

COMETS TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN



AMHERST EXEMPTED VILLAGE SCHOOLS

COMETS TO SCHOOL



TRAVEL PLAN

AMHERST EXEMPTED VILLAGE SCHOOLS

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Section 1 – School Travel Plan Team Members

The members identified below have come together to support this school travel plan entitled Comets to School. They all are committed to the vision of creating and encouraging safe commutes for children to and from school. The group is called the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Steering Committee and will be referenced as such throughout the Plan. The SRTS Steering Committee includes representatives from the local government, school system, and community.

School/Education/Encouragement

Steve Sayers – Superintendent, Amherst Exempted Village Schools
Hal Kendrick – Director of Operations, Amherst Exempted Village Schools
Brad Draga – Teacher and coach, Amherst Junior High School
Rhonda Newhoff – Principal, Harris School
Ron Hause – Assistant Principal, Amherst Junior High

Community / Evaluation

Joe Tellier – Leader of Amherst SRTS Task Force

Health/Education

Donna Palmer – PE Teacher, Amherst Schools
Lacie Reighert – PE Teacher, Amherst Schools

Public Safety/Enforcement

Chief Lonnie Dillon – City of Amherst Police Department
Lieutenant Joe Kurireck – City of Amherst Police Department

Local Government/Evaluation

Mayor Taylor – City of Amherst Mayor
Dennis Clotz – Safety Service Director City of Amherst
Jason Sobiski – Ward One Councilman
Glenn Loughrie – Ward Two Councilman

Engineering

Bramhall Engineering and Surveying

Primary Contacts are:

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Section 2: Introduction

In a time where obesity rates among children and adolescents are increasing, it is becoming more important to create healthy environments; as the environments we live in can make it easier or harder for healthy choices to be made. As shown on the following page, nationally, obesity rates over the past twenty years have more than doubled for children ages 6-11 and more than tripled for adolescents ages 12-19.

It is due in part to these alarming rates that members from the Amherst community have come together to put in place a school travel plan. This plan is being put together with the idea and vision to create an environment where children are enabled and encouraged to safely walk or ride their bikes to school safely.

The school travel plan has provided a way for various members of the Amherst community to come together to create a plan that will represent this communities priorities for school travel. Our plan will be termed comet safely to school because our school mascot is a comet. We believe by naming the plan after our school mascot, the entire community of students, parents, and community would encourage the healthy initiative this plan offers.

Through public outreach, interviews with stakeholders, and engineering analyses, it is the goal of this plan to identify problems and barriers that currently deter a student to walk or bike to school and create countermeasures to correct these barriers.

Section 3: The Public Input Process

In addition to compiling a Steering Committee that meets at various times throughout our planning process, public outreach was also a large component of this plan. Below is a list of techniques we used to create this SRTS plan.

Timeline:

A time line was created to keep this plan moving in a forward direction that would help our students as soon possible. This timeline kept all stakeholders onboard with what step of the process we were at and when the next step needed to be completed.

Public Meeting

A Public meeting was help during the planning of this project. It was held January 12, 2009 to solicit comments regarding problems and barriers community members see for inhibiting children to walk or bike to school. A notice of such a meeting was posted in the Lorain Morning Journal with Joe Tellier's telephone number listed for additional information about the meeting. Additionally parents at two schools where all sent a comment card asking for additional input from them dealing with their concerns and how to make this plan most beneficial to them.

Stakeholder Interviews

The STRS Steering Committee comprised an extensive list of stakeholders. The identified stakeholders include:

Steve Sayers- Amherst Schools Superintendent
Hal Kendrick – Amherst Schools Director of Operations
Donna Palmer-Amherst Schools PE Teacher
Lacie Reichert – Amherst Schools PE Teacher
Brad Draga – Amherst School Teacher
Rhonda Newhoff- Amherst School Principal
Ron Hause – Amherst School Assistant Principal
Mayor Taylor – Mayor, City of Amherst
Dennis Clotz – Safety Service Director, City of Amherst
Jason Sobiski – Ward 1 Councilman, City of Amherst
Glenn Loughrie- Ward 2 Councilman, City of Amherst
Chief Dillon- Chief of Police, City of Amherst
Lieutenant Kurireck – Police Department, City of Amherst
Ron Merthe – Director of Utilities, City of Amherst
Bramhall Engineering and Surveying Co.
Linda Hail – Amherst Task Force member
Joe Tellier – Amherst Task Force Leader

Mayor Taylor provided us with a priority list of five areas in the city that needed to be addressed for safety concerns. This memo is included in the following page. Interviews/questionnaires were sent and returned in the month of May 2009 to get as many details on changes we needed to make to make Amherst a safer place for children to walk and/or ride their bike to school. This information provided through this process was utilized in helping to evaluate existing travel conditions as well as developing exploring possible countermeasures to encourage and improve bike and pedestrian travel to and from school.

Ideas for encouragement:

Logging and keeping track of miles traveled to and from school.
Bike Rodeo

Problems encountered before and after school:

Traffic Congestion
South Lake Narrow road and no sidewalks leading to several developments
Our community has a lack of sidewalks and needs to have a plan to create safer routes for our students to commute to school on foot or bike
Heavy traffic around school areas from students walking and crossing roads without sidewalks

Public Comment Period

As mentioned previously, a public meeting was held and information in regards to contact people where published in our newspaper, The Morning Journal. School staff members have also been passing out literature to go home asking for input from parents and students on how to make the commute to and from school safer than it currently is.

Existing Plan Recommendations

A study by the City of Amherst was conducted of the most dangerous areas that needed to be addressed in our city in relationship to sidewalks needing to be installed. Relative to the City of Amherst, the following proposed local corridors were recommended for including bike/pedestrian

routes in this plan:

The number one location determined by a committee of city officials and residents needing sidewalks is South Lake Street. These sidewalks would begin at Harris School and go south to Middle Ridge Rd.

The second location was West Martin at 390, south side of W. Martin, west of Apple Orchard.

The third location is on Lincoln Street from Sipple Avenue north.

The fourth location is from residence at 498 Sunrise (Mishak) & 591 Washington (Church of Christ) north Lincoln Street.

The fifth location is North Lake Street – city limits to Police Station on the east side of N. Lake Street.

Existing Programs Already in Place include the following:

Safety Town – Safety Town is a week long class in safety education open to all children who will be attending kindergarten in the fall. Under guidance, they practice and experience real life situations before being confronted with the issues in real life situations. These lessons are, but not limited to railroad crossing, fire and ambulance safety, crosswalks and sidewalks, bicycle safety, playground and drug safety. Safety Town is actually a miniature town built to scale of buildings and landmarks the students encounter in Amherst. (Different restaurants, churches, school) Amherst Safety Town is located on South Lake Street at Beaver Creek Park, right next to the Amherst Police Station. Police officers are also included in the lessons that are taught to Amherst's youth.

Crossing Guard – At Harris School there is an employee of the school who is out there working the crossing of South Lake Street directly across from the school. They are out on patrol during arrival and dismissal times.

