

HINSDALE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN



SEPTEMBER 2016

HINSDALE MIDDLE / HIGH SCHOOL SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

Acknowledgements

During the 2015/2016 school year, the Hinsdale School District (HSD) worked with Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) to develop a Safe Routes to School Action Plan for the Hinsdale Middle/High School (HM/HS). The school principal, Anne Freitag, helped to provide SWRPC staff with locally relevant guidance and input for this Action Plan. In addition, a team of students from the Keene State College Geography Department provided assistance with data collection and analysis and developed a report of their findings. The Hinsdale School District and SWRPC are grateful for the contributions provided by members of this student team, who are listed below.

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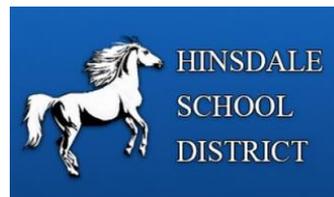


Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
Project Overview	1
Benefits of Safe Routes to School.....	3
Planning Process.....	3
Study Area	4
EVALUATION OF EXISTING TRAVEL CONDITIONS	8
School Arrivals and Departures	8
Parent and In-Classroom Surveys.....	9
Pedestrian Infrastructure Conditions	11
Traffic Volume and Speeds.....	14
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL STRATEGIES	16
Education	16
Encouragement.....	18
Enforcement.....	21
Engineering.....	22
Evaluation.....	24
IMPLEMENTATION	25
APPENDICES	31

INTRODUCTION

The Hinsdale Safe Routes to School Action Plan was created to identify measures that will improve conditions for walking and biking to school for Hinsdale Middle/High School (HM/HS). It includes an evaluation of existing travel conditions, strategies to improve education, encouragement, and enforcement activities, and recommendations for physical improvements, educational programs and community efforts that will encourage walking and biking within a two-mile radius of HM/HS.

There are far-reaching implications of an SRTS program. SRTS programs can improve safety for children and a community of pedestrians and bicyclists. They provide opportunities for children to become more physically active and to rely less on their cars. SRTS programs also benefit the environment and a community's quality of life by reducing traffic congestion and motor vehicle emissions. The goal of this Action Plan is to identify potential physical improvements and operational measures and programs for HM/HS and the surrounding area. This action plan will be available for use by the school and community leaders as a framework to guide actionable next steps, both in the short-term and long-term.

Project Overview

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national program established in 2005¹ by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that is focused on improving the health and wellbeing of children by creating safe opportunities to walk and bike to school. SRTS programs examine the conditions around schools and conduct activities to improve safety, accessibility, traffic, and air pollution near schools. Communities conducting these programs are encouraged to employ a combination of evaluation, education, encouragement, enforcement and engineering strategies to address the specific needs of their school(s).

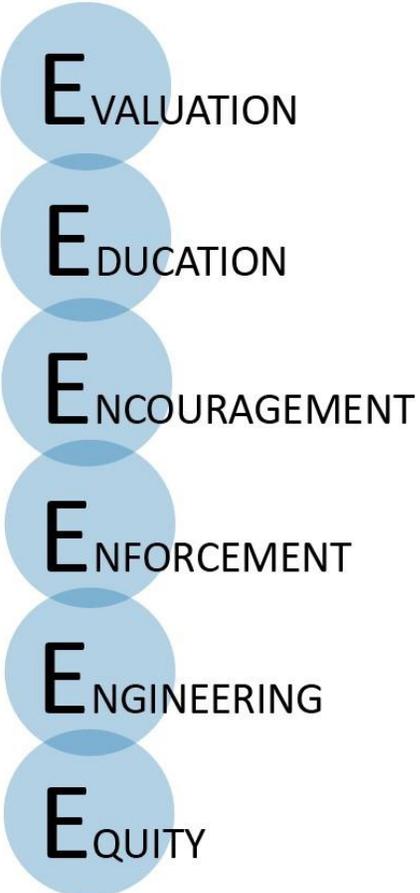
Figure 1 - The Six E's of Safe Routes to Schools.



¹ "Safe Routes to School." Federal Highway Administration. Accessed April 21, 2016. http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/safe_routes_to_school/.

HINSDALE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL – SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

This comprehensive approach, called the **five (5) E's**, is centered on an understanding that the barriers to safe walking and bicycling are both behavioral and physical. In 2015, the Safe Routes to School National Partnership introduced a **sixth (6) E**, Equity. Although the focus of this Action Plan is evaluation, each of the six (6) E's (described below) is addressed.



EVALUATION

Evaluation involves monitoring and documenting outcomes, attitudes, and trends through the collection of data before and after program activities or projects. These activities help track which strategies would be most or least successful and which should be modified for better results.

EDUCATION

Education programs include teaching pedestrian/bicyclist/traffic safety and creating awareness about the benefits and goals of SRTS. Education programs often incorporate health and environmental considerations associated with walking and bicycling.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Encouragement activities generate excitement and interest in walking and bicycling. Special events, mileage clubs, contests, and ongoing activities all provide ways for parents, caregivers, and children to discover or re-discover that walking and bicycling are doable and fun.

ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement programs are focused on deterring unsafe behaviors of pedestrians, bicylists, and motorists and encouraging all road users to obey traffic laws and share the road safely.

ENGINEERING

Engineering is a broad concept used to describe the design, construction, and maintenance of traffic control devices or physical measures. These strategies create safer environments for walking and bicycling through improvements to the infrastructure surrounding the schools.

EQUITY

Equity means working to support safe, active, and healthy opportunities for children and adults in low-income communities, communities of color, children with disabilities, and beyond. This involves incorporating equity concerns throughout the other E's to understand and address obstacles, create access, and ensure safe and equitable outcomes.

Benefits of Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs create a safer travel environment near schools and serve to reduce motor vehicle congestion at school drop-off and pick-up areas. One of the main goals of the SRTS program—along with increasing safety—is to increase the numbers of children who walk and bicycle to school. Students that choose to walk or bike to school are rewarded with the benefits of a more active lifestyle, as well as the responsibility and independence that comes from being in charge of the way they travel.

SRTS can improve communities by making walking- and bicycling-safe ways to get to school and by encouraging more children to do so. SRTS programs offer additional benefits to neighborhoods by helping to reduce school-related traffic and provide infrastructure improvements that facilitate walking and bicycling for everyone. Identifying and improving routes for students to safely walk and bicycle to school can also help reduce traffic speeds in neighborhoods, reduce traffic congestion on weekday mornings and afternoons at schools, and decrease auto-related pollution around school environments.

Planning Process

Data Collection

In the fall of 2015, staff from Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) met with the principals of the Hinsdale schools, SAU staff, and the Hinsdale School Board to discuss the development of SRTS Action Plans for the Hinsdale schools. Following these meetings, SWRPC staff began working with a team of students from the Keene State College geography department (KSC Team) to assess walking and bicycling conditions around the schools and collect baseline data about current walking bicycling trends among students.

Figure 2 - The benefits to SRTS for Hinsdale.



HINSDALE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL – SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

In order to better understand the walking, bicycling and travel conditions of each study area, SWRPC and the KSC Team:

- Conducted field studies to review the behaviors and travel patterns of students, buses, and motorists at the Hinsdale schools during student arrival and departure times;
- Conducted an infrastructure assessment of sidewalks in the Town of Hinsdale;
- Distributed and analyzed parent surveys related to walking and biking behaviors;
- Distributed and analyzed student in-classroom travel tallies related to student arrival and departure travel modes;
- Conducted traffic volume and speed studies at four locations: Plain Road, Brattleboro Road, School Street, and Prospect Street; and,
- Gathered and analyzed accident data in 2-mile radius of HM/HS.

