

School Travel Plan

Draft 12/10/08

Section I

School Travel Plan Team Members

Introduction

The Pataskala Safe Routes to School Planning Team is comprised of a core group of stakeholders concerned with children's health and safety. They have committed to gathering and analyzing data, conducting public outreach activities, preparing, writing and implementing the strategies of the School Travel Plan. The Planning Team Members will have the primary responsibility for seeing that the tasks of the School Travel Plan are carried out.

Planning Team Members:

<u>Primary Contact:</u>	Timothy Boland	Pataskala City Administrator
Forest Yocum,	Superintendent,	Southwest Licking Local Schools
Denise Staffilino	Principal,	Pataskala Elementary School
Bruce Brooks	Deputy Chief of Police	Pataskala
Tirzah Hammond	Nurse	Southwest Licking Local Schools
Deb Coffel,	PTO President	Pataskala Elementary School
Natalie Pinnick	Safety Patrol Advisor	Pataskala Elementary School
Tom Sackett	BAC Representative	Southwest Licking Local Schools
Todd Liston	Transportation Director	Southwest Licking Local Schools
Dianne Harris	City Planning Director	Pataskala
Steven Butcher	Mayor	Pataskala
Adam Voris	Engineer (EMHT)	Pataskala

Section II

Introduction

Name of Plan

Safer Streets for Students

Part I: A Pedestrian and Bicycle School Travel Plan for Pataskala Elementary

Vision Statement

To foster a community that ensures a safe-school environment for students to walk and bike to school.

Purpose for Writing the Plan

Pataskala Elementary School is a vintage school that is located in the heart of a historic and traditionally laid out neighborhood. According to traditional neighborhood design, it is ideally located for more than half of its students to travel to school without using motor vehicles. Yet at this time, only about 10% of the students regularly walk or ride bicycles to school.

The school experiences a great deal of traffic congestion during arrival and dismissal times. Dismissal creates the greatest congestion as parents in private vehicles line up along the narrow neighborhood streets to await school to let out. This congestion creates a significant safety problem within the neighborhood and for the students. Although the adult crossing guard coordinator and school personnel try to guide the students to safe crossing points, many parents insist that their children walk across the street from between buses, not using the safer crossing points. There is evidence that many students arrive by private vehicle who could walk as well as many who could ride buses, which increases the amount of motor vehicle congestion and diminishes the safety of the environment for all students.

Although the school administration has made many improvements to the bus and drop off circulation pattern on its own grounds, there remain many concerns about the safety of the area for pedestrian use during these times.

The plan partners recognize that there are many other benefits to encouraging students and their families to walk and ride bicycles to school and generally engage in a more naturally active lifestyle.

To address these issues, the Southwest Licking School District, Pataskala Elementary and the City of Pataskala have initiated a partnership to study the physical and cultural barriers that prevent students from walking or riding bicycles to school. They have elected to be a participant in the National Safe Routes to Schools initiative. This school travel plan has been designated as "Part I" as it is a first step in an ongoing program to increase "active" transportation. We hope to eventually implement the program across the City in the neighborhoods of other school facilities.

Goals (What we hope to accomplish)

Main motivations for improving walking and bicycling to school

In preparing the school travel plan, the community was engaged at a number of levels in order to more fully understand the physical, cultural and perceptual environment. We sought to identify the forces that have created this situation where so few students travel to Pataskala Elementary "under their own power" in spite of its convenient location.

The second step was to determine a set of goals that advance the cause of increasing active transportation to school, and which directly address the barriers that affect Pataskala Elementary School students. These are:

Safer Streets for Students

Part I: A Pedestrian and Bicycle School Travel Plan for Pataskala Elementary School Travel Plan Goals

- A. Enforcement:** Raise awareness and promote safe driving by those who travel by motor vehicle in the school zone.
- B. Encourage:** Provide more programs to encourage more students to walk or ride bicycles to school.
- C. Educate:** Communicate to the community at-large, neighbors, parents and students the benefits of active transportation as well as the better opportunities that will result from this plan.
- D. Engineering:** To select physical improvement projects that promote safe pedestrian environments along the major routes between neighborhoods and Pataskala Elementary School.
- E. Evaluation:** To establish a yearly process to evaluate the School Travel Plan implementation and to set the next year's action agenda.

Section III

The Public Input Process

Potential Stakeholders

In addition to the people and groups they represent, there are a number of other community stakeholders that have been included in this process. These include: the Pataskala business community and Pataskala Area Chamber of Commerce, all the residents of the neighborhoods surrounding Pataskala Elementary School, the faculty and staff of the school, and most importantly, the students themselves.

Summaries of the input received by each method are presented in Section XII, Supporting Documentation, of this plan. The barriers identified and the solutions envisioned are outlined in Section VII and Section VIII respectively, of this plan.

Summary

The Planning Team reached out to the community for input by a variety of processes and received important insights and creative proposals for how to make travel to school safer for the students in the neighborhoods served by Pataskala Elementary School. The public outreach process included:

- Parent surveys
- Faculty questionnaires
- Planning Team focus group session (see part 1 for membership)
- Neighborhood newsletter (mailed to each household and published in the local newspaper)
- Presentation to the Pataskala Area Chamber of Commerce
- Letters sent to the members of the Board of Education of the Southwest Licking School District
- Stakeholder interviews
- Student art projects
- Public roll out of draft plan and display of student art projects

One of the most interesting things about the input received during the process, was a uniformity of opinions, especially across the constituencies of parents, board members and other community members. The community recognizes the health benefits of an active lifestyle for children and that active transportation to school is one method to build in more activity for students. In fact a total of 83% of parents recognize active transportation as either healthy or very healthy.