Wellness Policy-Amherst schools has a link on their website to help the students and parents to understand when to keep children home, nutritional valued foods, and what to look for when helping their children eat and live healthy life styles.

Section 4: Description of Schools

The two schools included in the Comet To School Travel Plan are Amherst Junior High School and Josiah Harris Elementary School. These two schools are located in the City of Amherst, although students from Lorain also attend Amherst Schools. Total enrollment for these two schools is approximately 1200 students.

These two schools are located on the same campus, though they have different main entrances on different streets. A small easement is being added currently to allow these two schools to share entrances and exits.

Harris Elementary School

Enrollment: 350 students

Grade: 4th.

School Hours: 8:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.

393 South Lake St.

Amherst, Ohio 44001

Phone: (440) 984-2496

Amherst Junior High School

Enrollment: 750 students

Grades: 7th. & 8th.

School Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

548 Milan Avenue

Amherst, Ohio 44001

Phone: (440) 988-0324

Section 5: School Demographics

Student Subgroups



	This School	State Average
Economically disadvantaged students	19%	36%
Students with disabilities	15%	14%

Source: OH Dept. of Education, 2007-2008

Harris Elementary School

Student Subgroups



	This School	State Average
Economically disadvantaged students	21%	36%
Students with disabilities	19%	14%

Source: OH Dept. of Education, 2007-2008

Amherst Junior High School

Student Population - 697

Harris Elementary School

Student Population - 263

Section 6: Current School Travel Environment

Amherst Exempted Village Schools currently has an approved transportation school policy in effect for each of their schools. The following drop off and pick up procedures for Harris Elementary School and Amherst Junior High School is listed below.

Harris School

Aug 22, 2009

School Hours:

8:00-3:00

Morning Drop Off:

Students are to be dropped off after 7:30 in front of Harris school. Please use the "car lane" to drop off all along the front of the building. Parents will then exit out of Harris onto South Lake Street. Buses will also be pulling in to drop off students just past the building. They will be in the "bus lane". Buses will exit Harris by using the new road that connects Harris to Amherst Junior High. Please use extreme caution, as this is a new procedure.

After School Pick Up:

Walkers:

Walkers will be dismissed out the front door at 2:55. An aide will walk students across the sidewalk out to South Lake Street.

Car Riders:

Parents will pull in to the Harris lot off of South Lake Street. Cars will pull all the way around the circle and park on the yellow lines. There will be two lines of cars. Students will be dismissed out the North door and walk to the cars. The cars will be dismissed after each child is safely in a vehicle. Please use extreme caution. Our number one concern is student safety.

Bus Riders:

Bus riders will be walked to their assigned bus that will be waiting for them on the new road that connects the Harris Parking lot with Amherst Junior High.

Amherst Junior High Pickup/Drop off Procedures:

The different building start times and changes in the bus runs have brought new challenges this year. We are committed, though, to providing a safe, efficient, and convenient pickup/drop off procedure. This has always been a difficult undertaking for a number of reasons: there are only two entrances into the entire Harris/AJH campus, the narrowness of Milan Avenue which makes it very difficult for buses to turn onto and the traffic flow constraints inherent in the Amherst road system (Five Points, etc.). However, in spite of all of these factors, we feel that we can develop a system that works fairly well. It takes a few days to see what the problems are and identify the choke points, as well as to get a feel for where people are going after they leave the campus. Now, with more information in these areas, we feel that the following procedures will help:

- 1) Parents can continue to drop off and pickup in the loop in front of the flag pole. When you drop off

in the morning, we ask that you pull all the way up and around past the flag pole to get as many cars into the loop as possible. This will keep cars from backing up onto the driveway. Please drop off at curbside and exercise due caution. When picking up at the end of the school day, parents may form two lines: one around the outside (curbside) curve and one around the inner curve (the grass/tree island) if there are too many cars for the outer ring. This will leave an empty row in the middle that parents can use to exit once they have picked up their child. *Please be very alert to any students who may be moving between cars and be careful when you pull out.* Students whose parents are parked on the outer ring are able to use the sidewalk all the way to their parent's car, but the other students will have to walk between cars to get to the inner ring. AJH staff will be out there monitoring the situation but you can never be too careful.

2) Parents will also be able to drop off in the Harris parking lot in the morning if they find this more convenient. This will also help reduce some of the morning congestion on Milan Avenue. *When you drop off in the morning, please drop off close to the Harris building where the sidewalk to AJH begins.* Please do not pull all the way down to the bus access road because this will interfere with bus traffic. Once you drop your child off, please pull right around the Harris horseshoe and onto South Lake. The Harris parking lot cannot be used for pickup at the end of the school day. This is because the Harris parents have already begun lining up for the Harris dismissal. Harris parents must be lined up in a particular manner due to the fact that Harris students are 4th graders and that no car moves in the Harris lot until the all clear is given.

3) There will also be an Amherst Police Officer at the entrance to AJH off of Milan Avenue for the next few days to help facilitate traffic flow onto Milan Avenue. Please be advised, though, that there always will be a certain amount of traffic backup going up to the Five Points. Remember, that between 7:07-7:25, 16 school buses leave AJH and proceed towards Five Points. Parents have found in the past that adjusting their schedule by even just a few minutes can make a big difference.

4) The new access road between Harris and AJH is for buses only during the school day.

5) School buses have the right of way. When the school buses begin moving, please do not try to cut in between them. Remember, the safety of our children comes first. So, in a nutshell:
Parents can drop off at either Harris or AJH in the morning. *Parents can only pick up at AJH* in the afternoon. Please exercise extreme caution whenever you are driving in or near a school campus. Students are not very alert in the morning and full of energy in the afternoon. Either one make them liable to step in front of a car without thinking. Thank you for your patience and cooperation as we try to make the pickup/drop off procedures as safe and efficient as possible.

**Amherst
Safe Routes to School
Engineering Study**
Ohio Department of Transportation,
District 3
July 28, 2010



EXPERIENCE | Transportation

Executive Summary

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Amherst Safe Routes to School Engineering Study is to identify and provide active transportation choices to school that will improve children's safety and promote healthy lifestyles. To accomplish this, the study needs to improve connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists, enhance safety of existing infrastructure, and identify strategies beyond infrastructure to emphasize active transportation in students' lives.

Background

The Amherst Exempted Village School District and the community as a whole values the health and environmental benefits provided by walking and bicycling and aim to improve student participation in active transportation. School and community leaders hope to increase the number of students who walk or bicycle to and from Harris Elementary School and Amherst Junior High School. The two schools are located adjacent to one another on the same campus. Data from 2005-2007 identified that ten pedestrian or bicycle crashes occurred within two miles of the schools.

Overview of Existing Conditions

Harris Elementary School and Amherst Junior High School are located in Amherst, Ohio. Harris serves Grade 4 and Amherst serves Grades 7-8. On average, Harris Elementary has 3% walkers and no one bicycling, while Amherst Junior High has 15% walkers and less than 1% travel by bicycle.

