Department. The WCER provides a wide array of youth recreational opportunities, both for team sport and leisure-type non-team sport activities. Annually, in the fall, the WCER holds its Ride the Trails Event. This Bicycling event provides organized riding opportunities geared towards families and longer designated routes for those looking for a longer bicycle ride. Proceeds of the event help to pay for the expansion of trail facilities in the City.

WCER has just started a new program in 2013 called the “Wheels for Kids” Program. The program takes old bicycles that need repairs and fix them up to give away. Many of the bicycles will come from bicycles that would have been auctioned off by the City’s Police Department from unclaimed bicycles. Other bicycles will be donated by the public. Seventy bicycles have been collected thus far. The bicycles are in fairly decent condition, needing only minor repairs or maintenance. The bicycles range from young children to adult sizes. The Willmar Kiwanis Club donated \$10,000 that was used to purchase the needed repair equipment and three bike racks. The program is currently seeking out volunteers that have the needed knowledge in repairing bicycles. The Best Buy store in town has signed up to have store employees volunteer for a day in June to help at getting the 70 bicycles ready to be given to children in need. A retired bicycle repair expert has volunteered to help guide the repair efforts. The plan calls for additional bicycles to be donated/collected so that during the winter months additional bicycles will be made ready to be given to children. It is hoped that some children that will receive a bike, will help make the repairs. This will allow these children to be educated on bicycle maintenance and how to make simple repairs. The program may also get the Boy Scouts involved for scouts that are interested in earning a Bicycle Merit Badge.

SECTION FOUR: KENNEDY ELEMENTARY SRTS ACTION PLAN

I. Recommended Education and Encouragement Strategies

Education includes identifying safe routes, teaching students safe walking and bicycling techniques, and informing the public about driver safety concerns near schools. Encouragement strategies are aimed at increasing the number of students who walk and bike to school. The two strategies are tied closely together and are thus highlighted together.

A. Objective: Teach students pedestrian safety skills in a way that is clear, hands-on, and consistent.

- Action: Provide pedestrian education within physical education classes.
 - Who: School
 - When: Ongoing, beginning at start of school year
 - Funding: None needed
- Action: Annually the K-3 grade classes have a walking field trip to the City Library. The walk is approximately six or seven blocks in length. Second Grade classes also have a walking field trip to the Post Office, and Kindergarten classes to the Willmar Fire Station. The school will take this opportunity to teach pedestrian safety skills to the students.
 - Who: School
 - When: Ongoing, on an annual basis
 - Funding: None needed

B. Objective: Teach students safe bicycling skills in a way that is clear, hands-on, and consistent.

- Action: Provide Second Grade classes with bicycle safety training and provide students with helmets. Children are fitted for proper helmet size and fit.
 - Who: School and Willmar Police Department
 - When: Annually in May
 - Funding: Helmets are provided by the Police Department through United Way funds.
- Action: “Healthy Kids Day” will include bicycle training for children Pre-K to 5th Grade.
 - Who: Kandiyohi County YMCA, School to help promote
 - When: Annually in April

- Funding: YMCA
- Action: “Ride the Trails” Event provides an organized family bicycling event in the City.
 - Who: Willmar Community Education & Recreation
 - When: Annually in September
 - Funding: Participant fee
- Action: Willmar Ambulance Service has a Bike Helmet Program, funded through donations, where children’s bike helmets are given to families that cannot afford them.
 - Who: Willmar Ambulance Service
 - When: Ongoing, their EMS Open House in May is one of the major times where helmets are given out
 - Funding: Donations given to the Willmar Ambulance Service

C. Objective: Educate parents on transportation related procedures, and all community drivers about the need for driving safely around the school to reduce the likelihood of accidents.

- Action: Provide parents with safety rules and school procedures dealing with students arriving and departing to/from school by all modes of travel, through parent informational packet and school web site.
 - Who: School
 - When: Ongoing, beginning at start of school year
 - Funding: Minor expense by the school
- Action: Promote safe driving around the school by newspaper articles and other means to be determined by the SRTS Team, with cooperation from the other School District SRTS Teams.
 - Who: All three school SRTS Teams
 - When: Ongoing, beginning at start of school year
 - Funding: Minor or no expense by the school

D. Objective: Encourage more parents to allow their children to walk or bike to school within the school’s walk zone, and encourage all students to be more physically active.

- Action: Prepare a walk and bike to school route map, and display on school’s web site.
 - Who: School’s SRTS Team
 - When: During 2014 school year
 - Funding: Minor expense for school
- Action: Promote and attempt to have neighborhood parents begin “walking school busses.”

- Who: School SRTS Team to promote and provide information
Neighborhood parents to organize and run
- When: During 2014 school year
- Funding: No significant cost involved
- Action: Promote an ongoing organized walk and bike to school days, including the
“International Walk and Bike to School Day.”
 - Who: School’s SRTS Team
 - When: Start planning in the beginning of the school year
 - Funding: Minor expense for school
- Action: The school will look into having students participate in art projects involving
preparation of posters that can be used for a media campaign to highlight SRTS
and to encourage drivers to obey traffic laws near the school.
 - Who: School’s SRTS Team
 - When: To be timed with other media efforts
 - Funding: Minor expense for school
- Action: The school will investigate if there is interest and try to determine a good location
for a park and walk program for children who are dropped off by their parents. A
proper location for the remote site would also need to be determined.
 - Who: School’s SRTS Team
 - When: This will be a longer term priority effort
 - Funding: Minor expense for school
- Action: Willmar Community Education & Recreation is in the process of beginning a
“Wheels for Kids” program. Used bicycles will be repaired by volunteers and
given to those who are in need. The program will include having children that
will receive a bike, help out on the repairs, so they can learn about simple repairs
and maintenance. The program may involve the Boy Scouts going for their
Bicycle Merit Badge.
 - Who: Willmar Community Education & Recreation, Community Volunteers
 - When: Beginning in 2013 (20 bicycles to be fixed up to be given in the first
round)
 - Funding: Willmar Kiwanis Club has donated \$10,000 for repair equipment and
bike racks
WCER will continue to seek donations of cash and bicycles for the
program
The program may seek SRTS funding to help assist with funding bike
maintenance training and to help buy any additional needed bicycle
repair equipment

II. Recommended Enforcement Strategies

SRTS enforcement is a community effort that involves law enforcement, students, parents, school administration, and others. The strategies will target driver behavior as well as pedestrian and bicyclist behavior.

A. Objective: Reduce the possibilities of accidents by providing traffic enforcement measures within the walk and bike zone of the school.

- Action: Begin a “progressive ticketing campaign,” with assistance from the Willmar Police Department. Publicity of stepped up enforcement will be a combination of publicity using local media, school information, and police web sites. The Police reserve the right to decide to ticket before giving a warning. Step up patrols at school opening and closing after media campaign.
 - Who: School’s SRTS Team to contact media, Willmar Police
 - When: In the beginning of the school year
Work on doing media campaign and stepped up enforcement annually
 - Funding: Small expense for media campaign development
- Action: Willmar Police Department will continue to respond to school bus driver and school crossing guard reports of motorists not following traffic laws.
 - Who: School Bus Drivers, Crossing Guards, Police
 - When: Ongoing
 - Funding: No added costs
- Action: Periodically utilize the Police Department’s two portable speed trailers, especially after school begins to remind drivers to keep within the posted speed limits.
 - Who: Coordinate with the Willmar Police Department
 - When: Periodically on an ongoing basis
 - Funding: No added costs
- Action: Develop a “pace car” program where parents volunteer to sign a pledge to obey traffic laws and school procedures to set a good example for other parents that drive their children to/from school. The school’s web site can be utilized to publicize the program.
 - Who: School’s SRTS Team
 - When: At times when parents are engaged with the school, such as parent teacher conferences
 - Funding: Minor expense for school

B. Objective: Help provide enforcement and increased safety through the use of crossing guards at the four marked crossing locations during arrival and dismissal times. Investigate if additional locations for crossing guards would be advisable.