Section IV

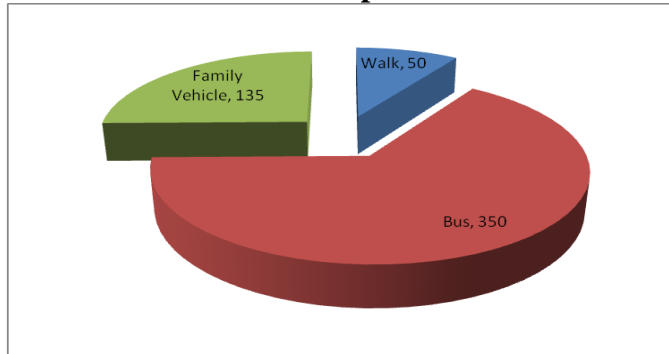
Description of Pataskala Elementary School

(See attached attendance boundary map)

Pataskala Elementary School is located at 395 South High Street in Pataskala, Ohio. The school building is an historic structure located in the heart of a residential neighborhood in the original Village of Pataskala, now often called the "Old Village". The building has been renovated in recent years and has an expansion wing. However it retains its architectural historic character, including its front yard, mature trees and entry gate, with playgrounds and parking lots located to the back of the building. It is served by narrow residential streets that were not designed for the volume of bus and private vehicle traffic now seen in the school zone.

The building now houses 535 students in grades one through five and is one of the two elementary schools (and separate Kindergarten Center) operated by the Southwest Licking School District.

Observed Modes of Transportation to Pataskala Elementary



Family Vehicle	135 students
Walk/Bike	50 students
School Bus	350 students

Even though the school is situated in a traditional neighborhood setting which was historically a perfect arrangement for active transportation to school, other features which were important to the growth of the community have served to isolate the students from their school.

- 1) The school is only two blocks south of a CSX railroad line that traverses the community in an east west fashion.
- 2) It is also only two blocks west of State Route 310, aka Main Street, a heavily used arterial road that bisects the Old Village along a north-south path. These two features cut off students both physically and perceptually from Pataskala Elementary.
- 3) The attendance area is bisected by a major transportation arterial, State Route 16, aka Broad Street, which is one-half mile to the north of the school. These barriers will be discussed further in Section VI, Current School Travel Environment.

The attendance boundaries for the school have been in existence for some time. There are two significant neighborhoods that lie very close to Pataskala Elementary that attend the other, more distant Etna Elementary to the south. Problems with overcrowding, community growth patterns, and public resistance to changing these boundaries weigh against changing these boundaries.

This setting as well as changing cultural norms and parental concerns with safety have served to greatly inhibit the numbers of students who arrive at school each day by foot or bike.

Section V

School Demographics

from www.greatschools.net

Total Enrollment for 2007-2008 school year was 535 students. The school serves grades one through five.

Students

Student Ethnicity



Ethnicity	This School	State Average
White, non-Hispanic	92%	76%
Black, non-Hispanic	4%	16%
Multiracial	4%	3%

Source: OH Dept. of Education, 2006-2007

Student Subgroups



	This School	State Average
Economically disadvantaged students ¹	28%	35%
Disabled students ¹	15%	14%
Gifted students ¹	18%	16%
Migrant students ²	n/a	<1%
Limited English proficient (LEP) students ¹	0%	2%

Source: ¹OH Dept. of Education, 2006-2007
²OH Dept. of Education, 2005-2006

Attendance and Completion

Source 1 OH. Dept. of Edu. 2006-2007

Source 2 OH. Dept. of Edu. 2006-2007

	This School	State Average
Attendance rate ¹	95%	94%
Mobility rate ²	n/a	n/a

Spending Per Pupil

Spending Per Pupil



	This District	State Average
Total per pupil expenditures	\$7,713	\$8,487

Household demographics:

Of those who returned our parent surveys, we found that:

- 70% of our parents who responded had 2 years of college or more. This may have been skewed by a propensity of more highly educated parents to participate in a survey.
- 50% had two children that attended Pataskala Elementary and 17% had three children or more in Pataskala Elementary
- Equal numbers reported living in each of the distance ranges listed, However, and interesting 30% reported not knowing the distance to the school from their homes.
- Correspondingly, 30% said the trip to school took more than 20 minutes, and a total of 45% said the trip was less than 10 minutes.
- Roughly equal numbers of respondents' children either walked, rode the bus, or took a family vehicle at 28% each, while bike riders reported to be 17%.

The school demographics as a whole would seem to indicate that Pataskala Elementary is not as impacted by family economic status as the average school in Ohio. In fact the 2000 Census seems to indicate that the attendance area in general is of relatively comfortable status. Yet in the smaller area of the Old Village the neighborhood is highly diverse in terms of household incomes. The City has begun conducting its own income surveys in the Old Village, and already has qualified the entire area south of the railroad as being more than 51% low to moderate income, according to the definition by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Section VI

Current School Travel Environment

Only an estimated 50 students, approximately 9% of the student body, are observed walking to school at Pataskala Elementary on most days. This observation is made by both school staff and the volunteer crossing guard coordinator. Parent surveys indicate that more than half arrive by bus or are driven. The school is served by 7 district buses, carrying an estimated 50 students each (about 350). Those who walk or ride bikes are observed to be mostly those that live in the homes that directly border the school grounds. Again, the parent surveys indicate that approximately 34% of students live within ½ mile of the school. There is one volunteer safety patrol coordinator, and the safety patrol monitors two intersections adjacent to the school.

In addition to the students that arrive by bus, a large number arrive in a vehicle driven by a family member. Thus there are a number of students that live within a 1/2 mile radius that most days are driven by a family member. This creates a lot of congestion especially in the afternoons. Traffic congestion in the area is further complicated by parents that regularly transport their children by car instead of using the buses and the fact that little if any carpooling is being practiced. Ironically, this extra vehicle traffic and congestion creates some of the worst safety problems in the immediate area around the school.