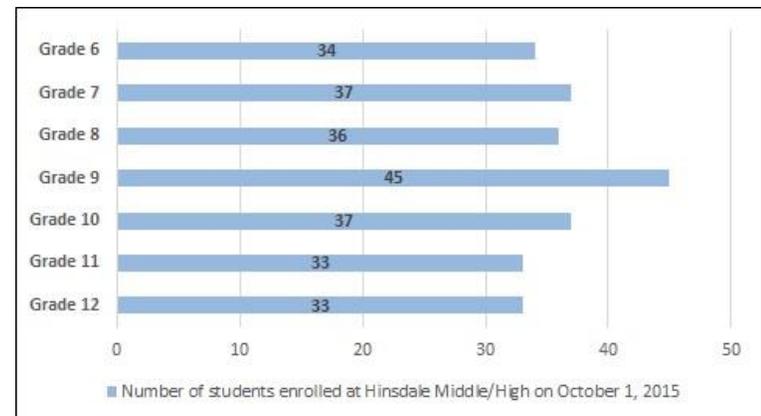
Community Input

During the spring of 2016 SWRPC staff attended several school events to gather community input about Safe Routes to School activities. This included attending a HM/HS PTSA meeting on April 5, 2016.

Study Area

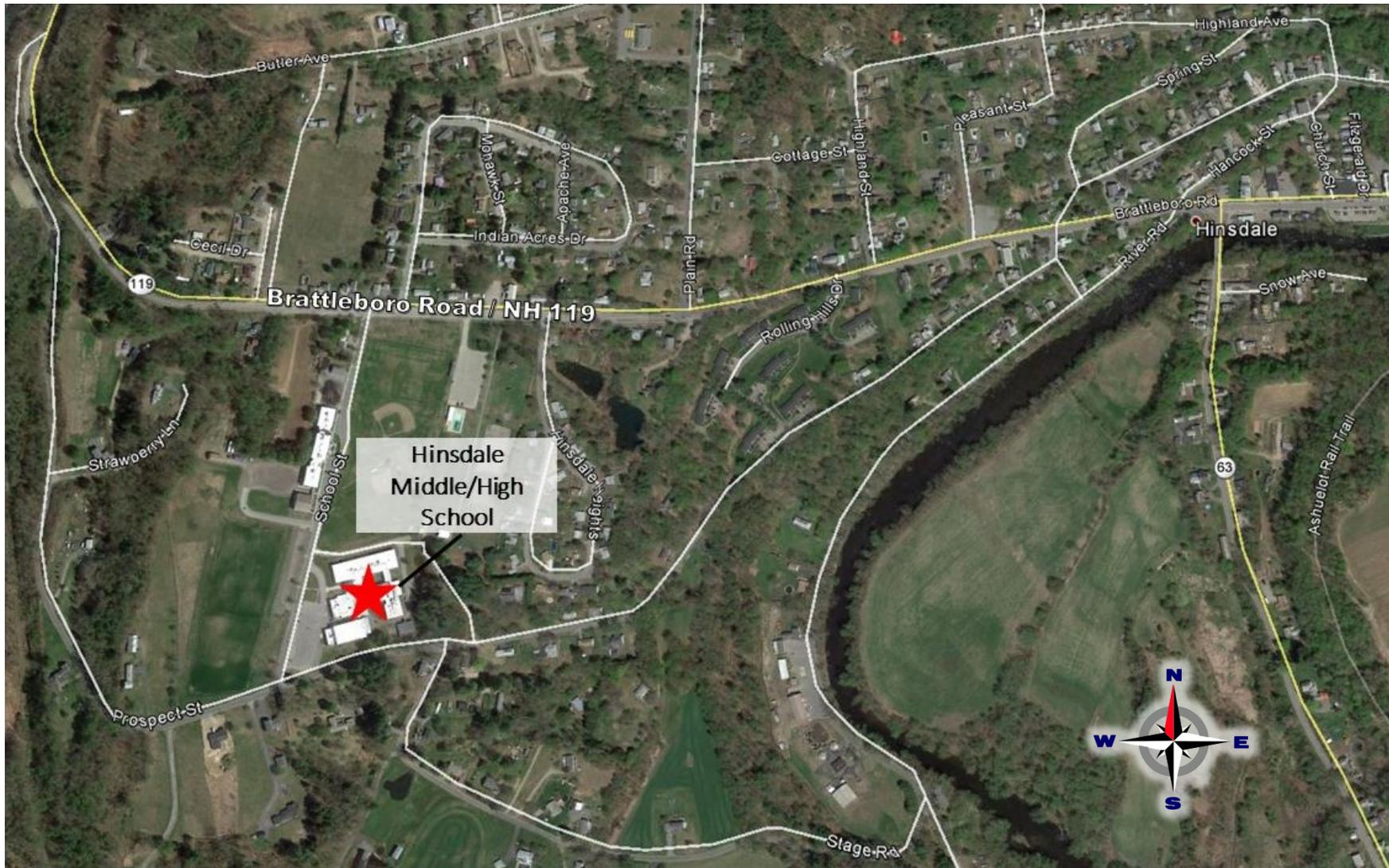
HM/HS is located on School Street near the SAU 92 offices and across from Hinsdale Elementary School. It is approximately one mile west of Town Hall on Main Street (NH 119) and can be accessed from Brattleboro Road (NH 119) to the north and Prospect Street to the south. Figure 3 on the next page shows the relationship of the school with the surrounding area. The school includes grades sixth to twelfth and had 256 students enrolled as of October 1, 2015. Approximately 52.7% of the student population, or 135 out of 256 students, lived within one mile of the school in 2015. Figure 4 on the following page shows the walking distance from HM/HS to most students' homes. Lastly, Figure 5 on page 7 shows the location of K-12 students within the Town of Hinsdale.

Table 1 - October 1, 2015 enrollment at HM/HS.



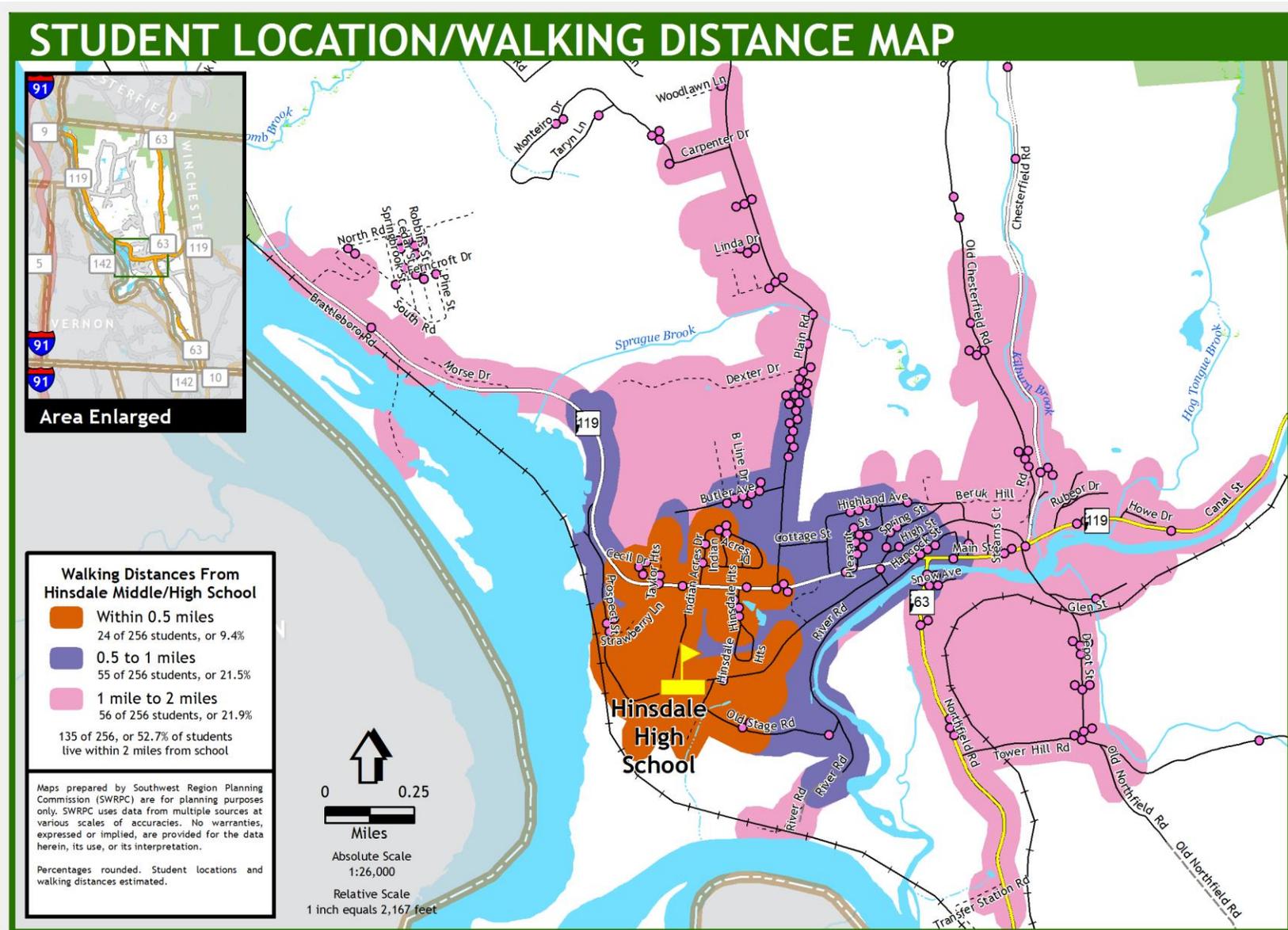
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Figure 3 - HM/HS within the Town of Hinsdale.