Deficiencies, Countermeasures, & Costs

Improvements for the two schools include intersection safety enhancements and sidewalk construction. Encouragement and education measures can be useful since many surrounding areas have sidewalks and paths to the schools.

The costs associated with potential infrastructure improvements for the two schools totals up to approximately \$1,317,500.

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Existing Conditions

Current conditions within the Amherst Exempted Village Schools were inventoried for Harris Elementary School and Amherst Junior High School. This process included creating maps of the areas surrounding the schools and completing walk audits of the campus and surrounding walkable areas. Walk audits were conducted on May 19, 2010, to observe conditions and arrival and dismissal patterns. The TranSystems team met with Ron Hause (Assistant Principal, Amherst Junior High), Mayor David Taylor (City of Amherst), Joe Tellier (Amherst SRTS Task Force Leader), Ron Merthe (Director of Utilities), Steve Bukovac (ward member), and Julie Cichello (ODOT District 3 SRTS Coordinator).

Local officials' top priorities for improvements are sidewalk construction on S. Lake Street, W. Martin Avenue, Lincoln Street, Washington Street, and N. Lake Street.

Harris Elementary School and Amherst Junior High School are located adjacent to each other on the same campus. A walking path connects the two schools. School policy dictates that bicycle riders walk their bicycles once on the school campus grounds. The campus is bordered by Milan Avenue to the north and S. Lake Street to the west. The campus is separated from both roads by a row of houses. Houses border the campus to the south and east as well. Trees, a creek, and a steep slope also separate the campus from neighborhoods to the east.

Railroad tracks bisect the town to the north of the schools, but they are grade-separated at N. Lake Street, Milan Avenue, and S. Main Street. Sidewalks exist at each railroad underpass, but often only on one side of the street.

In fact, many streets currently have sidewalks on one side only. This necessitates countermeasures that provide safe crossing locations for children on the opposite side to access the sidewalk. Additionally, many streets have gaps between existing sidewalks that place children in potential danger. If a street has sidewalks in some locations but not others, the lack of continuity can cause the entire street to be deemed unsafe for children, therefore providing parents with a reason to



Amherst Junior High School



Entrance and drop-off for Harris Elementary School

drive their children to school. This is especially the case on S. Lake Street where sidewalks in most places are not good enough; a gap in sidewalks must be filled before children south of the schools can safely walk or bicycle.

It also appears that there is a culture of driving that exists in Amherst that plays a role in current travel choices. It is likely that many children being dropped off at school could easily walk or ride a bicycle. In association with existing infrastructure and future improvements, encouragement and education programs will be necessary to combat this culture of driving.

Harris Elementary School

Harris Elementary School's address is 393 S. Lake Street. It serves 350 students in the 4th grade and school hours are 8:00 am – 3:00 pm. Harris Elementary has a driveway off S. Lake Street which cars and buses use to drop students off. Cars exit onto S. Lake Street while buses continue on a bus connector drive to the junior high and exit onto Milan Avenue.

A crossing guard and crosswalks are located at S. Lake Street and the school driveway entrance. Bicycle racks exist in front of the school but are in poor condition. Crosswalks exist at the driveway loop where parents and buses drop off students. Parent drop off of students begins around 7:30 am.

Surveys indicate that Harris Elementary School has an average of 60% of students traveling by school bus, 31% by family vehicle, 5% by carpool, 3% by walking, 1% by transit, and 0% by bicycle. In the afternoon, school bus use decreases by about 5% which is offset by a 5% increase in carpools.

Amherst Junior High School

Amherst Junior High School's address is 548 Milan Avenue. It has 750 students in the 7th and 8th grades and school hours are 7:30 am – 2:30 pm. The junior high is accessed from a drive off of Milan Avenue. Parents can drop off students either at the junior high off of Milan Avenue or at the elementary school parking lot off of S. Lake Street. Substantial backups



Entrance to drop-off area for Amherst Junior High from Milan Avenue

exist in the morning for car drop-offs that extend out to Milan Avenue. An auxiliary parking lot near Milan Avenue is where some parents drop off their children. Parent drop-off of students begins around 6:45 am.

In the afternoon, junior high parents can only pick up students at the junior high parking lot due to crowding at the elementary school.

Surveys indicate that Amherst Junior High School has an average of 38% of students traveling by family vehicle, 34% by school bus, 15% by walking, 12% by carpool, and less than 1% by bicycle. In the afternoon, family vehicle use decreases by 10%. Walking increases from 9% in the morning to 21% in the afternoon.

The doubling in the percentage of walkers from the morning to the afternoon is important to note. This shows that many parents who drive their children to school in the morning are happy to have them walk home in the afternoon. In these cases, existing infrastructure is not a problem. Encouragement programs mentioned later in the document are the best way to get these children to walk in the morning.



Cars dropping off students at the junior high before school

Assessment of Crash Data

Ohio School Crash Statistics were provided by ODOT for 2005-2007. This data shows ten pedestrian or bicycle crashes within two miles of Harris Elementary and Amherst Junior High Schools. No crashes were fatal. Seven of the crashes resulted in injuries to one or more people. Five of the crashes involved pedestrians and five of the crashes involved bicyclists.

No crashes occurred at the same location. With three crashes, the most dangerous corridor is SR 58 (Leavitt Road). Two of these crashes involved pedestrians and one involved bicyclists. This north-south roadway is located approximately 1.4 miles east of the schools.

Milan Avenue, which provides the northern border of the school campus, had two crashes. One occurred adjacent to the schools and involved a pedestrian at the intersection of Milan Avenue and Lake Street. The second involved a bicyclist and occurred at Milan Avenue and Quarry Road, approximately 0.7 miles from the schools.

The other crashes within one mile of the schools occurred at Lincoln Street/Martin Street (0.7 miles northeast), Park Avenue/Church Street (0.6 miles northeast), and Maple Avenue near East Street (0.8 miles east). Two involved bicyclists and one involved a pedestrian.

A bicyclist crash occurred along Middle Ridge Road approximately one mile south of the schools, and a pedestrian crash occurred on Cooper Foster Park Road approximately 1.4 miles northwest of the schools.

Traffic volumes were obtained from the Northern Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) for roadways near the schools with available data, as shown in Table 1. I-80 and SR 2 create barriers north and south of the schools, but a small proportion of students live outside these areas. Regarding traffic volume and active transportation crashes, SR 58 is the most dangerous road in the vicinity of Amherst, but it is on the eastern side of town away from Harris Elementary and Amherst Junior High Schools.

Table 1: Average Daily Traffic Volumes (NOACA)	
Location	ADT
SR 58 (Leavitt Rd) – near Cleveland Ave	21,600
SR 58 (Leavitt Rd) – near Middle Ridge Rd	14,950
SR 2	41,350
I-80	38,458

Improvement Suggestions

Infrastructure

A comprehensive solutions strategy was developed consisting of general countermeasures for each of the 5 E's (Engineering, Encouragement, Education, Enforcement, and Evaluation). Many infrastructure improvements could be strategically provided to fill gaps and add safety to the existing infrastructure. The infrastructure improvements are listed by sidewalks and intersections and general infrastructure.