Departure at the end of the day creates the greatest concern as parents arrive early and park along the narrow street in front of the school. The buses queue along the same street to enter the

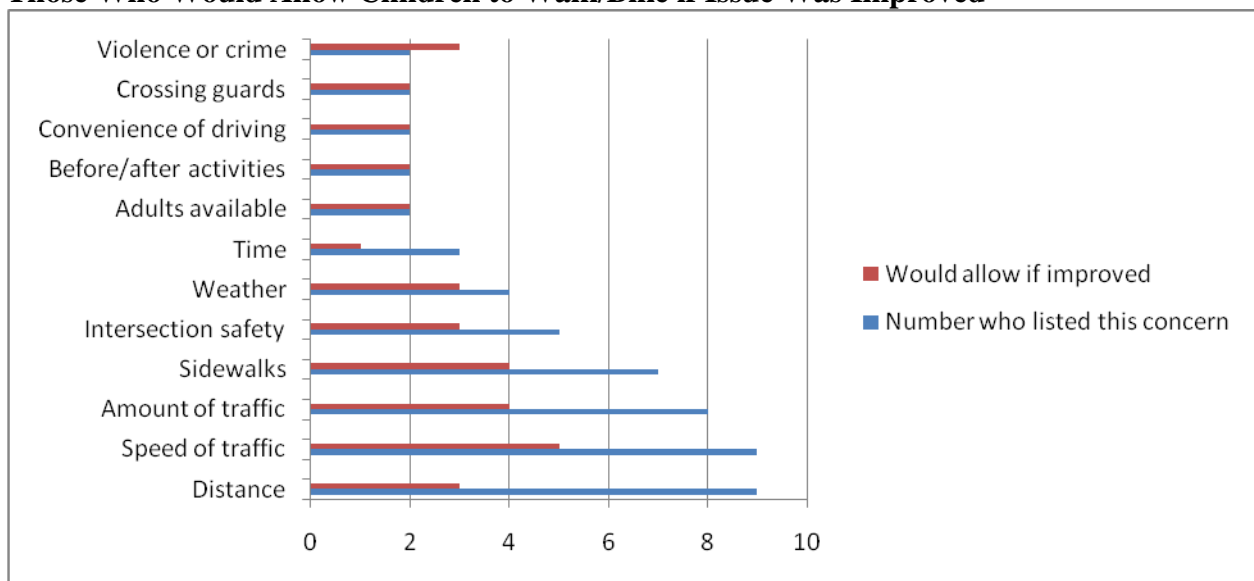
loading and unloading area. In spite of staff's warning, parents encourage their students to cross the street from between the buses in the shortest path to the waiting parent vehicle.

Other significant issues with the current school environment include an observed lack of traffic safety by other motorists during these times. There are stop signs at streets to the north and south of the school at High. Motorists have been observed speeding and even running these stop signs during arrival and departure times.

In the parent surveys, the top concerns that were reported as affecting the decision to allow children to walk/bike to school were: Distance and speed of traffic, the amount of traffic and the lack of sidewalks or pathways. The next most important factors were the safety of intersections, weather and time. Convenience of driving was the least important factor cited by the parents, in contrast to a generalized feeling from other stakeholders that convenience or at least a culture predisposed to driving was an important factor.

At present, almost half, 42% of the parents surveyed indicated that at present they would not feel comfortable letting their students walk to school, without an adult, at any age. However, most indicated that if the areas of concern they listed in the previous question were improved they would probably allow their students to walk/bike to school. The only exceptions regarded improvements to travel time and distance.

Parent’s List of Issues Affecting Decision to Allow Children to Walk/Bike and Those Who Would Allow Children to Walk/Bike if Issue Was Improved



*Parents were allowed to list all issues that concerned them

There are several problems with City infrastructure in the school environment. The parent's perception of lack of sidewalks is a fact. The Old Village has many blocks that do not have sidewalks of any kind. In other areas, the sidewalks are older and broken up and do not have any handicap ramps at intersections. When there is snow on the ground, the few homes that have sidewalks cannot be relied upon to keep them clear, causing the students who do walk to move out into the narrow streets.

Only a single block of High Street in front of the school is posted as a school zone. There are no traffic signals, school zone flashing lights and only one marked cross walks directly in front of the school to guide the students or alert motorists to the presence of children in the area.

Main Street (S.R. 310) does not have a traffic light in the Old Village area. There are pedestrian crossing signs and flashing lights at the railroad crossing and at Depot Street, though the light and sign at Depot are mostly obscured by low hanging tree branches. Individual parents have called the City to complain about the lack of safe crossings in the Old Village area, and many stakeholders expressed the opinion that we should never encourage children to walk across Main Street because of the volume and speed of traffic.



Flashing Light at Depot, (looking South on SR 310)



Crossing Sign Obscured and No Pavement Markings

Also important to the discussion of City infrastructure is the unstable status of City finances. Pataskala is one of only two cities in Ohio that does not have an income tax. Efforts to pass an income tax have failed seven times. In addition, a recent attempt to renew a streets levy failed and a Police levy will be up for renewal in 2009. The impact of these problems is that the City Police staffing level has declined as officers leave for other communities where they believe their

positions to be more secure and the force is having difficulty recruiting replacement officers in this economic climate. Thus there are few available resources for regular police protection around the school or for infrastructure improvements. The City continues to work on trying to win the citizen's support for an income tax and/ or other funding support of basic services.