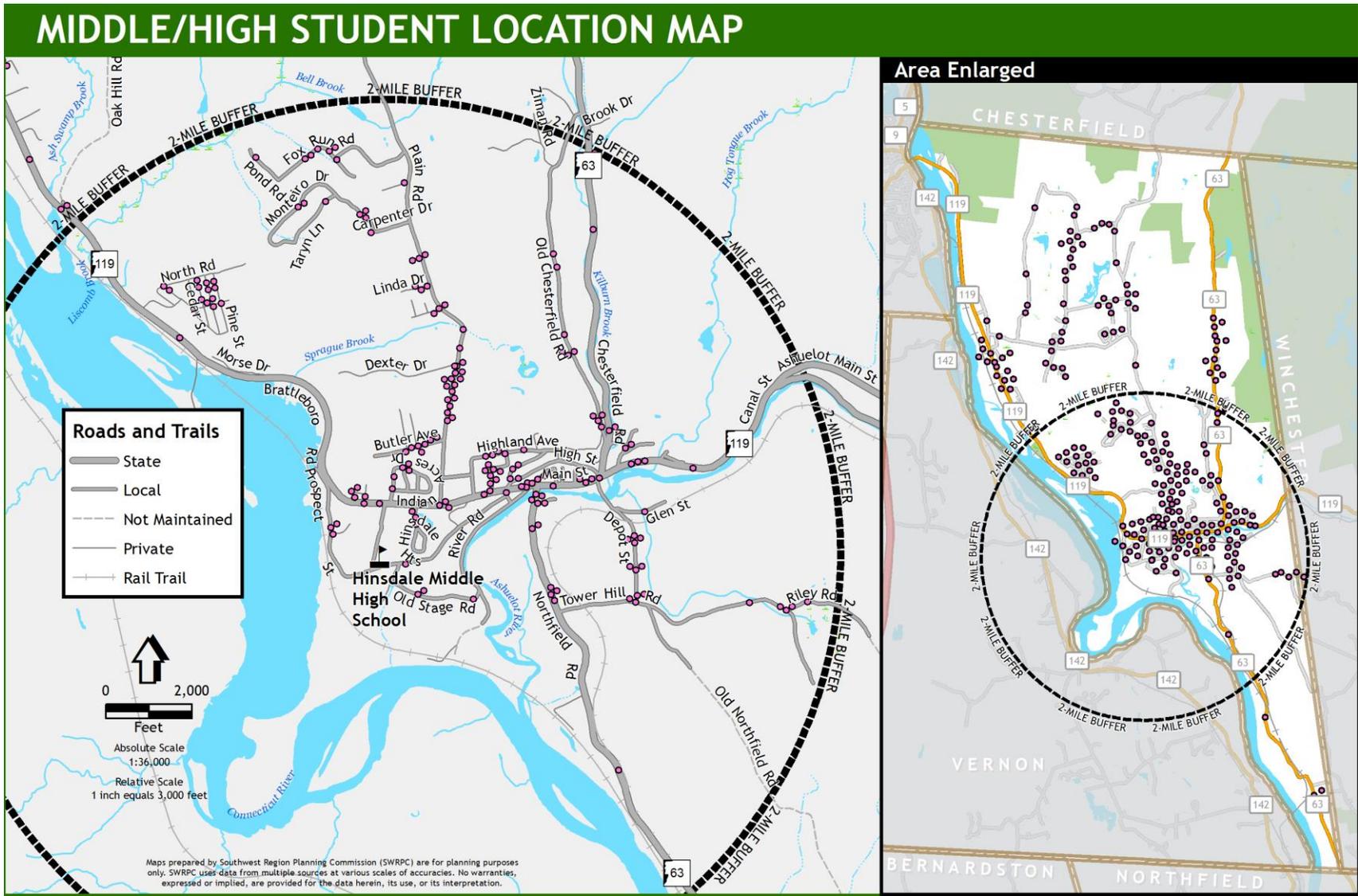
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Figure 4 - Hinsdale Middle/High School walking distance.



HINSDALE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL – SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

Figure 5 – Location of HM/HS students within the Town of Hinsdale.



EVALUATION OF EXISTING TRAVEL CONDITIONS

To better understand existing travel conditions within the study area, SWRPC staff worked with a team of students from the Keene State College Geography Department to conduct field studies to review the behaviors and travel patterns of students, buses, and motorists at HES during drop-off and pick-up hours. In addition, SWRPC staff collected and analyzed traffic speed and volume data at four locations within Hinsdale and distributed and analyzed data from a take-home parent survey and an in-class student tally related to student travel modes. A review of these observations and analysis is summarized in the sections below.

School Arrivals and Departures

Bus Drop-Off and Pick-Up

During the 2015 - 2016 school year, school started at 7:55 a.m. and ended at 2:36 p.m. The bus drop-off and pick-up location is in front of the school across from the parent pick-up and drop-off location, shown in Figure 7. There are no signs marking the bus drop-off and pick-up area, and this area was used by parents for drop-off before the buses arrived. There was one staff person present to help students exit the school bus. Likewise, there was a staff member present in the afternoon in the loading area.

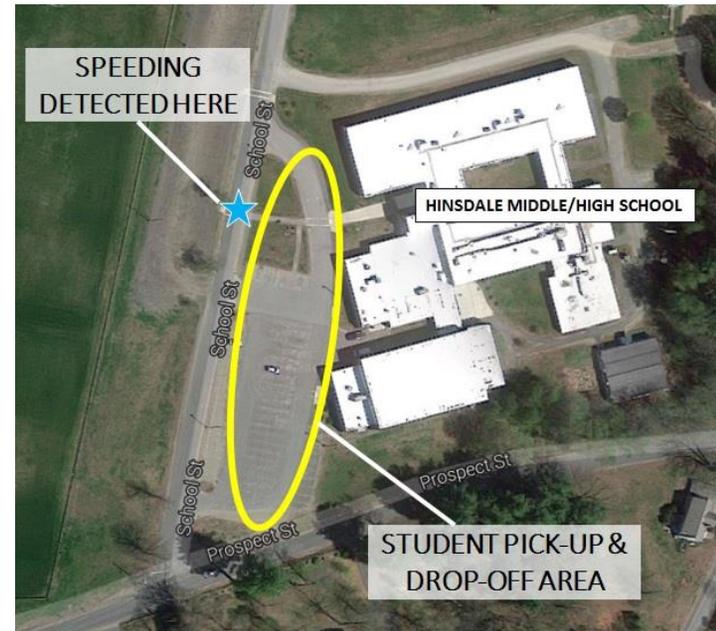
Parent Drop-Off and Pick-Up

The student drop-off and pick-up area is shown in yellow in Figure 7. It was observed that there are no signs or designated areas for picking-up or dropping-off students. The average wait time for pick up and drop off was around 1 minute; however, there were parents who arrived at the school 30 minutes before it

Figure 6 - The bus loading and unloading area in front of HM/HS.



Figure 7 - Field review areas of safety concern.



