

MIDDLETOWN SPRINGS
SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN
Spring 2008 / Updated Spring 2010

A School Travel Plan (STP) "maps out" how to improve pedestrian and bike travel to and from school. It provides strategic approaches to incorporating the 5 Es of a Safe Routes to School program: Encouragement, Education, Engineering, Enforcement and Evaluation. A completed Travel Plan is required as an element of participating in the Vermont Safe Routes to School program.

Middletown Springs Elementary School is located within ¼ mile from the town center (four corners). An 800 ft. two lane, town-maintained road (essentially the school driveway)—School House Road—ascends towards the school to a roundabout in front, before descending along the same road back to Rout 133, a State highway. There is residential property along each side of School House Road. To the south and southwest and west of the school are woodlands, fields, and sparse residential property. The school stands as one of the centerpieces of the town. The school is a Pre-K to 6th grade elementary school with approximately 70 students.

Middletown Springs' town center is intersected by four streets (North, South, East, & West). These are the main routes that students can potentially bike or walk on for travel to and from school. Aside from very few side streets where students may live, they have to access one of these main streets as they travel to school. It is similar for walking. There is a side path on the west side of the school that some students use for walking, not biking however. The problem with these routes is that there are no sidewalks/bike paths for walking and/or biking. This poses a safety concern throughout the town. The main school driveway is the major access point for walkers and bikers. The routes to get there are not as safe as they could be. Parent surveys discussed below indicate that the lack of sidewalks and pathways is an issue that affects their decision to allow their children to walk or ride to school. Sidewalks/bike paths are either non-existent, or in one section, crumbling. Along School House Road, there is no sidewalk. While several families walk to school along School House Road, there is broad concern about the safety as it currently exists without a sidewalk.

At the top of the driveway in front of the school is a roundabout, which connects back to the School House Road. The circle area is identified by pavement, however over the years the grassy area that defines the circle has worn away to dirt. It is more mistaken and therefore used as a parking area. During student drop-off and pick-up, there is no defined parking, nor is there a system for students to safely exit or enter vehicles. There is also no defined sidewalk for students who walk down the driveway. There are no crossing guards at the bottom of the driveway for students when they cross south.

1. Safe Routes to School Team

The Middletown Springs Safe Routes to School Team consists of planning commission member and parent Meredith Morgan, parent and school board member Steve Letendre, principal Aaron Boynton, physical education teacher Tracey Tinsley, town selectman Mike Lamson, and Friends For Education (Middletown Springs Elementary School's parent teacher association) co-chair and parent Leslie Silver.

2. Program Goals, Survey Results and Existing Policies

Program Goals include:

- a. Increase student drop-off and pick-up safety before and after school.
 - This includes creating procedures for parents and visitors during these times. This also includes repairs to the circle roundabout.
- b. Increase the safety of routes to school throughout the community.
 - This includes the installation of sidewalks/bike paths beginning at the school and continuing throughout town as resources become available.
- c. Increase walking and biking participation to and from school.
 - This includes education and encouragement efforts from teachers, parents, and community.

Local conditions and issues:

The committee has identified key local issues that directly correlate to our program goals. The SRTS Team administered "Parent Survey About Walking and Biking to School" in the spring of 2008 and again in the spring of 2010. The survey data was analyzed to understand the key concerns of families regarding allowing their children to walk or ride their bikes to school.

- Parent survey results (Please see additional survey results at the end of the Plan.)

The Parent Survey About Walking and Biking to School was distributed in the spring of 2008 and again in the springs of 2010. The survey results clearly show that family decisions to have their children walk or ride their bike to school are linked to safety. In 2008 14 survey respondents indicated that sidewalks or pathways are an issue that impacts their decision to allow their children to walk or ride to school. Eight families indicated that if things changed or were improved with regard to sidewalks and paths to school that they would probably let their children walk to school. Similarly, in 2010 7 families expressed concern on this issue and 4 indicated that addressing the issue would probably impact their decision about whether or not to let their children walk or ride to school. Similarly, the speed of traffic along the route to school and safety of intersections and crossings were identified by families as issues of concern both in the 2008 and 2010 surveys. In 2008 10 families identified speed along the route to school and 7 indicated that safety of intersections and crossings as important issues. The 2010 survey results found similar results with 9

families concerned about traffic speed and the safety of intersections and crossings. Once again, when asked if these issues were addressed many families indicated that they would probably allow their children to walk or ride to school.