Finally, there is the problem of crossing the railroad tracks. Two of the street crossings of the railroad, Township Road and High Street do not have developed pedestrian crossings at the railroad tracks; that is, the smooth paved crossings are only in vehicle lanes and do not extend outside of the crossing gates. Even if a student is inclined to walk in this area, they would have to move into a vehicle lane in order to do so. The uneven surface of rails, cross ties and the gravel rail bed are present a grave hazard to step between, risking a fall or entrapment in these components. Main Street (S.R. 310) does have a wider leveled area that could be used by pedestrians near the City owned parking lot.



Looking South on Main Street at the Railroad City Parking Lot Visible to the Left

It is interesting to note that stakeholder input (which included parents that are active volunteers) consistently rated the railroad tracks as a significant concern, but it did not show up in the parent surveys as a concern.

Accident Statistics:

Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) maintains statistics on accidents related to school travel. For the period 2005-2007 ODOT recorded only one accident for the school, occurring in Harrison Township, and which involved a bicycle rider. Fortunately no injury was reported.

School Travel Policies: The District's general busing policy is to transport students that live more than two miles from the school. Bus stops are planned so that students walk no more than 1/2 mile to a bus stop.

School Safety (Hazard) Busing: The busing policy is also modified for Pataskala Elementary to include transport of students that live north of Broad Street (some living within a mile of the school) and those from the area east of State Route 310 and also within 1/2 mile of the school, including a large apartment complex known as Pataskala Green (aka "The Greens"). However, the school district policy is that students should not be expected to cross S.R. 310 or Broad Street due to the number of trucks, high speeds and volumes of traffic on each. This makes the effective range of travel for walking and biking to school less than 1/2 mile to the north and east of the school.

LCATS data from 2005 show the AADT on SR 310 in the Downtown area of Pataskala (near the school) is 24,412. A recent count by a private engineering firm showed a daily traffic count of 19,462 on SR 16 at the intersection with SR 310.

Street	AADT	Source
Broad Street (SR 16) at SR 310	19,462	Commercial traffic impact study
SR 310 in Downtown Area	24,412	LCATS

Arrival/Dismissal Procedures: The school administration devised a staggered arrival and departure system, with the most critical period being in the afternoons. The first morning bell rings at 8:35 AM, allowing students to enter the building. The tardy bell rings at 8:45 AM. Three staff members monitor the front for the walkers and bus riders. Two staff members monitor the back drop off zone and doors.

School administration also devised a circulation pattern for bus and drop-off traffic to improve traffic flow around the building (see the circulation map attached). The entry to the school parking lot from High Street is designated as "one-way in" during arrival and departure times. The loading zone is at the back of the school in the school parking lot. A door in that area serves as the entry for students arriving by bus and car. The buses then exit the lot southward on Washington. The designated drop off route for parents involves entering the back lot from Rich Street, dropping the students off and exiting southward along Washington Street. Unfortunately many drivers attempt to either loop around to exit back onto Licking Street, or to leave through the High Street drive which hinders the bus and other car movements.

Walkers access the building from the two eastern doors in the front. The northeast door to the building is the location of a bicycle rack. Those who ride bikes enter and are dismissed through that door and are to travel eastward along the fence of the school to High Street. This pathway is not paved but is located on school property.

Students are dismissed directly from their classes by their teachers. Dismissal begins at 3:20 PM for students who walk, ride bikes or who are picked up by their parents. The bus riders are released approximately 5 minutes after (at 3:25) through the drop off doors in the back or through the front. Buses queue up with four located in the south drive and three parked southbound in front of the school on High Street.

Supports During Student Travel Times: School staff monitor arrival and departures as described in the section above. The major of site supportive activity at this time includes the school safety patrol program. This provides crossing guard assistance at two major intersections adjacent to the school, Granville Street at High Street, and Broadway at High Street. A single adult volunteer coordinates this activity and usually assists the students. The local Automobile Club provides their flags and shoulder belts and badges. It used to provide bright yellow raincoats to be used in wet weather, but discontinued that. The adult coordinator also tries to solicit support for small treats and rewards for the student crossing guards.

What the School Does Already: Two teachers at the school have voluntarily made active lifestyles a topic of their regular instruction. The physical education teacher provides some basic bicycle safety training to the fifth grade classes as a regular part of the curriculum. One second grade teacher provides regular encouragement to walk and bike more as part of class instruction. Though most teachers support the concept of promoting more active transportation, some are fearful that a focus on active transportation would take crucial time away from instruction in core subjects.

The school has some resources from its parents. There is one active parent volunteer that oversees the school safety patrol program and students. There is also an active parent/teacher organization that works with the school on projects.

In addition, the City has a citizen based committee that is studying the Old Village's infrastructure and other concerns and revitalization needs. This study will be used to determine where incentives and investments will be best applied in the near future, and where new resources will need to be identified. One member of that committee is a member of the Rails to Trails Conservancy and she is very supportive of the Safe Routes to Schools movement. This School Travel Plan will be part of the information provided to the revitalization committee. It can then become the basis for including Safe Routes projects in the City's Capital Improvement Plan.

Section VII

Barriers to Active Transportation

The following list includes all issues that were identified as contributing to the lack of walking and riding of bikes to school for students at Pataskala Elementary. These factors were identified through our public input process, and many were reiterated many times by several different constituencies. The factors include physical infrastructure problems, cultural mindsets, driving habits and less controllable factors such as Ohio weather in the winter and the impact of a family's economic situation. The issues identified are listed in declining order according to the frequency of that issue occurring during public input.