- Action: Continue to provide trained adult crossing guards at the marked crossing at the four current locations. Future determination if any additional crossing guard sites are advisable. A couple locations have been discussed in the development of this plan as possibilities. Investigate if any additional signs, vests, and other gear would assist in making the crossing guard and the crossing more visible.
 - Who: School and SRTS Team in investigating if added gear would help
 - When: Ongoing, with determining additional needs to be done in the short term
 - Funding: Low cost expense for school, over their current expenses
If additional sites are selected for crossing guards this would be a modest additional expense for the school

III. Recommended Engineering Strategies

Engineering strategies are meant to improve the safety conditions within the physical walking and bicycling environment. The issues and recommendations that have been identified should be used for planning purposes only and may require further engineering analysis, design, and public input before implementation.

A. Issue: Sidewalks in the school's walk zone need to be in decent shape to protect against children tripping and injuring themselves. Sidewalks in good condition help improve the walk environment that can help lead to more students walking to school.

- Action: On the north side of the school's property, along Kandiyohi Avenue, the sidewalk is in need of repairs due to tree roots causing the sidewalk to heave up and break.
 - Who: Willmar School District
 - When: Within 1 to 2 years
 - Funding: Modest cost of approximately \$3,000 to \$9,000
Could be made a part of a SRTS application
A rough estimate for sidewalk repairs is between \$250 to \$350 for each five feet of slab length

- Action: When poor sidewalk conditions become evident within the school walk zone, notify the City of the problem so they can be evaluated and placed in the City's capital improvement program.
 - Who: SRTS Team will help make recommendations as needed
 - When: Ongoing
 - Funding: Costs of needed repairs that would be placed on property owners and/or City

B. Issue: On some key student travel streets there are no sidewalks or sidewalks on one side of the street only. In addition, a pathway is needed on school property's southwest side in order to lengthen the walk zone to neighborhoods located to the school's southwest side.

- Action: Design and construct a trail/pathway on school property that will provide safe and shorter travel to the school starting at the Willmar Avenue and 9th Street SW T-intersection and traveling behind the fenced in athletic field to the side walk on the school building's southwest side. The pathway would allow the walk zone to be extended by two to three blocks to the neighborhoods located to the west and southwest of the school's location. A new marked crosswalk would be needed to cross Willmar Avenue as part of the project at the intersection of 9th Street SW.
 - Who: School District
 - When: One to five years
 - Funding: Rough estimate of \$30,000 to \$50,000
To be affordable, a SRTS application or other grant source would need to help pay for the improvement
- Action: On the east side of the school, sidewalks are lacking on the south side of Rice Avenue and on both sides of Grace Avenue and Robbins Avenue. On the west side of the school, sidewalks are needed on segments of Rice Avenue and 10th Street. Sidewalks would greatly improve the safety of children walking to/from school along these streets. To move forward with any new sidewalks there will need to be the political will of the City Council to move forward on constructing new sidewalks.
 - Who: City of Willmar, with support from the school
 - When: Ideally short term, but likely long term
 - Funding: Major Cost
As property owners would be mainly responsible for the expensive costs of adding sidewalks, it would be necessary to find grant dollars to help pay for the improvements to have their support, which is likely needed

to have City Council support

No engineering cost estimates have been determined for these sidewalk improvements

C. Issue: There are locations where additional marked crosswalks would provide increased safety for students walking to school. Bump outs (curb extensions) at some of the intersection locations of these marked crossings would also provide an additional safety element for pedestrians.

- Action: Create a marked crossing at the corner of 8th Street and Rice Avenue. This marked crosswalk is not only needed for the safety of student pedestrians, but also children crossing the road to get to parents' vehicle picking them up from school.
 - Who: City of Willmar
 - When: Within the first year
 - Funding: Minor expense
- Action: Construct bump outs at locations where crossing guards are posted. This will add an additional safety element to the locations where the most children cross roads to get to/from the school, by traffic calming and reducing the distance and time pedestrians are within the drive zone. Bump outs also bring pedestrians out from behind park cars so they can see and be seen better.
 - Who: City of Willmar
 - When: Within five years
 - Funding: Apply for SRTS funds to assist with the costs
Cost of a bump out is approximately \$8,000 to \$15,000
- Action: Prepare an engineering study to determine if additional marked crossings within the school's walk zone would help improve student safety. Too many marked crossings may desensitize drivers to their use. 5th Street SW intersections should be analyzed to determine which intersection(s) would best serve walking students heading to Kennedy. The Intersection of Robbins Avenue and 7th Street is also a location that participants thought may be appropriate for an additional marked crosswalk.
 - Who: City of Willmar
 - When: Within three years
 - Funding: Minor expense
If city staff can undertake the study, and approximately \$10,000 for an outside consultant is needed to conduct the evaluation study

D. Issue: At some identified locations the removal of on-street parking will help site lines of students crossing intersections. The removal of the parking spots will both help pedestrians to see and be seen.

➤ Action: Increase the no parking zone by one car length to streets at intersections where crossing guards are posted. In addition, create a no parking zone on Rice Avenue between the two entrances to the school's back parking lot. This will increase visibility of vehicles leaving the parking lot, including seeing pedestrians and oncoming traffic.

- Who: City of Willmar
- When: During first year
- Funding: Minor expense for signs and paint

E. Issue: While, the school is ADA compliant at other entry locations, there is the need to make the school's front door (off 7th Street) handicapped accessible. Currently a small step is required to enter the building. Note: Handicapped parking accesses the school's south doors.

➤ Action: Design and construct an ADA compliant front door entry at Kennedy. The project should include a door activator mechanism.

- Who: Willmar School District
- When: Place project in the school's capital improvement program, where it can be prioritized with the other needed projects
- Funding: Moderate expense for the School District

F. Issue: There has been one occurrence where an elderly driver jumped the low curb at the handicapped parking lot and hit one of the bike racks located behind the parking lot. Luckily no one was hit or injured because of this incident, but steps are needed to help make sure it will not occur again.

➤ Action: Rebuild the curb that over the years has settled lower than it was designed, or look at other design elements that can place a barrier between the sidewalk and bike rack area and the parking lot.

- Who: Willmar School District
- When: Place project in the school's capital improvement program, where it can be prioritized with the other needed projects
- Funding: Moderate expense for the School District

IV. Recommended Evaluation Strategies

Evaluation is an important component of any SRTS program. There needs to be an impartial review of what strategies have been implemented to determine if adjustments or changes are necessary to meet the goals and objectives laid out in the plan. In addition, new strategies may need to be developed to better meet the plan's objectives. The parent survey and student tally results may be utilized as a baseline to help measure student travel behavior and measure effectiveness of SRTS efforts over time.