HINSDALE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL – SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

ended. A staff person was present to direct students from the drop-off location to the school entrance. A safety concern was that parents seemed to be in a rush once they had dropped off or picked up the students.

Other Observations

- Speeding seems to be an issue on School Street in front of the school on nearby roads, including Prospect Street and Brattleboro Road.
- Additional speed limit signs and “One-Way” signs could help improve safety and traffic flow on School Street.
- In general, wayfaring could be improved. Though entering and exiting signs to the school are clearly defined, there are no signs for walking and bike routes, nor are there signs to indicate where children will be crossing the roads.
- There is a lack of bicycle infrastructure, such as bike lanes, wide shoulders, “Share the Road” signs, etc.

Parent and In-Classroom Surveys

SWRPC staff worked with HM/HS faculty and administration to conduct the National SRTS Parent and In-Classroom Surveys during the 2015-2016 school year. These surveys helped generate a baseline of the number of students currently biking and walking to school and identified some of the barriers that prevent parents from allowing their children to walk or bike to school.

Parent Survey

The parent survey collects information from parents about how their children arrive and depart from school and what concerns, issues, and barriers parents have about their child walking or biking to school. Survey results will help determine how to improve safety conditions and make walking and biking easier and more convenient for children and parents.

Among the HM/HS population, 11 households responded to the Parent Survey, seven (64%) of which have children in middle school and four (36%) of which have children in high school. Roughly half, or 5 out of 11 respondents, indicated that they were not comfortable with their child walking and biking to/from school at any age. The other six respondents recorded grades five, six, nine, ten, and eleven.

Respondents identified numerous factors that influence their decision to allow their child to walk or bike to school. The top factor that influences parents is the condition of surrounding sidewalks and pathways. The second top factor was a four-way tie between distance to/from school, the speed/amount of traffic along the travel route, weather conditions, and safety of intersections and crossings.

HINSDALE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL – SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

The top two choices for primary travel mode to and from school were **family vehicle** and **school bus**. Six respondents indicated that their primary arrival mode to school and primary departure mode from school is family vehicle. Four respondents answered school bus as their primary arrival mode and three respondents answered school bus as their primary departure mode. One respondent indicated that their child currently walks home from school.

In-Classroom Survey

An In-Classroom survey was administered by all classrooms at HM/HS in late October 2015. Teachers surveyed students each morning and afternoon for three consecutive days (Tuesday – Thursday) on their mode of travel to and from school. On average, 386 students shared their arrival modes and 375 shared their departure modes. An average of 12 students arrive to school via walking and 34 students depart school on foot, a jump of 6% of respondents.

Table 2 - Mode of travel to and from school based on in-classroom survey.

Mode of Travel	Morning/Arrival		Afternoon/Departure	
	Average # of Students	% of Total Respondents	Average # of Students	% of Total Respondents
Walking	12	3%	34	9%
Biking	18	5%	23	6%
Family Vehicle	161	42%	146	39%
Bus	154	40%	131	35%
Carpool	31	8%	26	7%
Transit	3	1%	4	1%
Other	7	2%	11	3%

Comments from the Parent Survey

- “The fact is you never know who's out there (safety); my daughter also has physical incapability's which makes it so she can't [walk]!”
- “I lived in Hinsdale Heights right next to school. I walked to and from with siblings and friends all grades. Times are different now. Not as safe?”
- “Would love to see a crosswalk at the top of Sand Hill on Rt. 119 from Taylor Heights to the sidewalk on the other side.”

HINSDALE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL – SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

Students that biked to school also experienced a small jump, from 18 on average to 23. Approximately 154 students (40%) rode the bus to school and 131 students (35%) rode the bus home in the afternoon. The average of number of students taking a family vehicle to work dropped by 15, from 161 average respondents to 146 respondents. Around 7-8% of students carpooled, with 31 average respondents stating they carpooled to school and about 26 respondents stating they carpooled home. Fewer students took public transit or other forms of transportation, with approximately 10 students taking those forms of transportation in the morning and 15 taking these in the afternoon.

Pedestrian Infrastructure Conditions

Pedestrian infrastructure includes sidewalks, crosswalks, paved shoulders, off-road trails or paths, and amenities such as lighting and street furniture. The presence or lack of pedestrian infrastructure has a large impact on safety, both real and perceived. Studies have shown that for students living within 1 mile of school, implementation of effective pedestrian interventions can reduce the traffic dangers (real or perceived) that prevent children from walking to school.^{2,3}

Statewide Asset Data Exchange System (SADES) Data

In order to better understand pedestrian infrastructure conditions near the school, SWRPC staff assessed the conditions of sidewalks and crosswalks in Hinsdale using the NH Statewide Asset Data Exchange System, or SADES. SADES provides a common set of collection and training standards, ensuring that data collected throughout the state is comparable and assessed uniformly. The sidewalk assessment includes data such as the width of the sidewalk, sidewalk condition (good, fair, or poor), curb condition (good, fair, or poor), and the presence of buffer strips, curb ramps and crosswalks.

Figure 9 on the next page shows the extent of the sidewalk network in Hinsdale and sidewalk structural conditions. “Good condition” indicates little or no distress or vertical displacements on the sidewalk, “fair condition” indicates the presence of narrow cracks and/or sidewalk displacements less than ½ inch, and “poor condition” indicates sidewalk cracks and/or large vertical displacements greater than ½ inch.

² Beck, Laurie F. and Greenspan, Arlene I. “Why Don’t More Children Walk to School?” *Journal of Safety Research*. 39.5 (2008): 449-52.

³ Nasar, J.L. (2015). Creating places that promote physical activity: Perceiving is believing. [Research brief.] Active Living Research.

HINSDALE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL – SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

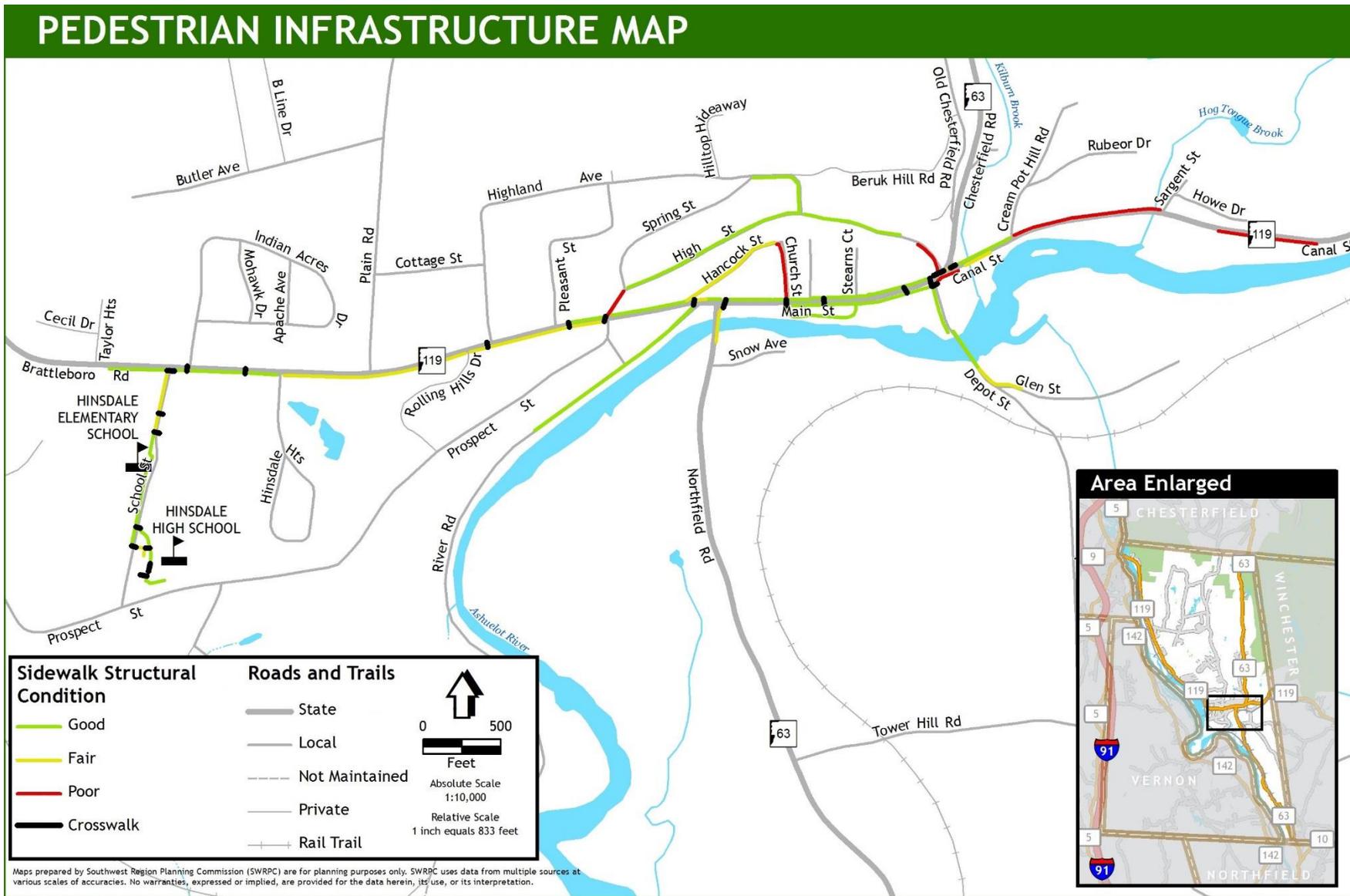
As Figure 9 indicates, there are several locations where sidewalks are in fair or poor condition. In particular, the section of sidewalk along Brattleboro Road between High Street and Hinsdale Heights is problematic for students walking and bicycling to school. While this sidewalk is in fair structural condition, there are other factors that make this sidewalk unsafe for pedestrians. In some locations, there is no buffer between the sidewalk and traffic. Due to the high speeds and traffic volumes along this road, a buffer strip of at least 5 feet in width and a six inch curb would help improve safety by physically and visually separating walkers from traffic.