Issues/ Barriers to Walking or Bike Riding:

- Will not be able to increase walking/biking rates until safety of the routes is greatly improved
- Main Street is too busy for young children to cross safely
- Sidewalks, where existing are crumbling
- Drivers in the area are not attentive
- Drivers frequently run one or both stop signs on High
- The City as a whole does not provide a good system of pedestrian and biking trails that facilitate the adoption of these activities by the public in general
- Some possible solutions may be too expensive considering the number of students that would actually benefit from certain investments, but others may be "doable"
- Cold and rainy weather
- Middle school students who congregate and harass the safety patrol
- We live in a "car" culture- people just prefer to drive
- Owners often don't shovel snow from sidewalks
- Current staffing levels prevent police from committing to stationing an officer during arrival/dismissal times
- Adult volunteers crossing guards are not as reliable as desired
- Bicycles are sometimes stolen from racks- keeping them secure is a problem
 - Truants thought to be a factor in thefts
 - No longer have bike registration program for tracing
 - 1/3 of students are on subsidized lunch programs- this implies that the costs of bikes, helmets, and maybe even appropriate outerwear for cold and rainy weather could be an issue for some
- Promoting biking also means promoting using helmets- many currently do not use them
- Some parents regard bus routes to be unacceptably long for their children

- Parents are more protective of their children/ have greater anxiety about "stranger danger" than in the past
- Due to overcrowding, school attendance boundaries designate two large subdivisions to be transported to a more distant school, one within the 1/2 mile travel area of Pataskala Elementary, and the other approximately 3/4 mile from Pataskala Elementary

Hot Spot Danger Areas:

- Intersection Broadway and High
- Intersection Granville and High
- Any crossing of SR 310
- Railroad
 - Frequency of trains? Maybe 4 times per day maybe more
 - Speed?
 - Crossings at High Street and Township Road do have gates, lights and audible signals, but no pedestrian paths

Section VIII

Creating Solutions (5 E's)

Creating Solutions and Countermeasures

As data and input were gathered, participants quickly gravitated toward making suggestions for potential solutions to the problems that they described. Once the overall goals of the School Travel Plan were developed, a range of possible solutions and countermeasures were evaluated according to perceived feasibility and efficacy in creating a changed and improved travel environment. Goals and strategies were developed that addressed each of the “5 E’s” that make up the guiding principles of the local Safe Routes to Schools Program. These are: Enforcement, Encouragement, Education, Engineering, and Evaluation.

- A. Enforcement:** The area of enforcement was found to be specifically important as a countermeasure to significant lapses by motorists traveling in the area of the school. Safety concerns with regard to operation of vehicles were raised by all stakeholders during the process. One all encompassing goal was articulated for this strategy:
- Goal:** *Raise awareness and promote safe driving by those who travel by motor vehicle in the school zone.*
- Objective:** *Eliminate speeding and failure-to-stop-at-stop-signs during school hours in the school zone within 1 year.*
- Monitoring:** This goal can be monitored by observation of a drop in the numbers of motorists who “run” stop signs at Broadway and High and at Granville and High. The volunteer safety patrol coordinator will monitor and report on progress on this item. The Police Department speed trailer suggested in “i” will keep data on the frequency of speeding in the area, and behavioral changes over time.

Action Steps:

- i. Deploy speed trailer more often- perhaps one week out of each grading period- keeps data that police can use for changes in officer deployment
- ii. Request regular officer postings during arrivals and dismissals- frequency about once every other week-keep records of number of observations and number of tickets issued

B. Encouragement: Some of the teachers at the school work on encouragement of active lifestyles in their classes. They need more reinforcement in this effort. The greater need for encouragement lies with the parents themselves, who have a number of safety concerns and time constraints that contraindicate allowing their students to be more active in traveling to school. Finding an effective mechanism to break down their strongly held beliefs will be challenging. Here there are two major goals:

- a. **Goal:** *Provide more programs to encourage more students to walk or ride bicycles to school.*

Objective: *Increase number of students who regularly walk or bike by 5 more students each year.*

Monitoring: Teachers and adult crossing guards (aided by City planning staff) conduct observational counts during the first month and last month of each school year.

Action steps:

- i. Start a Walking Buddies (like walking school bus) program. Provide incentives for participation. Objective- increase number of students who regularly walk or bike by 5 more each year, and to have them walk in groups of 5 or more.
- ii. Explore implementation of age appropriate safety programs, both in and out of school. Key components are experiential learning and recognition and incentives for participation. Examples include: the Railroad Live Saver Program, Visiting Police presentations, and Safety Town for younger children. Objective- to provide at least three regular programs within five years.
- iii. Start a High Milers Club: Create a “points” system for miles walked or biked on school days, where points can be used to purchase rewards. Provide a school based circuit for “hiking” opportunities for bus and car riding students during gym, before, after school or even recess. Provide appropriate alternatives for disabled students. Use to reinforce classroom instruction in health and physical education curriculum encouraging a more active lifestyle-and age appropriate for each grade. Teachers help track points on a large poster and submit data to Principal for school wide performance analysis. Objective-active participation by a50% of all students in the program. 10% increases each year. Teachers to set distance goals according to time and space available.

- b. **Goal:** *Provide more programs and information that engage the parents as partners in promoting more active lifestyles and travel.* The success of this goal depends upon success in reassuring parents that walking and biking to school are

safe, and to insure that success by encouraging parents to become active partners in the programs.

Objective: *To add reliable parent volunteers to help with crossing guard duty, or a Walking Buddies group. This means at least one additional adult to cover each morning and each afternoon.*

Objective: *To reduce the number of students arriving by private vehicle each day by 10 each year.*

Monitoring: Teachers and adult crossing guards (aided by City planning staff) conduct observational counts during the first month and last month of each school year.

Action Step:

- i. Promote safety programs to parents and engage them to support the programs by fundraising and solicitation of incentives if needed, helping to organize and run the programs, and generally supporting the programs.
- ii. Catch a Bus Campaign: Send letters/ and make announcements- promote to families who live on bus routes to encourage students to use the buses instead of private vehicles and save gas too! Include information on things students can do while on the bus
- iii. Work with School Transportation Department to see if bus travel times can be reduced to more acceptable levels.