Evaluation Strategy Action Steps:

- Keep the SRTS Team in place to meet periodically to work on encouragement, education, and enforcement goals and to evaluate and push for activities related to engineering action steps. There should be no cost for this strategy step.
- On an annual basis, conduct classroom student tallies to determine if progress is being made on the number of students walking and biking to school with the SRTS efforts being conducted. There should be no cost for this strategy step.
- After it is determine that an appropriate number of action steps have been taken under education, encouragement, enforcement, and engineering, conduct another parent survey to determine if attitudes are improving over children walking and biking to school. Resurvey every couple of years. This would involve a modest cost for making copies of the survey and for tabulating the results.
- After engineering action steps have been taken, the SRTS Team shall conduct a walking and/or biking audit of the improvement to see firsthand if the results of the new improvements have corrected the safety problems identified. There should be no cost for this strategy step.
- On an ongoing, periodic basis, ask the City of Willmar for both traffic count data and accident data to determine what changes are occurring over time. There should be no cost for this strategy step.
- Review and revise SRTS Plan. The SRTS Team should review how progress is being made on the action steps, and adjust efforts accordingly. Understanding that this Plan is created at a specific moment in time, the SRTS Team should review the Plan in detail periodically. Times, conditions, attitudes, and desires all will change over time. For this

reason, the Plan should be revisited at least every 5 years to determine what changes are needed and what new action steps should be added to keep the Plan relevant in the future. There should be no cost for conducting this strategy step, however new activities will likely be added that will cost money when implemented.

SECTION FIVE: SRTS IMPLEMENTATION RESOURCES

A successful implementation of a SRTS plan will need the continued effort of the School's SRTS Team, along with the support from the School District, the City of Willmar, and various other organizations mentioned as part of this plan. The engagement of the parents and the general public will also be very important to successfully implementing the SRTS plan. There are both federal and state resources that can be utilized to assist with the plan. This section provides web addresses for some of the better-known websites. The SRTS Team may also utilize web search engines to look for issues specific in a particular activity that likely will result in finding additional resources.

The National Center for Safe Routes to School provides a very complete website with information and resources on all aspects of a Safe Routes to School.

<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/index.cfm>

International Walk to School maintains a website that shares SRTS information along with their efforts in organizing the annual International Walk to School Day.

<http://www.iwalktoschool.org/index.htm>

The Minnesota Department of Transportation's SRTS website has general information and resources, grant information, success stories, on line webinars and many other topics to assist with SRTS.

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/saferoutes/>

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) maintains a useful SRTS website containing information about the program.

<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes/>

The Safe Routes to School Partnership provides links and contacts to businesses and organizations in each state that support SRTS, along with other useful information.

<http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/>

Funding Sources

A variety of resources can be utilized in funding SRTS activities. This includes both public grants as well as private sector funding.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

The new federal transportation act, MAP-21, combined the Safe Routes to School grant program in with several other grant programs into a new program called the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). The Minnesota Department of Transportation will administer the program. With this being a brand new program, details about how the program will be funded were still being worked on at the time this plan was written. A new application process will be developed. An important change over the past SRTS Program application is that there will now be a match requirement of likely 20 percent on projects that are funded. The Minnesota Department of Transportation should be contacted to learn more about this competitive grant.

Other Transportation Funding

It may be possible to include a SRTS safety project as part of a planned road major repair or reconstruction project. The engineer for the government entity that jurisdictionally operates the road should be contacted to discuss SRTS safety needs early on when a road project is being designed. There may be sources of funding these engineers could also possibly apply for that would help pay for SRTS safety projects that involve the streets near the school.

School District and City Funding and Other Local Government Funding

The School District and the City have been mentioned in the Action Plan for helping to carry out various inexpensive activities. The School and the City may also be needed as a source for match dollars for grant dollars that are obtained. The County's Department of Health may have programs or resources available to assist with educating and encouraging more physical activity.

Private Sector Funding

Often, local SRTS programs can solicit funding from non-governmental resources within their own communities. The multiple benefits of SRTS programs, including the safety, health, environment, and community impacts, often align with the interests of the local community. Civic Organizations such as the local Lions Club, Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, Jaycees, and others may be willing to help pay for a particular project.

Foundations and corporations/businesses may be willing to assist with a SRTS project. One example of this is Minnesota Blue Cross/Blue Shield that has helped fund SRTS activities in various communities in the past.

Individuals could be possibly approached for funding through beginning a local fund drive. Many programs have raised funds by holding special events. Use the SRTS theme to attract funding. Hold a walkathon or a bicycle event. You can also choose more traditional funding efforts such as bake sales, concerts, talent shows, etc.

APPENDIX

Acknowledgements

Surveys

Kennedy Student Tally Results

Kennedy Parent Survey Results

Kennedy Survey Tabulation Totals

Kennedy Elementary Survey Comments

Observations of Kennedy Elementary School for SRTS

Maps

Willmar Functional Classification

Intersection Accidents Willmar

Willmar Bike and Pedestrian Accident Locations

Kennedy Elementary School's Summary

Kennedy School Needs on Map

Kennedy Elementary School's SRTS Team

- Bruce Richards – Team Leader – Assistant Principal
- Wade Adamson – Physical Education Teacher
- Nichoel Gleason – Teacher and Parent
- Edwina Lorensen – Teacher and Parent
- Julie Arends – Custodian
- Trish Alsdurf - Parent
- Steve Brisdendine – Director of Willmar Community Education & Recreation
- Bruce Peterson – Willmar Planning Department
- Megan Sauer – Willmar Planning Department
- David Wyffels – Willmar Chief of Police
- Gary Danielson – Director of Kandiyohi County Public Works
- Theresa Wittenberg – Director of YMCA
- BobbiJo Berg – Kandiyohi County Public Health
- Donn Winckler – Mid-Minnesota Development Commission

Kennedy Elementary School Student Survey Results

The school conducted the "Student Tallies" during the middle of January, 2013.

The Survey was conducted in the mornings and afternoons of Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays, however some classrooms did not report on each of the six occurrences.

As the survey was conducted in January, weather was cold. There was snow on Wednesday.

Twenty-eight class rooms participated in the survey, with the following grade breakdown:

Kindergarten	6 classrooms
1st Grade	6 classrooms
2nd Grade	6 classrooms
3rd Grade	4 classrooms
4th Grade	3 classrooms
5th Grade	3 classrooms

Note: With more classrooms reporting for younger aged children, results are skewed toward the younger children.

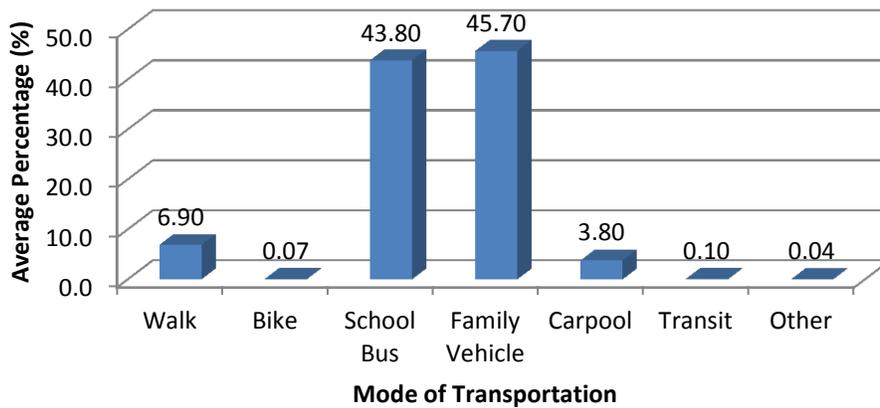
The younger the age, the less likely children will walk or bike.