A time frame has been identified for each proposed countermeasure based on the estimated cost for implementation. The different timeframes are as follows:

- ✓ Short Term Low Cost: \$20,000 or below;
- ✓ Medium Term Medium Cost: \$20,000 to \$150,000; and
- ✓ Long Term High Cost: \$150,000 or above.

Sidewalks

Problem: Sidewalk discontinues on S. Lake Street two blocks south of the school campus, decreasing safety for non-motorized users. The top concern of local officials regarding active transportation is the lack of continuous sidewalk on S. Lake Street.

Proposed Countermeasure 1: Construct a 5-foot wide sidewalk on the east side of S. Lake Street for approximately 0.3 miles and connect to the existing sidewalks at Van Oaks Drive and River's Edge Road. This requires a retaining wall and embankment for approximately 350 feet.

Time Frame (Estimated Cost): Long Term High Cost (\$470,000 total – \$60,000 for sidewalk and \$410,000 for retaining wall and embankment)

Proposed Countermeasure 2: Stripe a crosswalk across S. Lake Street at Cooper's Run so that residents on the west side of the road can access the sidewalk on the east side. Install flashers and "Yield to Pedestrians in Crosswalk" signs at crosswalk.

Time Frame (Estimated Cost): Short Term Low Cost (\$10,000)

Proposed Countermeasure 3: Stripe a crosswalk across S. Lake Street at Willow Creek Drive so that residents on west side of the road can access the sidewalk on the east side. Install "Yield to Pedestrians in Crosswalk" signs at the crosswalk.

Time Frame (Estimated Cost): Short Term Low Cost (\$1,000)

Problem: Sidewalk on Martin Avenue is discontinuous, decreasing safety for non-motorized users.

Proposed Countermeasure 1: Construct a 5-foot wide sidewalk beginning where the existing sidewalk terminates near Crestline Drive for approximately 0.5 miles on the north side of W. Martin Avenue and connect to the existing sidewalk on the north side of the bridge near Woodbridge Court.

Time Frame (Estimated Cost): Medium Term Medium Cost (\$110,000)

Proposed Countermeasure 2: Construct approximately 400 feet of 5-foot wide sidewalk on the north side of W. Martin Avenue between Long Street and the existing sidewalk at Woodbridge Court.

Time Frame (Estimated Cost): Short Term Low Cost (\$16,000)

Proposed Countermeasure 3: Stripe a crosswalk across W. Martin Avenue at Long Street to allow pedestrians to connect to existing sidewalk on south side of W. Martin Avenue. Install “Yield to Pedestrians in Crosswalk” signs at the crosswalk.

Time Frame (Estimated Cost): Short Term Low Cost (\$1,000)



Looking west at Martin Ave bridge

Problem: Sidewalk on Lincoln Street terminates at Sipple Avenue, decreasing safety for non-motorized users.

Proposed Countermeasure: Construct approximately 2,500 feet of 5-foot wide sidewalk on the east side of Lincoln Street between Sipple Avenue and Washington Street and connect to the existing sidewalk in front of the high school.

Time Frame (Estimated Cost): Medium Term Medium Cost (\$100,000)

Problem: Sidewalk on Washington Street terminates near Sunrise Drive, decreasing safety for non-motorized users.

Proposed Countermeasure: Construct approximately 1,500 feet of 5-foot wide sidewalk on the west side of Washington Street from the existing sidewalk near Sunrise Drive to Lincoln Street.

Time Frame (Estimated Cost): Medium Term Medium Cost (\$60,000)

Problem: Sidewalk on N. Lake Street terminates north of the Police Department.

Proposed Countermeasure: Construct approximately 1,000 feet of 5-foot wide sidewalk on the east side of N. Lake Street extending south from Cooper Foster Park Road.

Time Frame (Estimated Cost): Medium Term Medium Cost (\$40,000)

Problem: Sidewalk on N. Main Street discontinues north of Sipple Avenue, decreasing safety for non-motorized users.

Proposed Countermeasure: Construct approximately 0.25 miles of 5-foot wide sidewalk on the east side of N. Main Street connecting to the existing sidewalks near Sipple Avenue and Sunrise Drive.

Time Frame (Estimated Cost): Medium Term Medium Cost (\$53,000)

Problem: Sidewalk on Forde Avenue discontinues prior to N. Lake Street, decreasing safety for non-motorized users.

Proposed Countermeasure: Construct approximately 1,000 feet of 5-foot wide sidewalk on one side of Forde Avenue west of N. Lake Street and connect to the existing sidewalk.

Time Frame (Estimated Cost): Medium Term Medium Cost (\$40,000)

Problem: Sidewalk on Crestline Avenue discontinues prior to N. Lake Street, decreasing safety for non-motorized users.

Proposed Countermeasure: Construct approximately 1,000 feet of 5-foot wide sidewalk on one side of Crestline Avenue west of N. Lake Street and connect to the existing sidewalk.

Time Frame (Estimated Cost): Medium Term Medium Cost (\$40,000)

Intersections and General Infrastructure

Problem: Residents west of N. Lake Street on Crestline Avenue, W. Martin Avenue, Forde Avenue, and streets to the west must cross N. Lake Street in order to safely walk along the street. A sidewalk exists only on the east side of N. Lake Street, and a railroad underpass to the south can only be safely traversed on the east side of the road. However, N. Lake Street lacks crosswalks.

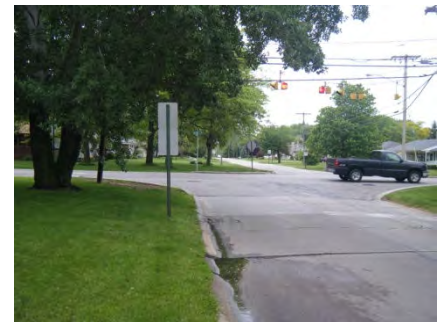
Proposed Countermeasure 1: Stripe crosswalks across N. Lake Street at W. Martin Avenue.

Time Frame (Estimated Cost): Short Term Low Cost (\$600)

Proposed Countermeasure 2: Stripe crosswalks across N. Lake Street at Crestline Avenue and Forde Avenue.

Install “Yield to Pedestrians in Crosswalk” signs at these locations on N. Lake Street since drivers do not have “Stop” signs at these intersections.

Time Frame (Estimated Cost): Short Term Low Cost (\$2,400)



Intersection lacks crosswalks at W. Martin Ave and N. Lake St

Problem: There are no school flashers on S. Lake Street or Milan Avenue to notify drivers to use extra caution around the schools.

Proposed Countermeasure: Install 20 MPH school zone flashers on S. Lake Street and Milan Avenue near the school campus.