C. Educate: Communicate to the community at-large, neighbors, parents and students the benefits of active transportation as well as the goals and opportunities that will result from this plan.

- a. **Goal:** *Teach pedestrian, bicycle and traffic safety to students and adults alike and create awareness of the benefits and goals of the SRTS program.*

Objective: *Obtain coverage in the Pataskala Standard or other local media of the program's publication. Produce press releases at least once annually.*

Objective: *Create an STRS announcement for every edition of the school's newsletter.*

Monitoring: City planning staff will maintain a file to document all media coverage. City planning staff will prepare and tabulate an annual parent survey each spring to measure changes in awareness and attitudes.

Action Steps:

- i. Publish and celebrate the school travel plan
- ii. Have a series of announcements that can go out into each student's newsletter
- iii. Tie this discussion to the Central Ohio Green Pact goals for Pataskala
- iv. Include announcements, maps and links to national program on City and Chamber web sites

D. Engineering: Engineering strategies are selected physical improvement projects that promote safe pedestrian environments along the major routes between target neighborhoods and Pataskala Elementary School.

- a. **Goal:** *Improve the sidewalks, crosswalks and accessibility ramps along the entire length of 1st priority routes of the plan. Expand to lower priority routes as time and funding permit.*
- b. **Goal:** *Explore opportunities of improvement of vehicle and pedestrian circulation around and in the neighborhood of the school.*
- c. **Goal:** *Improve railroad crossings for use by pedestrians and bicycle riders.*
Objective: Achieve at least two improvements from action list each year.
Monitoring: Bi-annual meetings of SRTS Committee assess progress on these steps. Include all monitoring results in an SRTS Annual Report for distribution to press and all stakeholders.
Possible Action Steps:
 - Improve or complete sidewalk system by priority location
 - Modify rail crossings
Tunnels or bridges?
 - Expand access to bike path and dedicated bike lane systems
 - Explore use of circulation improvements or one-way streets near school
 - Explore use of physical separation like fencing and bollards to separate traffic from sidewalks
 - Explore ways to make crossings of SR 310 safer and best location
Tunnels or bridges?
 - Install flashing school zone lights
 - Expand marked school zone to past the intersections of Broadway and High and Granville and High
 - Replace stop signs with more visible styles (at least at those intersections) and use high intensity markings at crosswalks
 - Install streetlights at bus stops and crosswalks
 - Explore moving the Middle Schoolers' bus stop location (at 7:20 am) and the High Schoolers' (at 7:00 am) perhaps to City parking lot?

E. Evaluation: This is the process by which the Committee and Community will measure the impact of its efforts. Progress and changing external factors will indicate whether annual programs are to be modified, and how. Results will be published at the end of the school year in an annual report for distribution to stakeholders.

Goal: *To establish a yearly process to evaluate the School Travel Plan implementation and to set the next year's action agenda.*

Objective: *An annual report will be published at the end of the school year in an annual report for distribution to stakeholders.*

Action steps:

- Convene the School Travel Plan Committee each October and June to review progress on the plan and to make necessary adjustments as needed
- Conduct all monitoring steps outlined for each Strategy and Goal.
- Prepare an Annual report including discussion of accomplishments, the next year's action plan, needed amendments to the plan, a budget and funding strategy. Distribute to stakeholders and receive comments.

Section IX

Improvements Mapping (insert pages)

Section X

The Action Plan(5 E's)

Strategy Type	Strategy Name	Strategy Detail	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Status	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Source
Enforcement	Safe driving awareness	Deploy Speed Trailer	Every 6 weeks	Police and City Administration	Pending	TBD	City General Fund
	Officers on site	Cruisers visible in area	Once every other week	Police and City Administration	Pending	TBD	City General Fund-Grants?
Encouragement	Walking Buddies	Incentives to walk together as groups	Spring 2009?	School, PTA, Crossing Guard, Parents	Pending	Costs of incentive awards	Private Donors / Grants
	Safety Programs	1-Safety Town 2-Railroad Life Saver Program 3- Visiting Police	1- Summer 2- Fall 3-Winter	Principal coordinates with community partner (all)	Pending	1-TBD 2-Free? 3-TBD	1-Private Donors 2-Central Ohio Rail 3-City Police/ Grants
	High Milers Club	Points/rewards system for logging distance walking or biking	School year	Physical Education and Health Instructors	Pending	TBD	Private Donors/ Grants
	Recruit parents to volunteer for STRS programs	Provide opportunities for involvement to overcome misgivings and generate support	All year	PTA, Crossing guard, parents and teachers	Pending	TBD	Private donors/ grants

Strategy Type	Strategy Name	Strategy Detail	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Status	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Source
	Catch-a-Bus Campaign	Promote use of school buses and car pools for those who live on those routes. Promote alternatives to private vehicles	All year	District Transportation, Principal and Teachers	Pending	Included in newsletter costs	School communications budget/grants
	Explore reductions in bus travel times	Promote alternatives to private vehicles for travel to school	Summer	School Administration and parents	Pending	Negligible	Schools
Education	Publish 1 st School Travel Plan	Make available in public library and on City website	January 2009	City Planning Department	Pending	\$155	STRS Grant
	FAQ's for student newsletters	A series of PSA's to maintain awareness throughout the year and promote emerging programs	Throughout school year	School Administration	Pending	Negligible	Schools
	Co-promote with City Central Ohio Green Pact Goals	Synergy of overlapping goals for pedestrian connectivity	9/08 through 9/09 and annually thereafter	City Council and Planning Department	Pending	TBD	CDBG, ODNR and ODOT grants; City General Fund