Kennedy Elementary Student Survey Results for all Six Survey Times

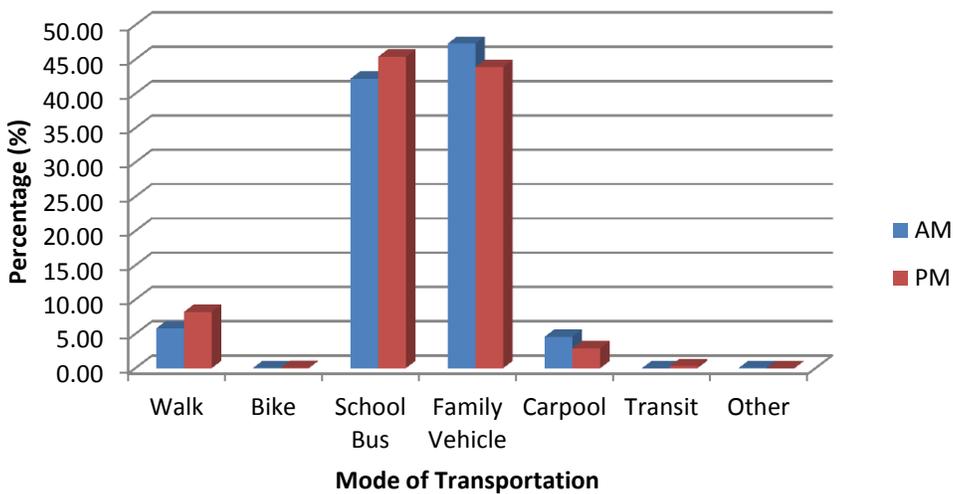
Mode	Average Percentage	AM	PM
Walk	6.90	5.80	8.20
Bike	0.07	0.07	0.08
School Bus	43.80	42.20	45.40
Family Vehicle	45.70	47.30	43.90
Carpool	3.80	4.60	2.90
Transit	0.10	0.00	0.30
Other	0.04	0.07	0.00

Mode	Totals	AM	PM
Walk	192	83	109
Bike	2	1	1
School Bus	1210	606	604
Family Vehicle	1263	679	584
Carpool	104	66	38
Transit	4	0	4
Other	1	1	0

Kennedy Student Survey Results



Morning and Afternoon Comparison



KEY	Reporting Number In Classrooms	Percentage						
		Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Tues. AM	483	4.6	0.0	42.0	49.1	4.6	0.0	0.0
Tues. PM	468	7.9	0.0	45.5	44.0	2.8	0.0	0.2
Wed. AM	546	6.0	0.0	41.0	48.9	4.0	0.0	0.0
Wed. PM	516	7.4	0.0	45.0	46.1	2.9	0.6	0.0
Thurs. AM	406	6.9	0.2	44.1	43.1	5.4	0.0	0.0
Thurs. PM	345	9.9	0.3	46.1	40.6	2.9	0.3	0.0

Note: Approximately 28 children walk or bike in the morning and 37 walk or bike in the afternoon in January from these classrooms reporting.

SRTS Parent Survey Tabulation for Kennedy Elementary School (220 Returns)

1. What is the grade of the child who brought home the survey?
 Kindergarten = 33 , 1st grade = 48 , 2nd grade = 38, 3rd grade = 65, 4th grade = 15 , 5th grade = 28
 No Answers = 1
2. Is the child who brought home the survey male or female? Male = 101 , Female = 126,
 No answer = 1
3. How many children do you have in k -8th grade?
 One = 82, two = 99, three = 28, four = 12, five = 1, No answers = 5

4. How far does your child live from school?

Less than ¼ mile:	37
¼ mile up to ½ mile:	27
½ mile up to 1 mile:	33
1 mile up to 2 miles:	26
2 or more miles:	98
Don't Know:	4
No Answer:	2

5. Answers to what is the street intersection nearest your home are not shown here.
6. Arrive and leave at school method on most days:

	<u>Arrive at school</u>	<u>Leave from school</u>
Walk	27	32
Bike	2	3
School Bus	88	100
Family Vehicle	108	92
Carpool	13	8
Transit	0	0
Other	0	1

Note: Some answered more than one category.

7. How long does it normally take your child to get to/from school?

	<u>To school</u>	<u>From school</u>
Less than 5 minutes	55	45
5 – 10 minutes	76	66
11 – 20 minutes	63	62
More than 20 minutes	28	51
Don't know/Not sure	4	3
No Answers:	3	

8. Has your child asked permission to walk or bike to/from school in the last year?

Yes = 69, No = 153, No Answers: 5

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

K = 1, 1st = 6, 2nd = 11, 3rd = 25, 4th = 9, 5th = 20, 6th = 4, 7th = 10, 8th = 1, 9th = 2, 10th = 1

I would not feel comfortable at any grade = 124

No Answers: 15

10. What of the following issues affected your decision to allow, or not allow, your child to walk or bike to/from school? (select all that apply) (Number that checked shown)

Distance:	115
Convenience of driving:	25
Time:	46
Child's before or after school activities:	17
Speed of traffic along route:	84
Amount of traffic along route:	90
Adults to walk or bike with:	22
Sidewalks or pathways:	35
Safety of intersections and crossings:	83
Crossing guards:	31
Violence or crime:	64
Weather or climate:	87

11. Would you probably let your child walk or bike to/from school if this problem were changed or improved?

My child already walks or bikes to/from school: 43

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not sure</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Distance:	69	75	22	61
Convenience of driving:	23	63	9	132
Time:	43	63	8	114
Child's before or after school activities:	21	68	9	98
Speed of traffic along route:	64	63	14	86
Amount of traffic along route:	61	62	17	87
Adults to walk or bike with:	37	55	10	125
Sidewalks or pathways:	34	61	8	124
Safety of intersections and crossings:	66	55	12	94
Crossing guards:	35	52	6	134
Violence or crime:	51	58	11	107
Weather or climate:	51	61	22	93

12. In your opinion, how much does your child' school encourage or discourage walking and biking to/from school?

Strongly Encourages:	9
Encourages:	24
Neither:	160
Discourages:	5
Strongly Discourages:	10
No Answers:	19

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

Very Fun:	23
Fun:	50
Neutral:	111
Boring:	5
Very Boring:	12
No Answers:	26

14. How healthy is walking or biking to/from school for your child?

Very Healthy:	71
Healthy:	75
Neutral:	44
Unhealthy:	3
Very Unhealthy:	9
No Answers:	25