- Student Council interview.

A conversation with student council showed that students feel that the current routes to school are not safe. They mention that sidewalks/bike paths are limited. One student stated that she has to literally walk in the ditch to be out of the road. Students feel an incentive program for students to walk or bike to school would be good.

- Principal observations regarding poor pick up and drop off safety

No defined parking, no defined student drop-off and pick-up area, no safe system for student pick-up.

- Limited sidewalks/bike paths within 1 mile of school.

One section at the bottom of the school driveway, across the street is in poor condition and serves little purpose as it ends abruptly on either end. There is also a short piece of sidewalk across the bridge on East Street.

- The school has no policies against walking or bicycling.
- The lack of contiguous sidewalks/bike paths connecting the school to student homes creates fear based barriers for both children and their parents as indicated in the survey results discussed above.

3. Education and Encouragement Efforts

This section provides a description of efforts that the team will work towards in collaboration with students, parents, and community members in order to educate and encourage safe walking and biking to school and within the community.

- Establish current safe walking areas from all 4 streets. Develop a program for students to understand where these areas are and how to safely access them from their homes.
- Participation in the "Way to Go" challenge and consider a weekly walking school bus.
- Have students create posters to encourage walking and biking to and from school.
- Create posters for store, post office, town offices for safe driving in town, especially in spring-summer-fall season.

- School bike safety and recess program. This program is supervised by the school's physical education teacher. Students have their bike and helmet inspected. The PE teacher then takes students on bike rides during recess time. We also would like to continue this program during the summer.
- We will explore bike helmet purchases for students via grant funding.

4. Mapping Routes

SEE ATTACHED MAPS

Physically, the two current routes work well. They are the only two routes that lead from the main roads to the school. Conflicts exist in the safety of the main roads and the driveway (School House Road). The conditions of sidewalks are fair. Our concern is they are not contiguous throughout town. Curbs and ramps also pose concern for handicap accessibility. The attached maps show current routes, sidewalks/bike paths, parking, and school pick up and drop off routes.

5. Solutions

This section provides a list a list of solutions for our goals. For this travel plan, we cover the 5 E's, as stated below. These solutions directly relate to our goals.

The 5 E's:

Education

Engineering

Enforcement

Evaluation

Encouragement

- Conduct an assessment of opportunities with the community to increase pedestrian and bike travel to and from the school. Evaluation
- Development and installation of sidewalks and bike paths throughout town, especially the four main streets. Engineering
- A sidewalk along the north side of Schoolhouse Road that runs from the school's main entrance to South Street and crossing the street, connecting to the sidewalk. Engineering
- Repairs to the circle to define a safe pick up and drop off area. Engineering
- A drop off and pick up system for parents, students, and teachers, documented and observed. Enforcement

- Repainted crosswalk. Engineering
- Driveway circle signage and parking signage. Engineering
- Whole school morning meeting discussions about walking and biking safety in town. Education
- Crossing guard solution- 6th grader, parent volunteer, community volunteer. Enforcement
- Walking school bus "Way to Go" challenge. Encouragement
- Bike program during recess in spring with PE teacher. Encouragement, Education
- Bicycling and walking safety instruction in the classroom and in PE. Education
- Media campaigns to reach the community beyond the school. Encouragement

6. Action Items to Achieve Our Goals

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS FOR THE FIVE Es			
Education Actions	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
• Bike program	School	Spring, Summer	Low
• Whole School programs, walking and biking in town	School	Annually, Fall, Spring	Low-Mid
Engineering Actions	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
• Sidewalk installation in town	Town, School	Unknown	High
• Sidewalk installation on driveway (School House Rd.)	Town, School	2010-2011	High
• Repairs to driveway circle, including signage	School	Summer, 2009	Mid
• Repainting crosswalk	State	Annually	Zero
Enforcement Actions		Time Frame	Cost
• Student drop-off and pick-up procedures	School	As soon as possible	Low
• Crossing guard at school crossing, South St.	School	As soon as possible	Low-Mid
Evaluation Actions	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
• Community assessment/ Feasibility Study	School	2010-2011	High