Strategy Type	Strategy Name	Strategy Detail	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Status	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Source
	Information about the local program and links to national STRS	Links on City website for more information	Spring 2009	City Planning	Pending	Negligible	City General Fund
Engineering-priority projects	Improve sidewalks	Repair/replace on priority routes	2009-2015	City	Pending	TBD	City General Fund/CDBG
	Review circulation system	Explore traffic routing changes around school	2009	Consulting Engineers	Pending	TBD	STRS Grant
	Improve crosswalks	Near school and on SR 310	2009	Consulting Engineers/ City Streets Dept.	Pending	TBD	City General Fund/ Grants?
	Rail crossings	Improve	2010	CSX and City	Pending	TBD	CSX , City, Grants
	Add street lights	At bus stops and crosswalks	2010	Consulting Engineer / City Streets Dept.	Pending	TBD	City General Fund/ Grants
	School Zone Markings	Flashing lights/ high intensity crossing markings	2009-2011	Consulting Engineer/ City Streets Dept./ Grants	Pending	TBD	City General Fund/ ODOT/ Grants
	Move older students' bus stop	Relocate to area away from elementary	2009	Consulting Engineer/ Schools	Pending	Negligible	NA
	Bike path system	Interconnected system throughout town	2009-2012	Consulting Engineer/ City/ Regional Parks	Pending	TBD	Grants/ ODNR/ODOT

Strategy Type	Strategy Name	Strategy Detail	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Status	Estimated Cost	Possible Funding Source
Evaluation	Biannual Review	Make adjustment	October and June each year	Travel Plan Committee	Pending	Negligible	NA
	*Annual Point in time counts and other monitoring steps outlined in individual strategies	Measure numbers of pedestrian arrivals and departures	May 09	School Admin and City	Pending	Negligible	NA
	* Annual Parent Survey	Measure changes in attitudes	April 09	School Admin and City Planner	Pending	\$ 500	TBD
	* Annual Teacher Survey	Measure changes in observed student behavior	April 09	Principal and City Planner	Pending	Negligible	NA
	Publish Annual Report	Report to community and stakeholders, celebrating progress, and outlining next year action plan, budget and funding strategy- Maintain awareness	Summer 09	STRS Committee	Pending	\$200	TBD

Section XI
Plan Endorsements

(To be included after review and comments by those who have provided input)

Section XII

Supporting Documents

Parent Survey, April 14, 2008 Summary Results

1. What is the child's grade who brought home the survey?

42%	5th grade
28%	2nd grade
17%	1st grade
17%	4th grade
8%	3rd grade

2. Gender of child? 50% male 50% female

3. Number of children in the home in K-8th grade?

50%	have 2
30%	have 1
17%	have 3

4. Zip Code? 100% = 43062

5. Distance from home to school?

< 1/4 mile	17%
1/4 - 1/2 mile	17%
1/2 - 1 mile	17%
1 - 2 miles	17%
> 2 miles	17%
done know	30%

6. On most days your child arrives for school by.... (Leave from school, same answers by all)

28%	walk
28%	bus
28%	family vehicle
17%	bike
8%	transit (?)

7. How long does it take to travel to/from school?

TO:	30%	More than 20 min.	FROM:	30%	More than 20 min
	28%	11-20 min.		28%	11-20 min.
	28%	5-10 min.		28%	5-20 min.
	17%	< 5 min.		8%	< 5 min.
				8%	Don't Know

8. Has child asked to walk/bike to school? 50% yes 50% no

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

42% Would not feel comfortable at any grade
17% 4th grade
17% 3rd grade
17% 2nd grade
8% 1st grade

10. Issues affecting decision (in order)

Top Concerns: Distance
& Speed of traffic
Amount of traffic
Sidewalks or pathways

Middle Concerns: Safety of intersections
Weather
Time

Infrequent Concerns: Participation in after-school activities
Crossing guards
Violence or crime
Convenience of driving

11. If the problem were changed would you probably let your child walk/bike to school? (percent of those who listed the concern)

Top Concerns: Distance 55% yes
& Speed of traffic 55% yes
Amount of traffic 75% yes
Sidewalks or pathways 57% yes

Middle Concerns: Safety of intersections 60% yes
Weather 75% yes
Travel Time 33% yes

Infrequent Concerns: Participation in after-school activities 100% yes
Crossing guards 100% yes
Violence or crime 100% yes
Convenience of driving 100% yes

12. How much does the school encourage walking/biking to school?

50% Neither encourage or discourage
42% Encourage
8% Strongly encourage

13. How much fun is walking/biking for your child?

83% Fun
8% Very fun

8% Neutral

14. How healthy is it to walk/bike to school for your child?

50% Very healthy

43% Healthy

8% Neutral

15. How many years of schooling do you have? Your spouse?

30%	12 years	Spouse	30%	12 years
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30%	16 years		25%	16 years
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8 %	14 years		8%	14 years
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8%	18 years		17%	18 years
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8%	19 years		8%	19 years
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Teacher Questionnaire May 2008

1. Which of the following issues negatively affect the safety of our students walking to school?
(could select more than one)

80%	Sidewalks/ paths
80%	Age of student
67%	Amount of traffic
60%	Speed of traffic
60%	Safety of intersection/ crossings
47%	Adults to walk/ride with
47%	Weather
40%	Distance
27%	Travel route
27%	Violence or crime
20%	Travel time
7%	Crossing guards

2. Do you encourage students to walk to school? 20% yes

3. Do you encourage students to ride bikes to school? 20% yes

4. Does your instruction include the topic of bike safety? 7% yes
 Comment: Promoting safety takes away from teaching time.