Time Frame (Estimated Cost): Medium Term Medium Cost (\$50,000)

Problem: Better infrastructure to the school campus could increase the number of students that walk and bicycle to school from adjacent neighborhoods.

Proposed Countermeasure: Install 10-foot wide asphalt, multi-purpose paths that connect the existing pathways on the school campus to the adjacent neighborhoods via Crocker Street (for a distance of 850 feet) and Shadow Creek Trail (for a distance of 585 feet).

Time Frame (Estimated Cost): Long Term High Cost (\$72,500)

Problem: Residential areas to the east of the schools are separated from the schools by trees, a creek, and a steep slope. These areas must travel to Milan Avenue to head west, which potentially doubles the distance to school.

Proposed Countermeasure: Investigate the feasibility of a 10-foot wide asphalt, multi-purpose path connecting S. Main Street and Shadow Creek Trail. The multi-purpose path

can diverge from Shadow Creek Trail west of the existing bridge over the creek to connect to the school campus. The path would connect to existing sidewalk on S. Main Street south of Elyria Avenue.

Time Frame (Estimated Cost): Long Term High Cost (\$250,000)

Problem: Bicycle racks are in poor condition outside of the elementary school.

Proposed Countermeasure: Install new bicycle racks. Monitor usage and add additional bicycle racks if needed in future to exceed bicyclist demand.

Time Frame (Estimated Cost): Short Term Low Cost (\$300 per rack; each parks two bicycles)

Non-Infrastructure

The infrastructure projects listed above will all provide positive safety and connectivity improvements to the areas around the schools for non-motorized users. The non-infrastructure activities listed below also have great potential to increase the number of walkers and bicyclists to school. The infrastructure around Amherst's schools is somewhat favorable to walkers and bicyclists in many neighborhoods. Additionally, limited funds often provide more "bang for the buck" on the activities listed below than on costly infrastructure improvements.

Education

Raise public awareness of safe non-motorized travel to and from school and promote positive prevention measures.

Walking Program: A walking program could be established to educate children on safe walking habits. This program should be developed around school curriculum and rewards could be provided for completing the program. School "Walk-Smart" routes have been produced that establish recommended travel routes in order to encourage walking to school by providing a safe and efficient route to school. School crossing guard locations, crosswalk locations, and existing intersection controls are provided to inform students and parents of area conditions. "Walk-Smart" route maps will be distributed to each student at each school in order to educate students and parents on the appropriate route to/from their school.

Safety Town: The City of Amherst or the Amherst Exempted Village School District could coordinate a Safety Town program every year for pre-kindergarten aged children. Through the program, children are taught a number of safety issues including pedestrian, bicycle, and bus safety. Encouraging, or even requiring, students to attend this before they begin kindergarten is a great way to get them to start learning pedestrian and bicycle safety from a young age. This early education will continue to pay dividends throughout childhood.

Bike Rodeo: A Bike Rodeo is usually a bicycle safety clinic featuring bicycle safety inspections and a short safety lecture about the rules of the road. This is followed by a ride on a miniature "chalk street" course set up in a parking lot where young cyclists are shown where and how to apply the

rules. Optional activities include helmet fittings, prizes and drawings, and, in some cases, commercial activities such as booths set up by bicycle shops. The main focus of a Bike Rodeo is cycling safety for young cyclists from kindergarten to eighth grade.

Rodeos are usually held a week or two after school is out for the summer. They are usually held on a Saturday in a large parking lot where a fairly large chalk course can be laid out with simulated streets, intersections, crosswalks and stop signs. The participants are usually escorted through the course by knowledgeable adult cyclists who point out hazards, safety tips, and explain how to apply the rules of the road that were mentioned in the lecture. This initial lecture is best handled by local police officers, either assigned or volunteers, who are familiar with bicycle safety issues and who are cyclists themselves. These officers are frequently interested in participating in such events, because they see crashes resulting from uneducated cyclists.

Encouragement

Provide safe and effective methods to promote active transportation.

Harris Elementary School and Amherst Junior High School have a good start towards encouraging active transportation among students. Harris Elementary has conducted bicycle safety programs to encourage riders and wants to continue more safety and health initiatives. The schools can aim towards holding regularly occurring activities such as those listed below that constantly encourage active transportation throughout the year.

Walking School Bus: One way to encourage students to walk to school is by starting a walking school bus. The walking school bus is a group of children walking to school with one or more adults. The walking school bus can also take the form of a bicycle train with adults supervising children riding their bicycles to school. Walking school buses can be started by neighborhood parents and can grow to accommodate more students as interest grows. Adult supervision ensures a safer walk or bicycle ride to school for students while students benefit from exercise and fun with friends.

Programs can be listed with the school where interested parents can sign up to volunteer. For safety precautions, the Amherst Police can provide background checks and fingerprint all volunteers. Volunteers are provided with vests that identify them as “drivers” and utilize walkie-talkies or cell phones so they can coordinate with other volunteers or police officers. The volunteers can either go door to door to pick up children or stand at designated stations. To keep the “drivers” motivated and involved, they can receive small incentives throughout the year which could include gift certificates or other items donated by local businesses. The volunteers increase the “eyes on the street” and can quickly identify problem intersections and criminal activity.

Walk to School Day: Student’s should be encouraged to walk or bicycle to school on the International Walk to School Day (IWALK). In 2008, more than 3,016 schools from all 50 states participated in Walk to School Day. While the event lasts only one day, communities are using Walk to School Day as a first step to create a walkable community that is safe for all residents.

Walk to School Days promote child health awareness and safer routes for walking and bicycling to schools.

Although walk to school events cannot guarantee that students will continue to walk, they are a positive first step. With the large number of people walking, parents and children feel safer and have fun. Walk to School Day may help skeptical parents or school personnel to see the value of walking, so that they support ongoing activities. The next Walk to School Day is Wednesday, October 6, 2010. More information on IWALK is available at <http://www.walktoschool.org/>.

Walking/Biking days: Schools can establish a day of the week when walking and bicycling to school is especially encouraged and kids can walk to school with adult supervision. For example, every week on Wednesday, orange cones can be set up along the route to increase awareness to motor vehicle drivers that more kids will be walking this day and to highlight the path the students will be walking. Parents can be involved by volunteering to be assigned to a hazard area (street corner, street crossing, or slippery spot) or they can walk with their children to school. This is a great weekly walking event for kids to spend more time with their parents.

Incorporate Activities with Other Health Initiatives: Active transportation is one part of a healthy lifestyle. Walking and bicycling should be promoted holistically with initiatives such as healthy eating. Fundraisers that avoid candy and instead promote water and fruits, for example, send the correct message to students and parents. Activities such as a Walk-A-Thon can include healthy prizes.

Enforcement

Prevent unsafe behaviors of drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists while reinforcing active travel behaviors.