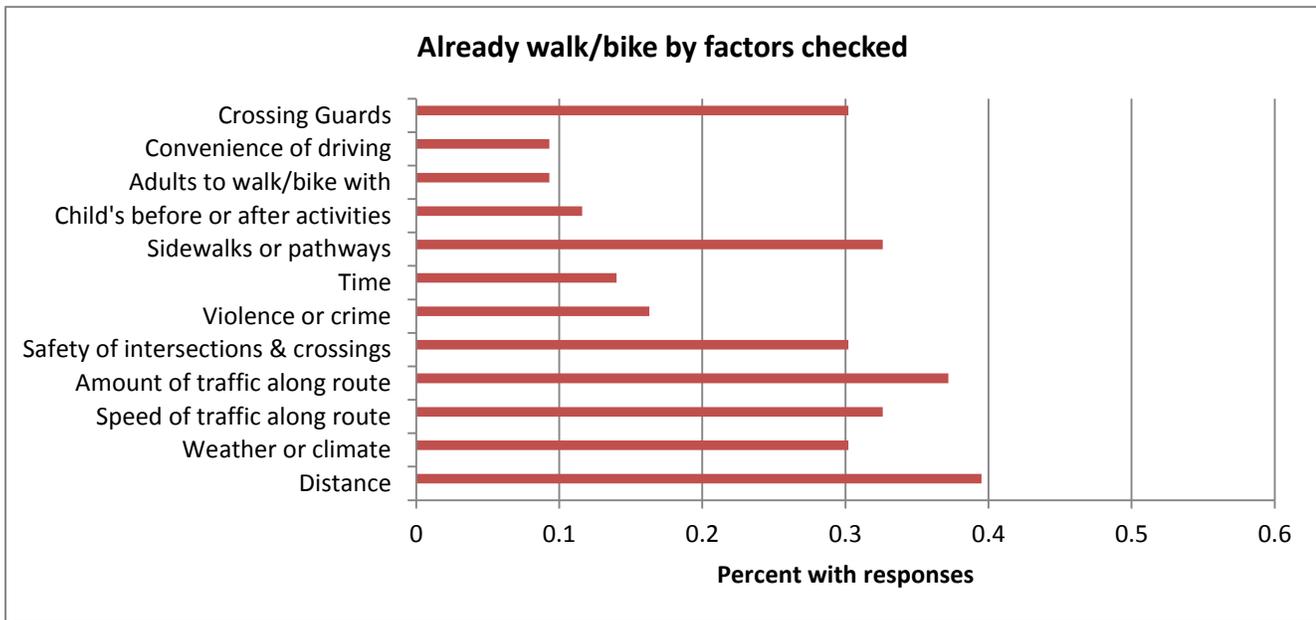
15. What is the highest grade or year of school you completed?

Grade 1 – 8:	17	Grade 9 – 11:	7	Grade 12 or GED:	28
College 1 to 3 or Tech:	83	College Graduate or more:	76	Prefer not to answer:	16

Issues reported to affect the decision to allow a child to walk to/from school by parents of children who already walk or bike to/from school

A total of 43 households reported that their child already walk/bikes to school.

Factor	Percent	Number
Distance	40%	17
Weather or climate	30%	13
Speed of traffic along route	33%	14
Amount of traffic along route	37%	16
Safety of intersections & crossings	30%	13
Violence or crime	16%	7
Time	14%	6
Sidewalks or pathways	33%	14
Child's before or after activities	12%	5
Adults to walk/bike with	9%	4
Convenience of driving	9%	4
Crossing Guards	30%	13



Kennedy Elementary Survey Comments – Safe Routes to School

Family Vehicle – Bus – $\frac{1}{4}$ -1/2 mile

I don't let my kids walk or ride bike because of the traffic on Willmar Avenue. I don't feel safe and I don't want them to be abducted. I'll take the extra time to bring them myself.

Family vehicle – $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 mile

Children should be able to call their parent if they are not seen outside to pick them up and not just let the child walk home without notice.

Family vehicle – less than $\frac{1}{4}$

My husband and I work opposite shifts to ensure one of us picks up the children.

Walk – less than $\frac{1}{4}$ th mile

My children do not have to cross the street. I find that driving them to school is very stressful and chaotic.

Walk – less than $\frac{1}{4}$ th mile

Presently only because we live so close, without crossing the street and walking with others does my child walk to school.

Carpool – Bus - $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile

My children (grade 1 & 5) only walk because we live too close for the bus to get them for free. I pay afternoon bus fees. When its cold/winter, my kids carpool with the neighbors.

Family vehicle – bus – $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile

With the maturity levels of children today and the level of traffic, I do not feel children should walk/bike to school.

Family vehicle – walk- less than $\frac{1}{4}$ mile

I am concerned with the 8am drop off time. Many families work at 8am and paying for cardinal place is a hardship/impossibility. Families need to work to house, clothe, and feed their families. Once winter begins children's health and safety will be at risk due to early drop off time – waiting outside school until 8.

Family vehicle – walk- $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 mile

Very frustrated by the 8:00 coming to Kennedy! The thing that really messed things up for my kids walking or riding bike to school this year was having them in two different buildings

(Kennedy and middle school) and not having the Kennedy kids come to school by 8:00 when middle school starts by 8:00, so they could not ride bike together along Willmar Ave.

School bus- ½ to 1 mile

Just far enough away for child to walk or bike alone until maybe 5th-6th grade or older.

School bus – ½ to 1 mile.

Child is bused from daycare.

Family vehicle – carpool – ½ mile to 1 mile

I am very upset that my 3 children have no busing to or from school. I pay taxes just like the parents that are able to get bussing for their kids. The school is unfair for forcing some kids to walk because not all parents can pay for busing.

Walk – less than ¼ mile

As a family we enjoy the convenience of walking to Kennedy. The crossing guards are wonderful and really look out for the kid's safety.

Family vehicle – ¼ to 1/2mile

The school should not charge families to ride the bus regardless of how close they live to the school.

Family vehicle – less than ¼th mile

I would love for my children to walk or bike to school. Not sure if I'd ever feel comfortable because of safety concerns. I feel the community is safe, but you never know.

Walk – less than ¼th mile

My son only walks 2 blocks, but I still get nervous when he walks, especially if there is no crossing guard on duty.

Bus -2+ miles

A number of similar comments about being too far from school to have walking/biking even a consideration

Walk – less than ¼th mile

Child has learning disabilities. I worry about her having to walk to the middle school when the time comes. The middle school is close to one mile away.

Walk – ¼ to ½ mile

I would not allow my 1st grader to walk to school if it were not for the short distance (mostly on our street) and if she were not with her 2 siblings.

Bus- ½ to 1 mile

I do not feel comfortable with my children crossing Hwy 12 or the railroad tracks. Ex-criminals are living at the highrise. A couple years ago an ex-criminal yelled to my daughter and chased her while she waited at the bus stop by herself. We filed a police report. They will not ever walk to school alone due to safety reasons.

Walk- ¼ to ½ mile

I only allow my child to walk to school because he is with his sibling and other neighborhood children. Also the walk includes our private street and the Kennedy lot only. If it was otherwise I might reconsider.

Family vehicle – ½ to 1 mile

My son does not look for cars when crossing streets. Might get distracted and not make it to school on time. The cold weather could affect my answer also. Note: has a 5th grader.

Walk – less than ¼th mile.

A sidewalk on 10th Street – Rice Ave. – 8th Street would be extremely helpful, as well as locating an additional bike rack at the rear entrance of the school – rear west entrance.

Walk – less than ¼th mile

I am more concerned about her walking all the way to the front of the school, when there is a back door right in front of our house. This would be easier for her.

Family Vehicle – ¼ to ½ mile

The drop-off/pickup in the main parking lot is a model of inefficiency.

Family vehicle – less than ¼th mile

I drive my child to school because of the lack of crossing guards and the amount of time they are at the cross walks.