5. What do you do? (no response)

6. Would you be in favor of school-wide activities and /or assemblies that promote bike safety?
100% yes

7. Do you know of any resources that are appropriate for bike safety? 20% offered ideas
 OH. Dept. of Public Safety
 Safety Smart program
 Get more adult crossing guards
 Police enforcement

8. What do you see as a stumbling blocks in getting kids to walk or ride bikes to school?
No additional answers.

April 8, 2008

3:45 PM

Meeting of the School Travel Plan Committee/ Focus Group Session

Location: Pataskala Elementary:

Members Present:

Several new members are present today-

- Deb Coffel, PTO President
- Natalie Pinnick, Safety Patrol Advisor
- Tom Sackett, BAC Representative
- Chris Forshey, Chief of Police
- Dianne Harris, Planning Director, Pataskala
- Denise Staffilino, Pataskala Elementary Principal

Promotional material provided by national SRTS program was distributed. Denise led a discussion about the issues affecting children or their parents' school transportation decisions. It is estimated that currently only 10% or less are regular walkers to the school. What would be a reasonable goal to increase? The group couldn't say.

Some ideas for improving the safety of the routes to school as well as how to encourage more acceptance of allowing children to walk were listed and are summarized below.

Denise will hold teacher focus groups tomorrow and distribute the parent surveys on Friday. Dianne still needs to start stakeholder interviews but has started the outline of the plan based on information available so far.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 6 at the same time and place.

Positive Steps So Far:

- Painted crosswalks have helped (except where sight is obscured by parked cars)
- Schools have studied their access and directed most drop offs to the back of the building which has helped
- Police willing to come out if called to address harassment or reckless driving
- 5th grade physical education includes a bicycle safety program

- Physical education program supportive of the SRTS concept
- Auto Club still donates flags and the like to Safety Patrol
 - The number of students affected by the Railroad and SR 310 may be significant - several multi-family developments affected
- Right in front of school when buses are parked

Needs / or Suggestions to Improve:

- More adult volunteers involved in Safety Patrol
- Adult crossing guards and training for them
- 1 additional set of walkie-talkies for Safety Patrol to use
- More yellow rain coats for children and adult crossing guards
- Improve signage: school zone signs, children at play signs etc in the surrounding area
- Establish, improve and mark bike routes
- RR Overpasses for walkers
- Traffic study in area
 - Maybe could re-route traffic flow more efficiently
 - Maybe more one-way restrictions
 - Maybe a staggered arrival or dismissal plan
- Provide better parking/ staging zones for parents who still drive kids to school (empty lot to south available?)
- Install flashing school zone lights (solar?) especially at Broadway and High
- Speed bumps
- Organize "Buddy Walks"; connect kids to walk with each other
 - Could tie in with emergency dismissal plans
- Promote more car pooling for the others to reduce the amount of cars
- "Red light cameras"- expensive- maybe "fake" ones?
- Some children do not receive a lot of encouragement in their education at home. Providing safer routes could remove one excuse for not attending.
- Although the area north of Broad is in the "draw" radius, from a practical standpoint, it is unlikely that there are any feasible strategies to overcome that barrier. Probably best to limit the scope of consideration to the area south of Broad.

June 11, 2008

School Travel Plan - Other Stakeholder Interviews to Date

- 1. Where surveyed? City-4 Phone-1
- 2. Do you have children in Pataskala Elementary? No-4
- 3. How many children do you have in K-8th grade? 0 (3 times) 1 HS
- 4. Do you work within 2 miles of Pataskala Elementary? No-2
- 5. Are you employed by or volunteer with the school? No ans.-3 No-2
- 6. If you lived within 2 miles of the school, at what grade would you allow your child to walk or bike without an adult to/from school?
 - K-8 1
 - Grade-6 1
 - I would not at any grade -2
(Maybe within 1/2 mile)

7. Issues/ Barriers to Walking or Bike Riding:

- Amount of traffic along route- 5 y
- Speed of traffic- 5 y
- Safety of intersections / crossings- 5 y
- Lack of crossing guards- 5 y
- Distance- 4y 1 not sure
- Lack of sidewalks- 4 y no ans-1
- Violence or crime- 4y 1 not sure
 - Middle schoolers congregate at nearby bus stop
- Lack of adults to walk/bike with- 3y 2 not sure
- Weather- 3y 1 not sure no ans1
- Convenience of driving- 2y 2 not sure 1 no
- Participation in after-school activities - 2 not sure 3 no
- Time to walk- 1 y 3 not sure 1 no
- Other- no ans.4
 - Hard to change driving mindset
 - Many don't even let kids ride bus due to length of ride

Would parents allow their children to walk/bike to school if these were improved?

(2- our culture is to drive everywhere)

- 8. Do schools encourage? 1 Neither 4 no ans.

9. How much fun for your child?

2-Fun 1- Neutral 1-don't know 1 no ans

10. How healthy is walking?

1 Very Healthy 2 Healthy 2 no ans.

11. What is the most important thing that the school/

Guards or some type of security to watch children	2
Not sure-	1
Restrict parking in front of building/ have a drop off area-	1
Assistance at crossings	1
Realign attendance boundaries so students attend the closest school (many practical and social issues)	1
Not likely anything	1

or 12. City could do to make the community safer for pedestrian/biking travel?

Better bike paths-	2
Improve sidewalks-	2
Improve crossings-	1
Opportunity to create better pedestrian linkages throughout town, but it is so spread out/ would be nice to connect neighborhoods and parks, and parks to parks	1

13. Community could do?

Awareness and willingness to watch out for all children	1
Talk to students	1
Police provide lessons in security	1
Improve berms or provide bike lanes along roadways	1

14. Other comments?

- Soccer program has been great for helping children transition to middle school/ fewer fights and conflicts now.
- Traffic and trains issues/ almost need an elevated path or tunnel around 310 and the railroad
- We should not encourage children to cross 310 ever because it is so dangerous
- There was a plan for a path through Bright Waters Subdivision to connect to Municipal Park/ but those students do not go to Pataskala Elementary