Figure 8 - A section of sidewalk in poor structural condition on School Street (left) and in good structural condition on River Road (right).



HINSDALE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL – SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

Figure 9 - Sidewalk conditions near HES.



HINSDALE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL – SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

Traffic Volume and Speeds

To better understand traffic conditions on routes near the school, SWRPC staff conducted traffic volume and speed counts at four locations in Hinsdale, including Brattleboro Road west of School Street (site 1), School Street in front of HM/HS (Site 2), Prospect Street west of School Street (site 3), and Plain Road south of Cottage Street (Site 4). Figure 10 shows the locations of the traffic counters. Table 3, below, shows the minimum, maximum, average, and 85th percentile speed (the speed which no more than 15% of traffic is exceeding) detected at each location in miles per hour (mph) during school arrival and departure times. Figure 11, on the next page, shows the 85th percentile speed for the morning and afternoon at each traffic counter site.

There was significant speeding detected at Site 4 on Plain Road. The posted speed limit at this location is 35 mph, however about 41% of drivers exceeded this speed limit. The maximum speed detected at this location during school arrival and departure times was 62.2 mph, or about 27 mph over the posted speed limit. Due to the lack of sidewalks and paved shoulders on this road, speeding may deter parents from allowing

Figure 10 - Traffic counter locations in Hinsdale.



Table 3 - Speed data for Hinsdale traffic study locations.

Traffic Counter Location	Posted Speed Limit	Morning (8:00-9:00 a.m.)				Afternoon (3:00-4:00 p.m.)			
		Minimum	Maximum	Average	85%	Minimum	Maximum	Average	85%
Site 1	20 mph	10	46.8	31.8	37.2	9.9	48	30.5	35.8
Site 2	15 mph	6.5	33.3	19	22.7	6.9	28.2	17	21
Site 3	25 mph	10.2	34.8	24.8	27.9	8.1	37.8	23.8	27.7
Site 4	35 mph	16.5	62.2	38.7	45.3	7.5	55.1	37.1	43.3

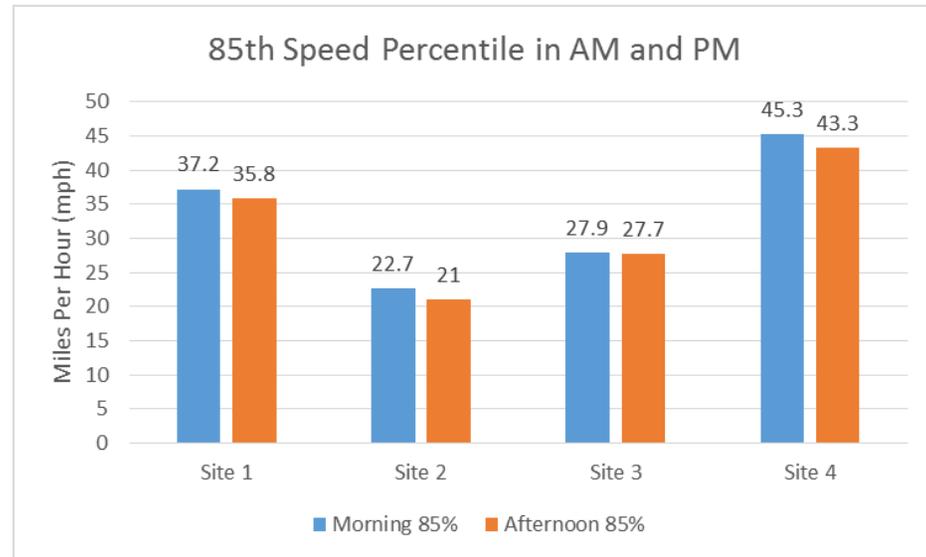
HINSDALE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL – SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

their children to walk or bike on this road. Speeding was detected at Site 1 (Brattleboro Road) as well. During school arrival and departure times, the speed limit is 20 mph due to the proximity of the school. However, the average speed at this location during these times was 31.8 mph in the morning and 30.5 mph in the afternoon. About 15% of drivers in this location were going over 37.2 mph and 35.8 mph in the morning and afternoon, respectively.

On School Street (Site 2), the posted speed limit is 15 mph. The average observed speeds at this location were 19 mph and 17 mph during morning and afternoon arrival and departure times, respectively. Fifteen percent of drivers exceeded 22.7 mph in the morning and 21 mph in the afternoon.

At Site 3 (Prospect Street), the posted speed limit is 25 mph. Average speeds at this location are within the posted speed limit during school arrival and departure times. The 85th percentile speeds at this location are 27.9 mph in the morning and 27.7 mph in the afternoon. This data suggests that, during school hours, there is not a significant amount of speeding on this road. Overall, the average speed on this road is 25.1 mph, and the 85th percentile speed is 29.55 mph.

Figure 11 – 85th percentile speeds at traffic counter locations during morning (8-9 AM) and afternoon (3-4 PM) hours.



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL STRATEGIES

The Hinsdale Middle/High School Safe Routes to School program works to create safe, active, and healthy opportunities for all children and seeks to engage families from all incomes, abilities, and walks of life. The Safe Routes to School program works to create safe, active, and healthy opportunities for all children and seeks to engage families from all incomes and abilities. To achieve this, all of the strategies developed under the 5 “E’s” incorporate the sixth E- equity. The following strategies help HM/HS work towards their goal of increasing the number of students who walk and bike to school and improve safety conditions.

Education

Education is essential for improving safe walking and biking conditions. Hinsdale Middle/High School should consider using this Action Plan as an opportunity to educate the school community about the benefits of walking and biking to school and on safe travel behavior for students and parents. Recommendations for enhancing education and awareness of the importance of and need for safe walking and bicycling routes to school are described below.

1. Incorporate Safe Routes to Schools into Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) Program and/or School Curriculum.