Family vehicle – Less than 1/4th mile

Traffic is very busy by school and unsupervised. Children are not taught to cross at intersections close to school. Dangerous! Cars too fast and not watching.

Family vehicle – ¼ to ½ mile

I would not allow my child to walk to school if it were not for close proximity (mostly on our private street) and walking with siblings.

Carpool – Walk – ½ mile to mile

Bullying in-services should include unsupervised behavior to and from school.

Family vehicle – 2+ miles

The bus should be an option for all children when it is winter time.

Bus – 2+ miles

We previously lived at an address that bus service was not even an option for the first month even if we paid for it. It is not safe for children to walk to school without an adult. We made sure our next address was at least 2 miles away from the school so our kids could get busing.

Bus – 2+ miles

We use to live within 1 mile of the school and we had no option of riding the bus for the first month. I do not think this is right. Everyone should be able to ride the bus if they choose to.

Family vehicle – 2+ miles

I would not even allow him to ride the bus because crowd control and bullying are out of control, especially after school routes.

Bus – 2+ miles

I wish I lived closer so my kids could walk/bike. There is a lot of foul bullying on bus 11 from Kennedy in the afternoon.

Bus – 1 to 2 miles

It is too early for us to determine if our daughter would be able to walk/bike. At some point we need to reconsider in the years to come.

Family vehicle – 1 to 2 miles

I know walking is a great way of staying healthy, but there are a lot of kids missing because of bad people. I would rather take them and bring them from school. They can exercise with us at home. (Two other comments were written the same way on those living 1 to 2 miles away. This could be from the same household answering the survey for each child?)

Family vehicle – 2+ miles

We live out of town. Willmar Ave. is way to busy to allow an elementary student to walk. There are several unmarked intersections in the area of the school that are very dangerous (no stop sign either way).

Bus – 2+ miles

Please! Please! Get some sidewalks on the west side of the school (Rice Ave. SW), when I drive back there to pick up my child there are kids riding scooters and walking in the street! I cannot believe there are not sidewalks all around a school! Dangerous!

Family Vehicle – Bus-1 to 2 miles

I think busing is very important for safety of crossing Willmar's railroad tracks and Highway 12.

Walk – Bike – 1 to 2 miles

My child walks/bikes mainly because there is a crossing guard.

Bus – 2+ miles

I believe that weather is a big issue for parents unable to transport their children. I also worry about bullying and children's safety now days.

Family vehicle – 2+ miles

My children attend Cardinal Place due to our working shifts. Also did not want to worry about children waiting at bus stops and being teased.

Walk –Family vehicle – 1 to 2 miles

Question 14 checked very unhealthy and wrote down winter. I would rather pay bus company \$20/month to bus my child versus having her walk or paying enormous child care at Cardinal Place.

Observations of Kennedy Elementary School Walking Audit for SRTS

Donn Winckler (MMDC) and Vice Principal Bruce Richards led the audit, and observations were made in both morning arrival and afternoon departure on November 19, 2012.

Kennedy Elementary is the former Willmar High School building located in an older central location in Willmar. The school is surrounded by neighborhoods, and is thus landlocked for any expansion of bus facilities or parent drop-off and pick-up locations. Solutions to problems will need to utilize current parking lot and area streets that are in place.

The School District buses children that live over one mile from the school site. Buses utilize 7th Street SW for unloading children in the morning and utilize the southern parking lot (with designated space) for afternoon pick-up. In the morning buses are staggered enough to allow a good flow of unloading of children. Several buses can be unloaded at the same time at the curb side with sidewalks connecting to the school's front door. Only buses are supposed to park in the designated street location, but there were a couple of cars observed letting their children off in this location. This is not allowed, and would be a big problem if more parents started to disobey this rule. In the afternoon buses are loaded together using the south parking lot. There is no curb side pick-up, however, buses do not drive away until all buses are loaded and they leave together.

Parents of kindergarten and first graders have a drop-off and pick up location in the rear parking lot. This is close to where these children have their classrooms. There is a circulation of cars in the parking lot with children being picked up and let out at curb side. Older children with K-1 siblings can also be dropped off and picked up in this location.

For grades 2-5 parent drop off is in the south parking lot. There are instructions given to parents on how to enter and leave the facility. Children are dropped off curb side and utilize the south-side doors. Flow would be better if parents would drive a little forward along the curbside to let their children out. This would allow several cars at once to be unloaded safely. The designated pick-up location for grades 2-5 is on the back side of the school along the east side of 8th Street.

The parent pick-up of children is not ideal. It is very congested. 8th Street and Rice Street form a circular route with Kandiyohi Avenue as the only connecting street. The southern parking lot, that acts as a pick-up location for grades K-1 has its entrances off of Rice Street. It forces a lot of cars into a small area. Some parents picked-up their children on 8th Street on the west side of the street, which forces their children to cross the busy street. Many were crossing without supervision at mid-block. Cars exit 8th Street onto Kandiyohi Avenue where there is a crossing guard stationed, assisting children both walking across 8th Street heading west and across

Kandiyohi Avenue, heading north. This adds to the slowing down of cars on the street waiting for walking children to cross the streets.

Some parents drop-off and pick-up their children on side streets other than designated locations. This seems to occur on the streets on the east side of 7th Street and on the back north side on the north side of Kandiyohi Avenue. In both instances there are crossing guards that help them cross busy 7th Street and Kandiyohi Avenue.

In the morning, children come in the front and south-side entrances. Some children stand outside back doors until someone lets them in. When school is let out the back doors are open for use.

There were 7 bicycles in the bike rack on the day of this observation.

Many more children walk home from school than walk to school in the morning. Crossing Guards are located at the following locations:

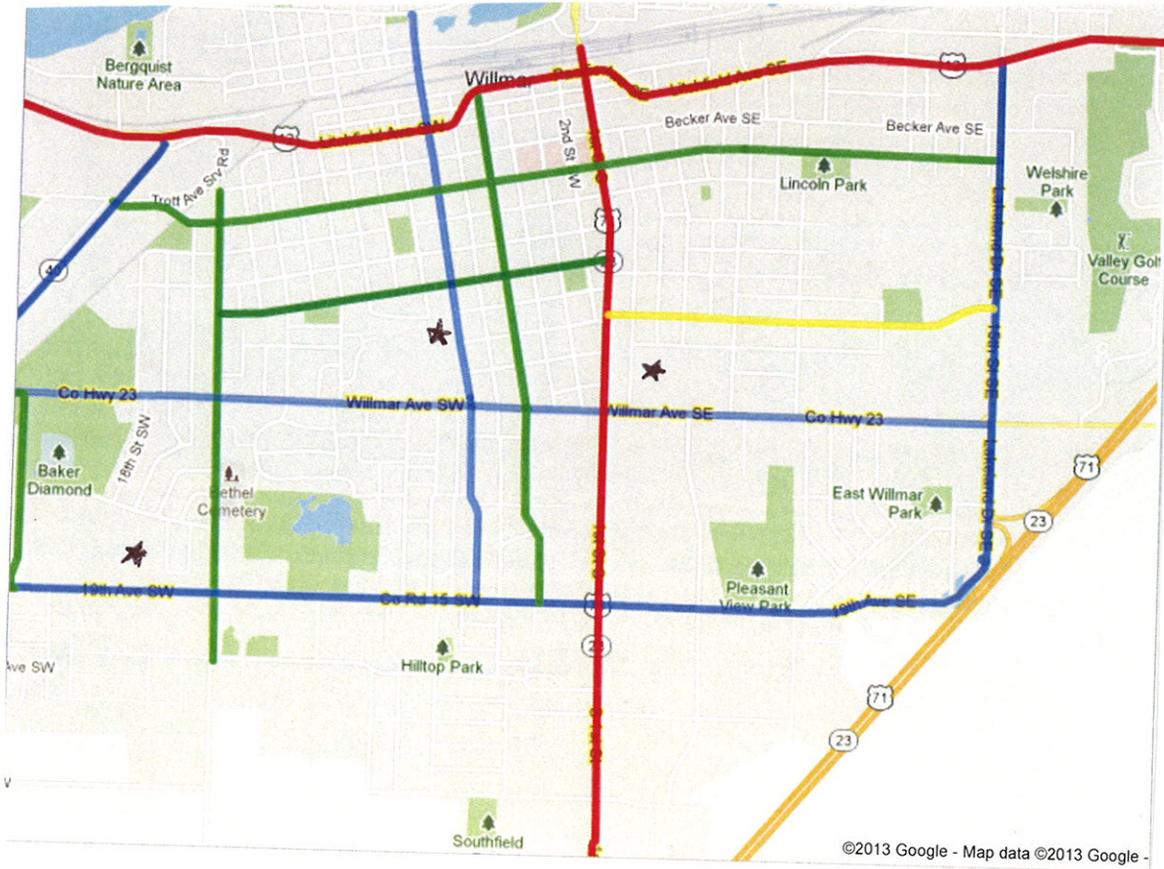
- Grace & 7th Street
- Kandiyohi Ave. & 7th Street
- 8th Street and Kandiyohi Ave.
- 7th Street and Willmar Ave. (As not many cross this busy street the crossing guard sits in their car until needed.)

Problems Observed – Items That Need Addressing:

- The front door (off 7th Street) is not handicapped accessible.
- Parents picking up their children on 8th Street on the west side of the street, causing children to cross the road in mid-block in front of cars. The school has rules against this.
- The bike rack location has no overhead lights.
- On 8th Street and Rice Avenue corner there are no curb cuts. It would also be helpful to have a crosswalk at this location.
- It would be helpful to have better warning devices at school crossing locations on 7th Street.
- It would be helpful to the visibility of crossing guards to extend no parking zones on side streets corners by at least one car length.
- Better signage on 7th Street to show that it is a bus drop off zone only.
- Better overhead lighting is desirable at school crossing locations.
- Sidewalk on the north side of the school needs repairs. Some upheaval due to tree roots.
- Lack of sidewalks on south sides of streets across 7th Street in front of school.

- Better visibility for drivers is needed that are exiting the rear parking lot. Have a no parking zone on Rice Avenue between the two parking lot entrances.
- There were some missing safety cones on the day of my visit.
- Children were running from buses to the front door in the morning. One child fell down by front door.
- There is a congestion problem of afternoon pickup. As was mentioned above parents are picking up children on both sides of 8th Street. Possible solutions would be to prohibit parking on west side of street for certain hours, or make the street a one-way? This would require Rice Ave. to also be a one way street.
- Parents dropping off their children in the parking lot do not move forward to allow several cars to drop off children at the same time. This adds to the wait time. By utilizing more of the curb, it could help speed up the wait. To do this may need some kind of signage and parent education.
- A couple cars were observed dropping off children on 7th Street at the bus unloading location.

Willmar Functional Classification Map for Central City



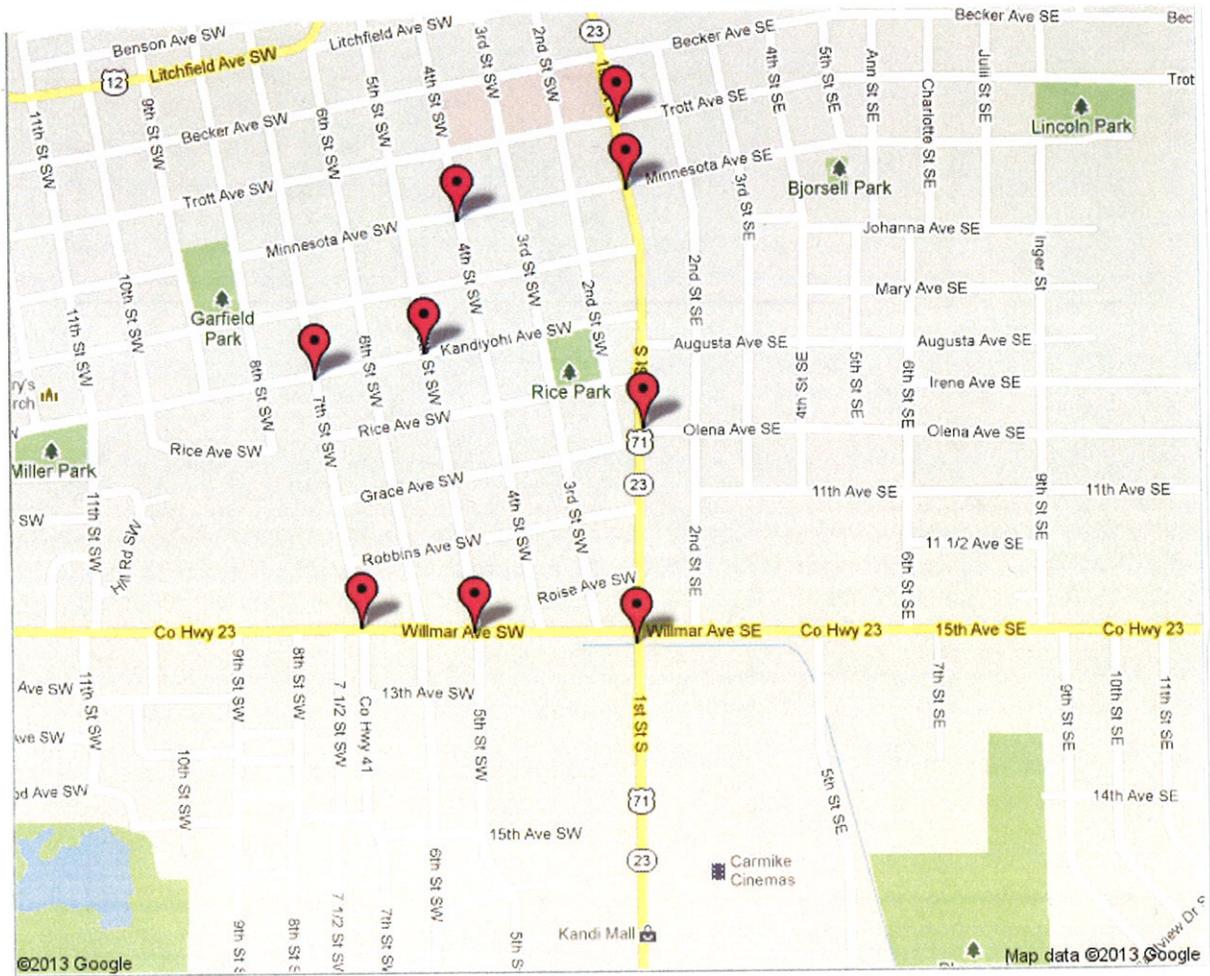
KEY:

- Red = Major Arterial
- Blue = Minor Arterial
- Green = Collector
- Yellow = Act like a Collector
- Stars = School Locations

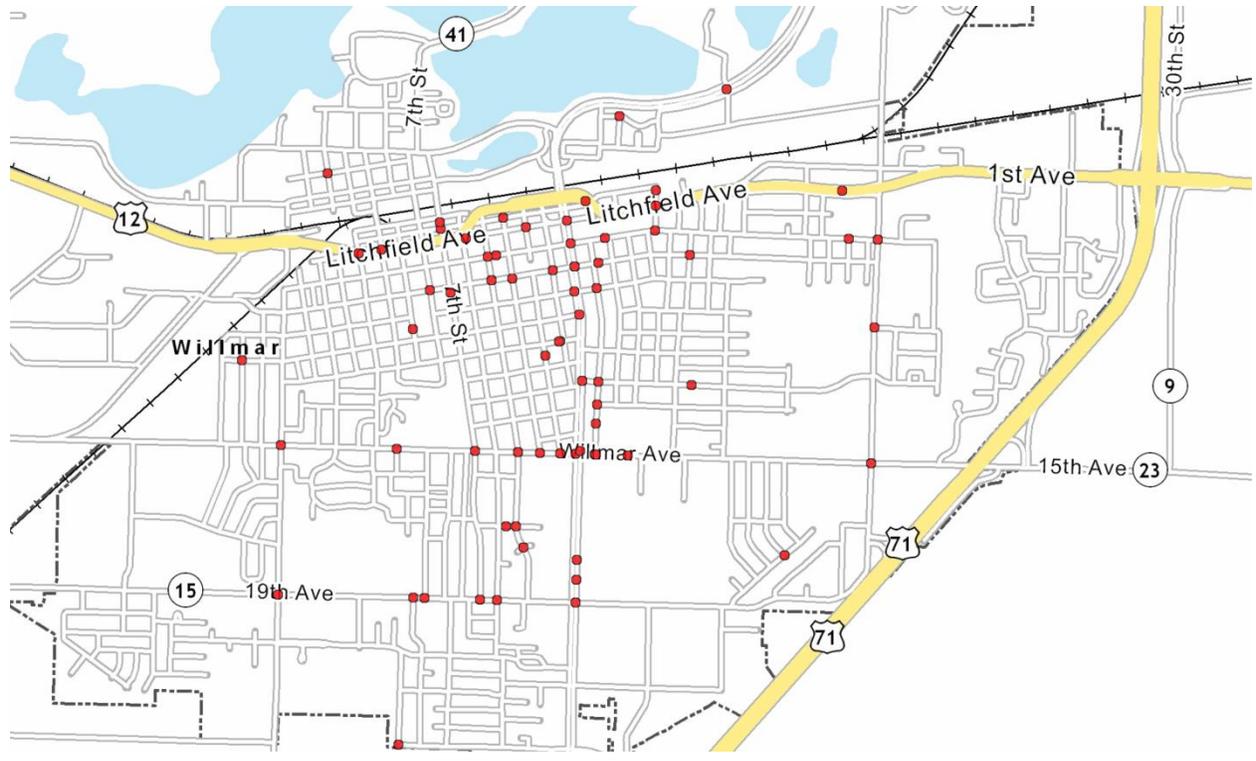
Intersections with Higher Total of Reported Accidents from 2002 to 2012

The map below shows intersections within Willmar school walking zones areas that show higher accident histories over a ten year period. The intersections are:

- 1st Street & Willmar Avenue with 140 accidents
- 1st Street & Trott Avenue with 45 accidents
- 1st Street & Olena Ave. with 31 accidents
- 1st Street & Kandiyohi Ave. with 26 accidents
- 5th Street SW & Kandiyohi Ave. with 33 accidents
- 5th Street SW & Willmar Ave. with 25 accidents
- 4th Street SW & Minnesota Ave. with 29 accidents
- 7th Street SW & Willmar Ave. with 20 accidents
- 7th Street SW & Kandiyohi Ave. with 24 accidents



City of Willmar Locations of Bicycle and Pedestrian Accidents From 2002 through 2012



Kennedy Elementary School

Identified Problems/Concerns/Needs/Barriers:

1. Missing sidewalks in various locations in the school's walk zone, including the streets across the front of the school on the east side of 7th Street: Grace, Rice and Robbins (south side).
2. The streets that surround the school are not very safe for bicyclists, especially young bikers.
3. There has been dangerous driving and speeding observed on streets near the school, especially on 7th Street.
4. On the school property's east, south and north sides the streets are all busy collector streets, causing barriers to cross. This is somewhat mitigated by the crossing guards that assist students cross these streets.
5. Drop-off and pick-up process creates congestion and unsafe behaviors.
6. The City does not effectively enforce its snow removal policies for sidewalks.
7. A path from west of the stadium to Willmar Avenue would be helpful.
8. Uncontrolled intersections around the school make it unsafe, especially for bikers.
9. Some intersections could use better lighting.
10. There are some parents that drop-off their children on 7th Street SW where it is only zoned for busses to stop. Better signage that it is for busses only could be helpful.
11. Drop-off flow would go more smoothly if parents would drive a little more forward along the curbside so that several cars could unload at the same time.
12. The parent pick-up location on 8th Street is not ideal. The street layout of the area causes much congestion. Many parents pick-up their children on the west side of 8th Street, which forces their children to cross the busy street. Children do not use the intersections to cross the street to get to their parent's vehicles. There is a chock-point in traffic at the corner of 8th Street and Kandiyohi Avenue with all the vehicles picking up children and the corner also having crossing guards assisting children that are walking home at this intersection.
13. The school's front door facing 7th Street is not handicapped accessible as there is a small lip to overcome.
14. The bike rack location has no overhead lights. Bikes are somewhat non-secure.
15. Driver visibility for exiting the rear parking lot would be improved if there was a no parking zone created on Rice Avenue between the two parking lot entrances.
16. On the corner of 8th Street and Rice Avenue there are no curb cuts. It would be helpful to have a crosswalk at this location.
17. It would be helpful to have better warning devices at school crossing locations on 7th Street.
18. Extending no parking zones on side streets off of 7th Street would assist the visibility of traffic for crossing guards at these locations.
19. The sidewalk on the north side of the school needs repairs. Some upheaval due to tree roots.
20. To assist with the congestion caused by the seventh Street pick-up location a four way stop at 7th and Kandiyohi Avenue would create the gap/turn-taking needed, and could allow students safer crossing at times when crossing guards are not present.

21. Key crossing points for children around the school should consider bulb-outs, but bus traffic also might be difficult with them in place.
22. Better communications with parents (maps) was mentioned.
23. Children need more education on safe practices in walking and biking.
24. Parking on Street (Kandiyohi and 8th) was mentioned – need better explanation.
25. Parent survey asked that a bike rack also be placed on the back side of the school.
26. Parent survey discussed that vehicles are traveling too fast and not watching out for children with the care needed. Another survey respondent worried about their child crossing streets at times when school crossing guards not on duty. Another parent said that children need to be educated on how to safely cross the street.

Kennedy Elementary School SRTS Identified Needs



Numbers 6,9, 22, 23, 26 are shown on text listing only.