Enforcement countermeasures would potentially include the following measures:

- Provide visible presence for enhanced behavior of drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists to deter dangerous activities.
- Monitor the speeds of vehicles and enforce the speed limits.
- Provide guidance/education to pedestrians and motorists on traffic laws and necessary safety measures.
- Deploy speed trailers to further assist in the education and enforcement of the speed limits in the vicinity of the schools.
- Provide classroom education on the “rules of the road” and safely getting to and from school.
- Develop crossing guard training whose benefits will be twofold: the police will get engaged in pedestrian issues while at the same time educating crossing guards and the general public.
- Require staff assisting students crossing at crosswalks wear safety vests.
- Patrolling in winter months to make sure citizens are keeping their sidewalks clear of snow and enforcing fines if they are not complying.
- Deter bicycle theft and vandalism at bicycle storage areas outside schools.

The school zone enforcement and education is a countermeasure that is anticipated to be combined with other enforcement, education, engineering, and encouragement strategies that are a part of the overall school travel plan.

Evaluation

Provide annual evaluation of program effectiveness and improve partnerships between the school district (including the individual schools) and local agencies.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Counts: Pedestrian and bicycle counts can be collected yearly through a School Travel Tally Sheet filled out by home room teachers. This process can be used after the proposed countermeasures have been implemented to see how much the number of walkers and bicyclists to school rises.

Parent/Teacher Follow-up Surveys: Surveys were administered as one of the first steps of the School Travel Plan. To determine the effectiveness of any countermeasure(s), follow-up surveys should be conducted periodically. The results of the surveys can identify which existing programs and/or design require modification to address unmet needs. Specific focus should be placed on the type of measures that will increase a parent's perception of safety so they will allow or encourage their child to walk or bicycle to school.

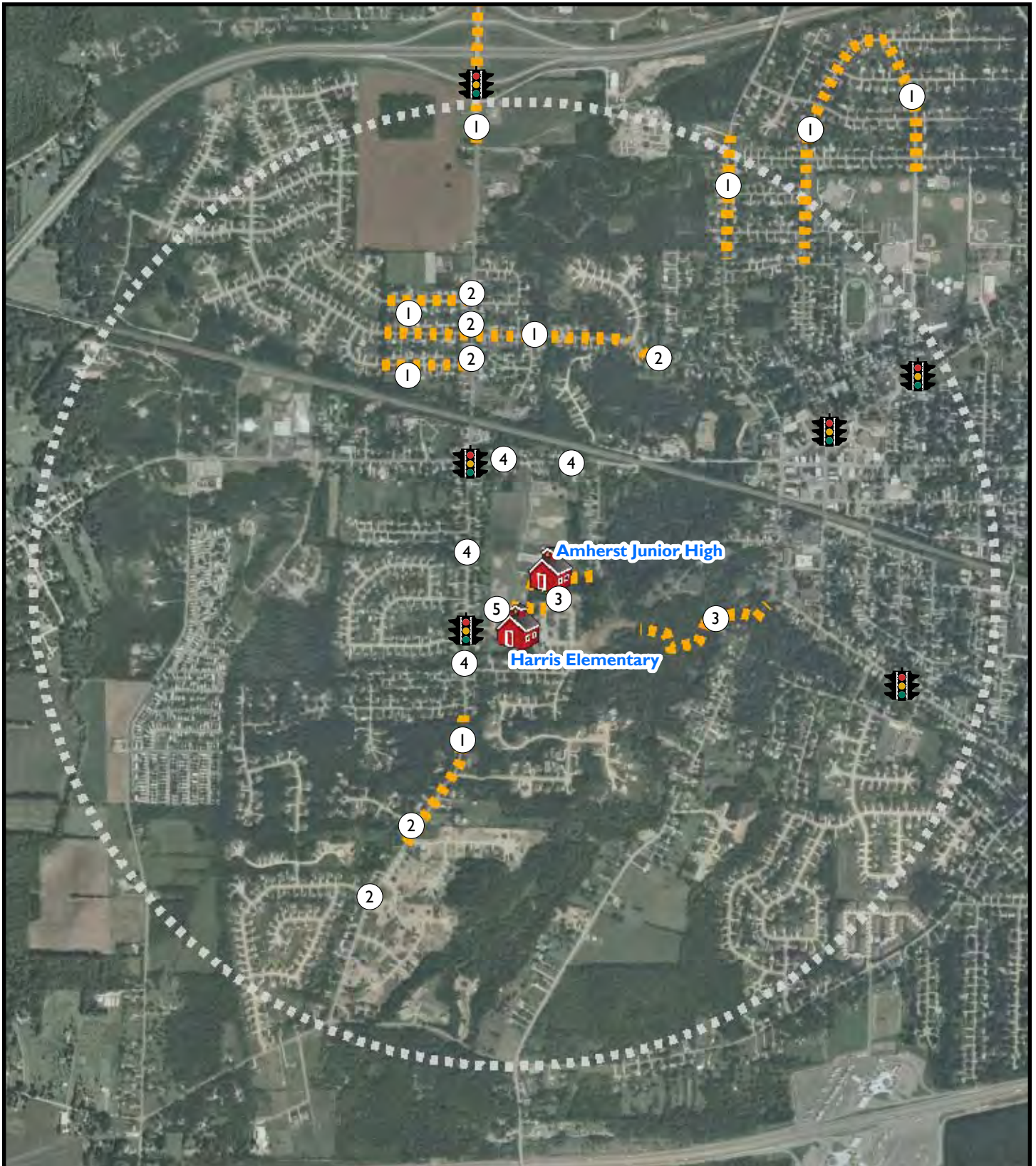
Speed Data and Traffic Infractions: The effectiveness of infrastructure countermeasures will be evaluated, in part, by the collection of speed data and traffic infractions. Speed counts will be conducted at or near locations where countermeasures have been implemented and possibly where there is previous speed data, if available. Before and after data will be compared to determine possible benefits, such as lower traffic speeds and/or traffic volumes.

Appendices

Appendix A – Proposed Countermeasures Map

Appendix B – School Walking Map

Appendix A – Proposed Countermeasures Map



Amherst City Schools Proposed Countermeasures

- 1) Construct Sidewalks
- 2) Improve Intersection
- 3) Install Multi-Purpose Pathway
- 4) Install School Zone Flashers
- 5) Install New Bike Racks



Traffic Signal



New Sidewalk/Pathway



1 Mile Radius



1 inch = 1,500 feet



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Appendix B – School Walking Map

School Walking Map Description

These maps are meant as a guideline for parents as well as school administrators to demonstrate the safest routes for children to walk or bike to/from school. It is important to note that the final choice falls in the hands of the parents of every student.

Recommended Route – these streets are recommended for children to walk or bike along due to the presence of sidewalks or other off-street pathways.

Recommended Route with Caution – these streets are either low volume, low speed, residential streets without sidewalks or other pathways or they are high volume, high speed arterial streets with sidewalks or other pathways. In either case, these streets are recommended for children to walk or bike along with Caution.

Discouraged Route – these streets are not recommended for children to walk or bike to/from school since they have NO sidewalks or other off-street pathways.