There are many opportunities for students who wish to earn school credits through the ELO program to engage in Safe Routes to Schools. The exact nature of an ELO project will depend on the interests of the student and the specific competencies the student would like to learn. ELO project ideas include:

- Organize an HM/HS bicycle club. Example activities could include creating a bicycle safety training, putting on a bicycle workshop for new riders, identifying and mapping potential routes for bicycle rides, teaching bicycle maintenance skills, creating a “how-to” guide for starting a bicycle club, researching the health benefits of bicycling, and/or organizing special bicycle events or fundraisers (i.e. “bike to ice cream” or “bike to the movies”). Potential community partners include the School Resource Officer and local bike shops.
- Collect and analyze walking and/or bicycling data. Example activities could include administering the National Safe Routes to School Student Travel Tally and creating a report based on the findings, doing pedestrian and bicycle counts at intersections near the school,

Figure 12 - Alexandria, Virginia’s Junior Bicycle Ambassadors demonstrate a turn signal during a bike rodeo at an elementary school.



HINSDALE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL – SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

mapping student locations and determining the average commute time by mode of travel, developing and implementing a survey that asks questions about student attitudes and behaviors around walking and bicycling to school, and/or calculating the amount of carbon dioxide avoided by walking or bicycling instead of driving or riding the bus. Potential community partners include Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) and local colleges/universities that have GIS labs, such as Keene State College.

- Create an educational video about safe walking and bicycling practices. Example activities include researching state and local laws pertaining to pedestrians and bicyclists, researching safe walking and bicycling practices, interviewing local “experts” such as the School Resource Officer, collecting data on current walking and bicycling trends, and/or demonstrating safe walking and bicycling practices. Potential community partners include the School Resource Officer, the Town of Hinsdale, the Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation, the Monadnock Cycling Club, and local bike shops.
- Teach younger students and children about safe walking and bicycling practices. Example activities include organizing a bicycle rodeo for the elementary school, helping out at Bike/Walk to School Days, helping to organize and lead a local “walking school bus” for younger students, helping to create and lead a bike club at the elementary school, and/or putting on an interactive presentation about safe walking and bicycling practices for younger students. Potential community partners include the School Resource Officer, the Hinsdale Elementary School (HES), and the HES Parent Teacher Association.

2. Start a “Hinsdale Bike Club” to teach students bicycling skills in a safe and supervised environment.

After School Bike Clubs teach students the skills necessary to become responsible cyclists and allow students to practice these skills in a safe and structured setting. Generally, bike clubs are led by at least one staff member or trained coach with help from parent volunteers. HM/HS

Figure 13 - Tips for organizing a walk/bike to school day event.

- Designate an **event organizer**. This could be a parent, PE teacher, school principal, or local non-profit organization.
- Try to include all students, including those who live too far to walk, by designating a **remote drop-off location**. To ensure students of all abilities can be involved, seek input from your Special Education staff and confirm that Walk to School Day routes are accessible.
- Recruit **partners and volunteers**, such as the police department, parent volunteers, teachers, and school administrators.
- Promote the event ahead of time with **flyers, newsletters, PA announcements, and letters to parents**.
- Contact **local media** and invite **community leaders/local celebrities**, such as the mayor or a team mascot, to your event. Take pictures of the event, and celebrate!

HINSDALE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL – SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

may want to require students to complete a bicycle safety training course (for example, a “bike rodeo”) before they are allowed to go out on rides. Family members can benefit from learning proper helmet fitting techniques, easy bicycle checks, tips for riding safely with children to school, and specific state and local laws about where and/or how to ride (e.g. Sidewalk riding is allowed for children under age 10 in residential areas, etc.).

3. Share information on student bicycle and pedestrian safety via the school website, newsletter, and/or other information outlets.

HM/HS should periodically remind parents and students about school rules for walking and bicycling and provide safety tips. For example, when the weather starts to get cold, the school could post information about when bicycling to school is allowed, as well as the proper clothing to wear while walking or bicycling in cool weather.

4. Include information about how families can walk, bike, take the bus, or carpool to school in the HM/HS Parent Handbook

The HM/HS Parent Handbook should include information such as who is eligible to ride the bus, where parents can find information about bus routes and schedules, recommended walking/bicycling routes to school, etc. In addition, the school may want to consider providing resources to help parents arrange carpools.

5. Give presentations about Safe Routes to School at School Board meetings, PTSA meetings, and other meetings as appropriate.

The Hinsdale Safe Routes to School task force should consider giving at least one presentation to the School Board and PTSA each year about the HM/HS Safe Routes to School program. These presentations could include information such as an overview of the SRTS Action Plan, an overview of the benefits of Safe Routes to School, and/or an update on the Safe Routes to School activities that HM/HS has undertaken or will undertake during the year. The SRTS task force may also want to consider giving presentations to other groups that may have an interest in Safe Routes to Schools.

Encouragement

Encouragement activities help generate excitement and interest in walking and bicycling to school. Coordinating special events, contests, mileage clubs, and ongoing activities all provide ways for students to discover, or re-discover, the benefits of walking and bicycling to school. Encouragement activities can be done with little funding and can remind students that walking or bicycling can be fun. Encouraging middle and high school students to walk and bike to school will require creative strategies that provide opportunities for self-expression and independence. By offering them leadership roles, students can learn valuable skills in community service. Several recommended encouragement activities are listed below:

1. Organize Walk/Bike to School Day events to promote walking and bicycling to school.

Walk and Bike to School Day events create opportunities for children to interact and socialize with their peers and encourage families and children to try walking or bicycling to school. National Walk to School Day occurs the first week of October, and National Bike to School day occurs the first week of May, but many schools choose to hold walk/bike to school day events throughout the year. For example, some schools designate the first Wednesday of every month as “Walking Wednesday”. For more information, guidance, and resources on how to plan a Walk to School Day event, see the [Walk to School Day Guide](http://www.walkbiketoschool.org), available at www.walkbiketoschool.org

2. Enlist Older Students to Help Plan SRTS-Related Activities.

There are many opportunities to coordinate events that support and promote walking and bicycling to school such as safe routes to school fundraisers, publicity campaigns, and special events. Enlisting middle and high school students to help plan these events can teach them independence, give them a chance to become a role model to younger students, and give them freedom to make an event their “own”. Hinsdale Middle/High School staff could mobilize a group of motivated students to develop a student “walk to school committee” or “youth SRTS task force” that could work directly with staff and parents to coordinate education and encouragement activities for both younger students and for their fellow peers. One example of how high school/middle school students can vamp up a walk/bike to school day event is to incorporate a “Bicycle Blender”.

A “Bicycle Blender” lets students use their own pedal power to make a smoothie and is a great tool to reward participation in Safe Routes to School activities and teach about health and wellness.

3. Engage Students in Creating Tools that will Help Make Walking and Biking to School More Convenient and Fun for their Peers.

Middle and High School students can support walking and bicycling to school by creating walking or biking maps that provide fun information including safety facts, distances, and calories burned walking or biking that particular route. These maps can be used by

Figure 14 - San Mateo, CA schools bring in a Bicycle Blender to encourage students to participate in Walk/Bike to School.



their peers, by parents, or as a resource for Walk/Bike to School Day events. Hinsdale Middle/High School can also encourage students to design SRTS-related promotional materials including logos, posters, and websites to further educate the community about the benefits of walking and bicycling to school.

4. Create a School-Wide Mileage Club or Contest to Offer Incentives to Students who Bike or Walk to School.

Mileage Clubs can provide quick reinforcement to students for walking and bicycling to school. Students track the number of times they walk or bike to school and are rewarded with recognition, prizes, or awards. Prizes can include stickers, wrist bands, healthy treats, etc. Contests can be between individuals, classrooms, or between schools. Mileage Clubs are generally year-round programs, but schools can also choose to coordinate a “Mileage Contest” as an event. Tips for organizing a Mileage Club or Contest include:

- Bring in a local expert, such as Beth Corwin from Symond’s Elementary School, to share lessons learned from developing a successful “Walk, Roll, & Ride” program.
- Identify a program coordinator, such as a PE teacher or another staff member that is enthusiastic about the program.
- Decide where students can accrue mileage (on the way to school, at home, on the school campus).
- Create system for logging and tracking mileage or number of times walked/bicycled. Utilize free physical activity tracking tools provided by Safe Route’s to School’s “Fire up Your Feet” initiative to log and track mileage or number of times students walked/bicycled.
- Decide on incentives (pizza party, recognition at assembly, etc.).
- Seek funding to support the program—materials, awards, prizes, etc.
- Recognize and reward participation.
- Track participation.
- Make changes as needed—the program will change over time to fit the unique needs of your school community.