Marked Crosswalks – locations of existing crosswalks.

Crossing Guard – locations where crossing guards are present during arrival and dismissal.

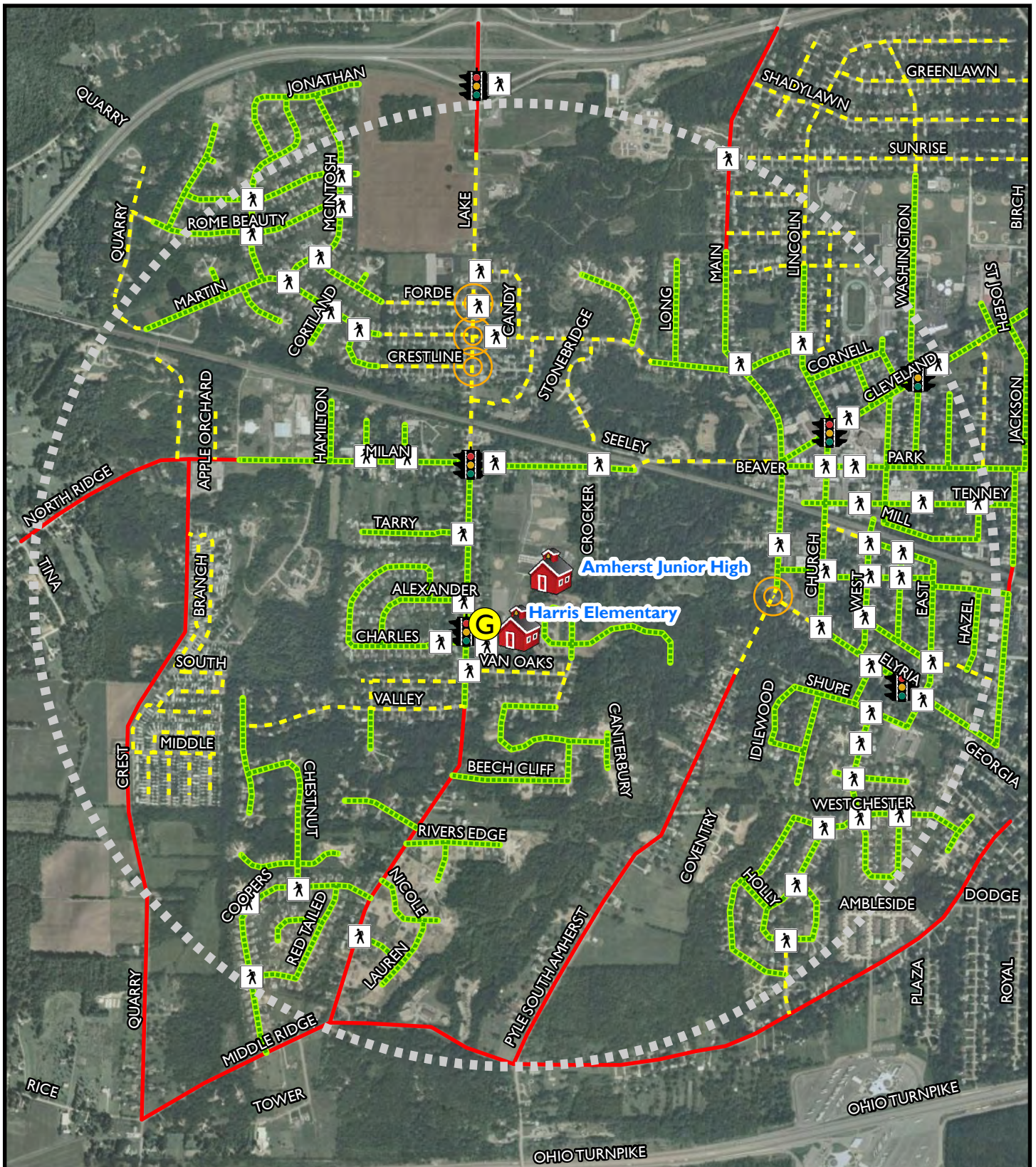
Difficult Intersections – these intersections (signalized or un-signalized) should be crossed with caution due to one or more of the following issues: high volumes, high speeds, or lack of crosswalks (or other crossing devices).

School Flasher – approximate locations of 20 MPH school zone flashers.

Traffic Signal – locations of existing traffic signals.

Enrollment Area – this is the approximate area in which students are located.

1 Mile Radius – this circle shows a distance of one mile around the schools.



Amherst City Schools Walking Map

- Recommended Route
- Recommended Route with Caution
- Discouraged Route
- 1 Mile Radius

- Crossing Guard
- Marked Crosswalk
- Traffic Signal
- Difficult Intersection



1 inch = 1,500 feet



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Str	Strategy Detail			Time Frame	Responsible Party	Status	Est. Cost	Possible Funding Source	% students Affected	Priority Level (First, Second, Third)
EIN	Construct sidewalk on east side of S. Lake to connect existing sidewalks (approx. 0.3 mi) between Van Oaks and River's Edge			Summer 2011-2012	City of Amherst STRS Team	Planning/ Funding Stage	\$470,000	SRTS/ODOT	20%	First
GILN	Stripe a crosswalk across S. Lake Street at Cooper's Run so that residents on west side of road can access new sidewalk			Summer 2011-2012	City of Amherst STRS Team	Planning/ Funding Stage	\$1,000	SRTS/ODOT	20%	First
EEN	Hold regular SRTS Meetings			Ongoing	SRTS Team	Planned	\$0	none	100%	First
RIN	Install new bike racks. Monitor usage and add additional bike racks if needed in the future to exceed bicyclist demand			Summer 2011-2012	SRTS Team Amherst Schools	Research	\$300	SRTS/ODOT	all bikers	Second
G	Construct sidewalk from Crestline Dr. for approx. .5 mi. on North side of W. Martin to bridge near Woodbridge Court.			Future Planning	City of Amherst STRS Team	Research	\$110,000	SRTS/ODOT	20%	Third
G	Construct a sidewalk 400 feet on north side of W. Martin Ave between Long St. and existing sidewalk at Woodbridge Court			Future Planning	City of Amherst STRS Team	Research	\$16,000	SRTS/ODOT	20%	Third
G	Stripe a crosswalk across W. Martin Ave. at Long Street to allow pedestrians to connect to south side of W. Martin Ave.			Future Planning	City of Amherst STRS Team	Research	\$1,000	SRTS/ODOT	20%	Third
G	Construct approx. 2500 ft. of sidewalk on east side of Lincoln between Sipple and Washington to connect in front of HS			Future Planning	City of Amherst STRS Team	Research	\$100,000	SRTS/ODOT	50%	Third
G	Construct approx. 1,500 ft of sidewalk on west side of Washington St. from existing sidewalk near Sunrise to Lincoln			Future Planning	City of Amherst STRS Team	Research	\$60,000	SRTS/ODOT	20%	Second
G	Construct a sidewalk approx. 1,000 ft on east side of N. Lake St. extending south from Cooper Foster Park Rd.			Future Planning	City of Amherst STRS Team	Research	\$40,000	SRTS/ODOT	10%	Second
G	Construct approx. 0.25 mi. of sidewalk on east side of N. Main St. connecting existing sidewalks near Sipple and Sunrise.			Future Planning	City of Amherst STRS Team	Research	\$53,000	SRTS/ODOT	40%	Second
G	Construct approx. 1,000 ft. sidewalk on one side of Forde Ave west of N. Lake Street to connect to existing sidewalk			Future Planning	City of Amherst STRS Team	Research	\$40,000	SRTS/ODOT	20%	Second

	Construct approx. 1,000 ft. of sidewalk on one side of Crestlin Ave. west of N. Lake Street to connect to existing sidewalk	Future Planning	City of Amherst STRS Team	Research	\$40,000	SRTS/ODOT	20%	Second
	Stripe crosswalks across N. Lake Street at W. Martin Ave.	Future Planning	City of Amherst STRS Team	Research	\$600	SRTS/ODOT	20%	Second
	Install a 10ft. wide asphalt walking path that winds around jr. high and Harris campus to promote activity	Future Planning	Amherst School STRS Team	Research	\$150,000	SRTS/ODOT	100%	Third
E	Both schools continue to conduct bicycle training programs	Current	Amherst School	Planning	\$0	SRTS	100%	First
N	to continue to reinforce more safety and health initiatives		STRS Team					
C								
O	Implement "Walking School Bus" to encourage students to start walking to school	Future Planning	STRS Team Amherst Schools	Planning	\$0	SRTS	100%	First
U			Amherst Police					
R								
A								
G	Implement "Walk to School Day" where students should be encouraged to walk or bike to school on the IWALK Day	Future Planning	STRS Team Amherst Schools	Planning	\$0	SRTS	100%	First
E								
M								
E								
T								
E	Continue to provide the students of Amherst with Safety Town for pre-k aged children to instill early education that will pay dividends throughout childhood.	Current	STRS Team Amherst Police	Planning	\$0	SRTS	100%	First
D								
U								
C								
A	Implement a Bike Rodeo where bikes can be inspected for safety and good skills when riding bikes	Future Planning	STRS Team Amherst Schools	planning	\$0	SRTS	100%	Second
T								
I								
O								
N								
E	Provide annual evaluation of program effectiveness and improve partnerships between schools and local agencies	Current	SRTS Team	Planning	\$0	SRTS	100%	First
V								
A								

Section 12: Supporting Documentation

The following documentation has been included:

The ordinance to approve such measures.

Action Plan.

Student and Parent Surveys and results.

Sidewalk Priority List

1. South Lake Street-

Middle Ridge Rd north to Harris School on the east side of S. Lake St.

2. West Martin-

from residence at 390 W. Martin (Henceroth), south side of W. Martin, west of Apple Orchard

3. Lincoln Street-

From Sipple Avenue north

4. Washington-

From residence at 496 Sunrise (Mishak) & 591 Washington (Church of Christ) north Lincoln Street.

5. North Lake Street-

City limits south to Police Station on the east side of N. Lake Street

July 28, 2010

Ohio Department of Transportation
Office of Local Projects
Julie Walcoff, SRTS Program Manager
1980 West Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43223

Dear Ms. Walcoff,

As Mayor of the City of Amherst and as Superintendent of Amherst Exempted Village Schools we recognize the importance of creating a partnership with the schools and community to assist the Safe Routes to School Team in achieving our goal to improve the walking and bicycling conditions in our city nearest our schools.

We are committed to making our route to schools safe and accessible for our students and residents of Amherst Schools.

We appreciate your consideration of the pending funding requests for the projects recommended by our "Comet to School" team.

Sincerely,



David A. Taylor, Mayor



Steven Sayers, Superintendent of Schools

Section 11: Plan Endorsements

Representing the 5 E's:

Joseph Tellier: Joseph Tellier
SRTS Task Force Leader

David A. Taylor: David A. Taylor
Mayor, City of Amherst

Steve Sayers: Steve Sayers
Superintendent, Amherst School

Lonnie Dillon: Lonnie Dillon
Chief, Amherst Police Department

Ron Merthe: Ron Merthe
Superintendent, City of Amherst Utilities

ORDINANCE NO. O-09-34**AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY TO APPLY TO THE STATE OF OHIO, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS PROJECTS GRANT FUNDS; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.**

WHEREAS, the United States Congress has set aside monies for Safe Routes to School ("SRTS") Projects through the State of Ohio, Department of Transportation;

WHEREAS, local public agencies can apply for these monies and be selected for funding by the State of Ohio, Department of Transportation;

WHEREAS, the Comets to School Travel Plan (the "Project") is a transportation activity eligible to receive federal funding; and

NOW, THEREFORE, be it ordained by the Council of the City of Amherst, County of Lorain, and State of Ohio:

SECTION 1: That the Safety-Service Director of the City of Amherst, Ohio is hereby empowered on behalf of the City to prepare and execute an application for SRTS funds for the Project (the "Application") and to submit same to the State of Ohio, Department of Transportation.

SECTION 2: That, prior to submission of the Application, that portion of Section 3 thereof, which currently reads as follows:

The signature below indicates agency willingness to enter into a formal agreement with ODOT to complete the project if selected for funding.

shall be modified to read as follows:

The signature below indicates agency willingness to enter into a formal agreement with ODOT, provided such agreement does not impose on the agency any monetary obligation or any other obligation that the agency is not willing to accept.

SECTION 3: That the total cost of the Project is estimated to be \$0.00, of which the City, if awarded the funds, will receive one hundred percent (100%).

SECTION 4: That, if the Application is approved for the funding, the Safety-Service Director of the City is hereby empowered on behalf of the City to enter into a contract with the Director of the Ohio Department of Transportation, provided such contract does not impose on the City any monetary obligation and is in form and substance acceptable to the Mayor and Safety-Service Director and is in form acceptable to the Law Director.

SECTION 5: That it is found and determined that all formal actions of this Council concerning and relating to the passage of this Ordinance were adopted in an open meeting of this Council and that all deliberations of this Council and of any of its committees that resulted in such formal actions were in meetings open to the public and in compliance with all legal requirements, including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

SECTION 6: That this Ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety of the City for the reason that the deadline for submitting the application for such grant funds is rapidly approaching; and provided it receives the majority vote of two-thirds or more of those elected to City Council, it shall go into full force and effect from and immediately after its passage and its approval by the Mayor; otherwise it shall take effect at the earliest period allowed by law.

1st reading
2nd reading
3rd reading

10/26/09

PASSED

October 26, 2009

ATTEST

Olga Swenson

John S. Dietrich, President of Council

APPROVED

David A. Taylor, Mayor

Approved as to form by:

Anthony R. Pecora, Director of Law

Filed with the Mayor: 10/27/09

A-09-38