Figure 15 - Symonds Elementary School students get their cards punched for the Symonds "Walk, Roll, and Ride" program.



Enforcement

Enforcement strategies help reduce unsafe behaviors by drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists and encourage all road users to obey traffic laws and share the road safely. Law enforcement, school personnel, and community members can work together to create and sustain a safe environment for walking and biking to school. Enforcement strategies should be implemented in combination with education, encouragement, and engineering strategies to have a maximum impact. Used on its own, enforcement does not usually result in long-term, lasting changes in driver behavior. Recommended enforcement strategies are listed below.

1. Organize a Student Safety Patrol to Increase Safety for Younger Students and Improve Traffic Flow Efficiency.

School safety patrols are trained student volunteers responsible for enhancing safety around the school and includes tasks such as directing and assisting students in crossing the street. A safety patrol program allows students to take a participatory role in promoting traffic safety. It is important for the school and a committed teacher or staff person to grant permission for such a program and coordinate trainings to ensure students are following safety protocols.

Hinsdale Middle/High School could also look into developing partnerships with local law enforcement and the American Automobile Association (an entity known for supporting student safety patrol programs) to assist the school in creating a safety patrol curriculum and training materials.

2. Engage Students to help chaperone a “Walking School Bus” for younger students.

A walking school bus is a group of children walking to school with one or more adults, and it can be informal (usually organized by parents) or a formal school program. Hinsdale Middle/High School students could get involved by assisting adult volunteers or school staff with chaperoning the walking school bus. During

Figure 16 - Wheelock School Student Safety Patrol Program.

Wheelock School, located in Keene, NH, developed a partnership with the Keene Police Department to organize a school safety patrol program. The purpose of the program is to provide a safe environment for crossing streets and waiting at bus stops. The program is open to students in the fifth grade who have demonstrated responsibility and leadership.

Wheelock School in Keene, NH.



a PTSA meeting in the spring of 2016, several Middle/High School students expressed interest in this activity. Becoming a “walking school bus chaperone” could civically engage the Middle/High School student community in Safe Routes to School by providing them a leadership role. Students would be offering a valuable service to their school community and could help bridge the safe routes to school initiatives between the two schools.

3. Clarify Bus Pick Up and Drop Off Zones.

During the field review, students noticed that there were no signs or arrows signifying traffic flow or bus pick up and drop off locations on the middle/high school campus. This poses safety concerns because parent vehicles picking up or dropping off their children may not be aware of which way buses are entering and exiting which could cause traffic congestion or an auto accident. To enforce proper pick up and drop off procedures, HMS/HES could paint directional arrows indicating desired traffic flow for buses or create a bus-loading lane indicated by signage or pavement markings.

Figure 17 - Deer Valley School District in Phoenix, Arizona uses pavement markings and clear signage to designate parent drop off circulation for school parking lots.



Engineering

Engineering is a broad concept used to describe the design, implementation, operation and maintenance of traffic control devices or physical measures, including low-cost as well as high-cost capital measures. Infrastructure such as sidewalks, wide paved shoulders or bike lanes, visible crosswalks, trails/paths, and connectivity between sidewalks and trails/paths creates conditions that improve safety for walking and bicycling in the area surrounding the school. Recommended engineering strategies for HM/HS are listed below.

1. Work with the Town of Hinsdale and N.H. Department of Transportation (NHDOT) to improve sidewalks on N.H. Route 119/Brattleboro Road.

The sidewalks along Brattleboro Road are the only pedestrian infrastructure available for students walking to school from the east side of town. The section of sidewalk on Brattleboro Road between Hinsdale Heights to the west and High Street to the east is in fair condition, as shown in the Pedestrian Infrastructure map (Figure 9 on page 13). The sidewalk is asphalt with a granite curb, and it contains cracks, heaves, and other surface defects, and in several locations, it is not separated from the road with a buffer strip. The school should consider working with the Town of Swanzey and NHDOT to come up with a plan to upgrade this section of sidewalk so it is in good condition. Where possible, the sidewalk should be separated from the road with a buffer strip of grass or concrete.

2. Work with the Town of Hinsdale and NHDOT to implement traffic calming measures on roads near the school.

High traffic speeds are a major safety concern for students walking and bicycling to school, especially on roads without sidewalks or wide paved shoulders. The school should consider working with the Town of Hinsdale to implement traffic calming measures on Plain Road between Butler Avenue and Brattleboro Road, Prospect Street near the school, and Brattleboro Road near the school. Traffic calming ideas include narrowing travel lanes when restriping the road to no more than 11 feet, posting speed feedback signs that show driver’s speeds in real time, installing School Zone signs with flashing lights to make them more visible, and/or painting pavement markings to help visually narrow travel lanes (i.e. transverse pavement markings, painted shoulders, etc.).

Figure 18 - Shoulder markings were used to visually narrow travel lanes on a two-way road in Roland, IA.



3. Work with Town of Hinsdale to increase pedestrian and bicyclist safety on Plain Road.

Plain Road is a significant barrier for students who must walk or bike along that road to get to school. Several parents have commented that they think the road is unsafe even for adults walking or bicycling. According the traffic study that was conducted on Plain Road, 15% of drivers exceeded the speed limit by more than 10 mph during school arrival and departure times, and the highest speed detected during these times was 27 mph over the speed limit. The school should consider working with the Town of Hinsdale to install pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure along the section of Plain Road between Brattleboro Road and Butler Avenue. The presence of a wide paved shoulder, or ideally a paved sidewalk, would greatly increase the comfort and safety for people walking and bicycling along this section of road. In combination with traffic calming measures, a widened shoulder or sidewalk could make it possible for more students to safely walk and bike to school.

4. Implement traffic calming measures on School Street in front of the Middle/High School.

According to the traffic study that was conducted on School Street, there is some speeding in front of the Middle/High School during school hours. About 15% of drivers go faster than 22.7 mph despite the 15 mph speed limit. The school may want to consider implementing traffic calming measures such as installing speed tables to help slow traffic in front of the school.

Evaluation

Evaluation involves monitoring and documenting outcomes, attitudes and trends through the collection of data before and after program activities or projects. These activities help track which strategies would be most or least successful and which should be modified for better results. HM/HS has already collected baseline data on student travel modes to and from school and parent concerns about walking and bicycling to school. Moving forward, the school should consider the evaluation recommendations listed below.

1. Administer the “Safe Routes to School Arrival and Departure Tally Sheet” on an annual basis to track trends over time.

The Student arrival and departure tally sheet is simple to administer, and it provides useful data on student travel modes to and from school. In addition, students can be involved with data collection and analysis, turning it into an educational opportunity. By collecting this data on an annual basis, the school will be able to track trends in travel modes over time and adjust education, encouragement, enforcement, and engineering strategies accordingly. The data from the tally sheets can also be used to enhance applications for grant funds to help support Safe Routes to School programs and/or infrastructure projects. The National Center for Safe Routes to Schools will tabulate survey responses free of charge; for more information please visit www.saferoutesinfo.org. A copy of this survey can be found in Appendix D.

2. Administer the “Parent Survey about Walking and Biking to School” on a bi-annual basis (every two years).

The parent take-home survey provides useful information about parents’ safety concerns related to their children walking and biking to school, and it helps to uncover the reasons behind travel behaviors. In addition, students can be involved with data collection and analysis, turning it into an educational opportunity. In order to stay current with the school population, this survey should be administered once every two years. Since participation in the parent survey in 2015 was low, the survey should be re-administered as soon as possible. The National Center for Safe Routes to Schools will tabulate survey responses for free; for more information please visit www.saferoutesinfo.org. A copy of this survey can be found in Appendix C.

3. Update the Safe Routes to School Action Plan every five years.

The data and recommendations outlined in this Action Plan are intended to be used as a starting point for launching a comprehensive Safe Routes to School program. As the program progresses, the Action Plan will need to be updated to include current data and recommendations that fit the needs of the school and community at that time. The Hinsdale Middle/High School staff should consider taking this task on.

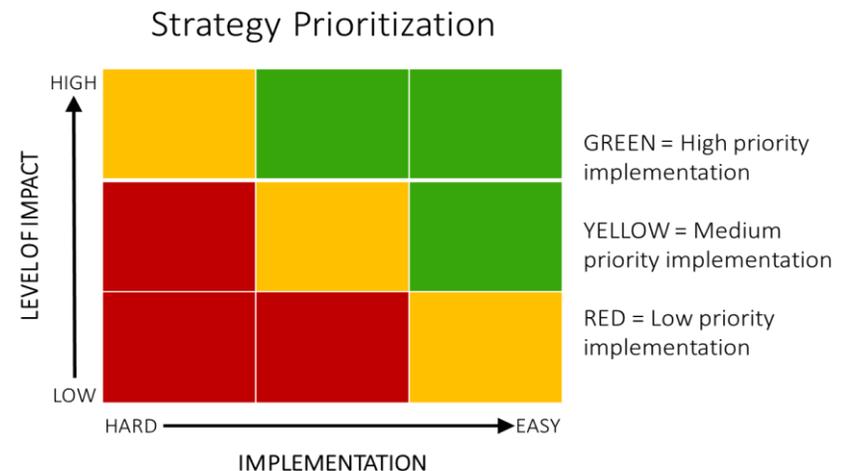
IMPLEMENTATION

Following the adoption of this Action Plan, the HM/HS Safe Routes to School Task Force should work on implementing priority strategies within this Plan. The task force may want to consider going through a strategy prioritization process to determine which strategies would be most effective in the short term. Factors to consider in this prioritization process could include the expected level of impact for each strategy, the funding and/or resources available to help implement each strategy, and the ease of implementation for each strategy. Figure 19 gives an example chart that can be used to help with the prioritization process. Table 4 provides information about each strategy, including potential partners for each strategy, a suggested timeframe for implementation, implementer, and potential funding source.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:

- 1) Designate an existing committee or form a SRTS Task Force to implement this Action Plan that (ideally) includes the following:
 - a. Parents
 - b. School administrators and teachers
 - c. Community members
 - d. Town staff and/or officials
 - e. Students
- 2) Prioritize Strategies for implementation. Factors to consider may include:
 - a. Expected impact of strategy
 - b. Ease of implementation
 - c. Availability of resources such as funding, volunteers, etc.
- 3) Begin putting high priority strategies into action
- 4) Evaluate success and share results!

Figure 19 - Prioritization chart for SRTS strategies



HINSDALE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL – SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

Table 4 - Hinsdale Middle/High School Safe Routes to School strategies matrix.

	Strategy	Partners	Timeframe	Implementer	Potential Funding Source
EDUCATION	1. Incorporate Safe Routes to Schools into Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) Program and/or School Curriculum.	Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC), local police dept., School Resource Officer, Town of Hinsdale, local bike shops, etc.	Immediate/ongoing	Hinsdale Middle/High School (HM/HS)	N/A
	2. Start a “Hinsdale Bike Club” to teach students bicycling skills in a safe and supervised environment.	School Resource Officer, Hinsdale PTSA	Immediate/ongoing	HM/HS	Advocates for Healthy Youth (AFHY) Mini Grant Program; Hinsdale School District (HSD)
	3. Share information on student bicycle and pedestrian safety via the school website, newsletter, and/or other information outlets.	Hinsdale School District	Immediate/ongoing	HM/HS	N/A
	4. Include information about how families can walk, bike, take the bus, or carpool to school in the HM/HS Parent Handbook.	Hinsdale School District	Immediate/ongoing	HM/HS	N/A

HINSDALE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL – SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

	Strategy	Partners	Timeframe	Implementer	Potential Funding Source
EDUCATION	5. Give presentations about Safe Routes to School at School Board meetings, PTSA meetings, and other meetings as appropriate.	Hinsdale PTSA; Hinsdale School Board	Ongoing, ~1-2 times per year	Hinsdale SRTS task force or other committee charged with implementation of this plan	N/A
ENCOURAGEMENT	1. Organize Walk/Bike to School Day Events to Promote Walking and Bicycling to School.	Hinsdale PTSA, Town of Hinsdale, Local Businesses, Community Service Groups	Start September 2016, then ongoing	HM/HS	AFHY Mini Grant; Hinsdale School District; Hinsdale PTSA (fundraising)
	2. Enlist Older Students to Help Plan SRTS-Related Activities.	Hinsdale School District	Start September 2016, then ongoing	Staff, Teachers, SRTS Task Force	AFHY Mini Grant; Hinsdale School District; Hinsdale PTSA (fundraising)
	3. Engage Students in Creating Tools that will Help Make Walking and Biking to School More Convenient and Fun for their Peers.	HM/HS, Student groups	Start September 2016, then ongoing	Teachers, SRTS Task Force	N/A

HINSDALE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL – SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

	Strategy	Partners	Timeframe	Implementer	Potential Funding Source
ENCOURAGEMENT	4. Create a School-Wide Mileage Club or Contest to Offer Incentives to Students who Bike or Walk to School.	Hinsdale PTSA, Local Businesses, Community Service Groups	3-6 months to implement, then ongoing	Teachers at HM/HS, SRTS Task Force	AFHY Mini Grant; Hinsdale School District; Hinsdale PTSA (fundraising)
ENFORCEMENT	1. Organize a Student Safety Patrol to Increase Safety for Younger Students and Improve Traffic Flow Efficiency.	Local Police Department, AAA	6-12 months to implement, then ongoing	Hinsdale School District	Hinsdale School District; AFHY Mini Grant
	2. Organize a Group of “Walking School Bus Chaperones”.	Local Police Department, PTA	3-6 months to implement, then ongoing	Hinsdale School District	Hinsdale School District; AFHY Mini Grant
	3. Clarify Bus Pick Up and Drop Off Zones.	Hinsdale School District	3-6 months to implement	Hinsdale School District	Hinsdale School District

HINSDALE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL – SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

	Strategy	Partners	Timeframe	Implementer	Potential Funding Source
ENGINEERING	1. Work with the Town of Hinsdale and N.H. Department of Transportation (NHDOT) to improve sidewalks on N.H. Route 119/Brattleboro Road.	Town of Hinsdale, SWRPC, NHDOT	~1-5 years	NHDOT	Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)*, Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)*
	2. Work with the Town of Hinsdale and NHDOT to implement traffic calming measures on roads near the school.	Town of Hinsdale, SWRPC, NHDOT	1-5 years	NHDOT (Brattleboro Road); Town of Hinsdale (Plain Road and Prospect Street)	TAP*, Town of Hinsdale
	3. Work with Town of Hinsdale to increase pedestrian and bicyclist safety on Plain Road.	Town of Hinsdale, SWRPC	1-5 years	Town of Hinsdale	TAP*, Town of Hinsdale
	4. Implement traffic calming measures on School Street in front of the Middle/High School.	Town of Hinsdale	6 months - 1 year	Hinsdale School District/Town of Hinsdale	Hinsdale School District, Town of Hinsdale

HINSDALE MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL – SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

	Strategy	Partners	Timeframe	Implementer	Potential Funding Source
EVALUATION	1. Administer the “Safe Routes to School Arrival and Departure Tally Sheet” on an annual basis to track trends over time.	SWRPC (to enter data); National Center for Safe Routes to School Data Center	Ongoing/yearly	HM/HS; SRTS task force	N/A
	2. Administer the “Parent Survey about Walking and Biking to School” on a bi-annual basis (every two years).	SWRPC (to enter data), National Center for Safe Routes to School Data Center	Ongoing/every two years	HM/HS; SRTS task force	N/A
	3. Update the Hinsdale Middle/High School Safe Routes to School Action Plan every five years.	SWRPC (to help update plan)	Every 5 years	HM/HS; SRTS task force	N/A

** Note: Projects may or may not be eligible for funds through TAP and HSIP. Please contact SWRPC for assistance with applying for funds via these programs.*

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Keene State College Student Report about Hinsdale Safe Routes to School program

Appendix B: Hinsdale Middle/High School Field Review Summary

Appendix C: National Safe Routes to Schools Parent Survey

Appendix D: National Safe Routes to Schools In-Classroom Student Tally

Appendix E: Safe Routes to Schools Resource List