• Parent survey	School	Bi-Annually	Low
• Student survey	School	Annually	Low
Encouragement Actions	Responsibility	Time Frame	Cost
• Walking School Bus	School, Parents	Spring '08 '09 '10	Low
• Media Campaign	School	On going	Low

Additional Survey Results

Table 1

How Students Arrive and Leave School

	2008		2010	
	Arrive	Leave	Arrive	Leave
Family Car	11	10	8	6
Walk	4	3	1	3
Car Pool	0	2	0	0

Table 2

Child Asks Permission to Walk or Ride to School in Last Year

	Yes	No
2008	9	6
2010	8	1

Table 3

What Grade Would You Feel Comfortable Having Child Walk/Bike to School

Grade	2008	2010
1	1	0
2	2	1
3	0	0
4	1	3

5	5	1
6	1	3
Not Comfortable at Any Grade	0	1

Figure 1
Number of Students vs. How Far They Live from School

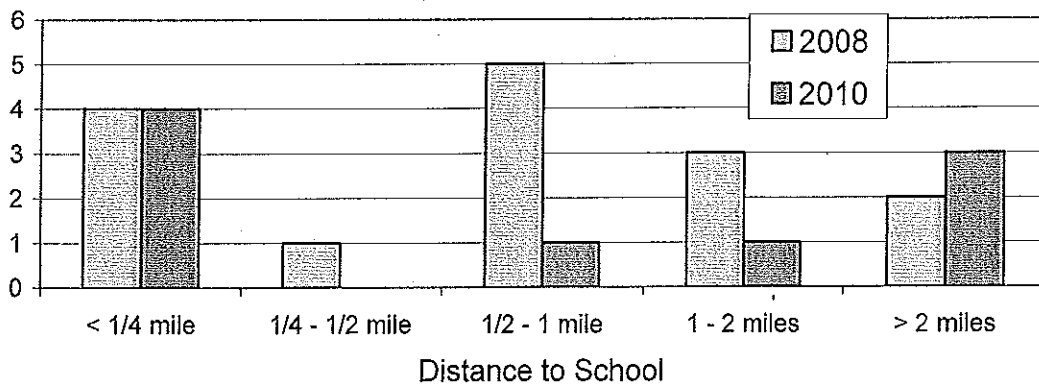
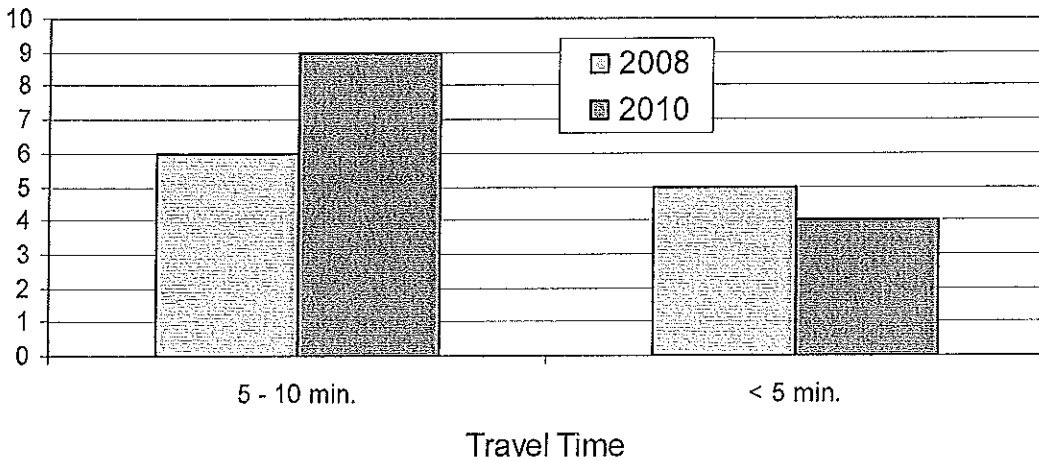
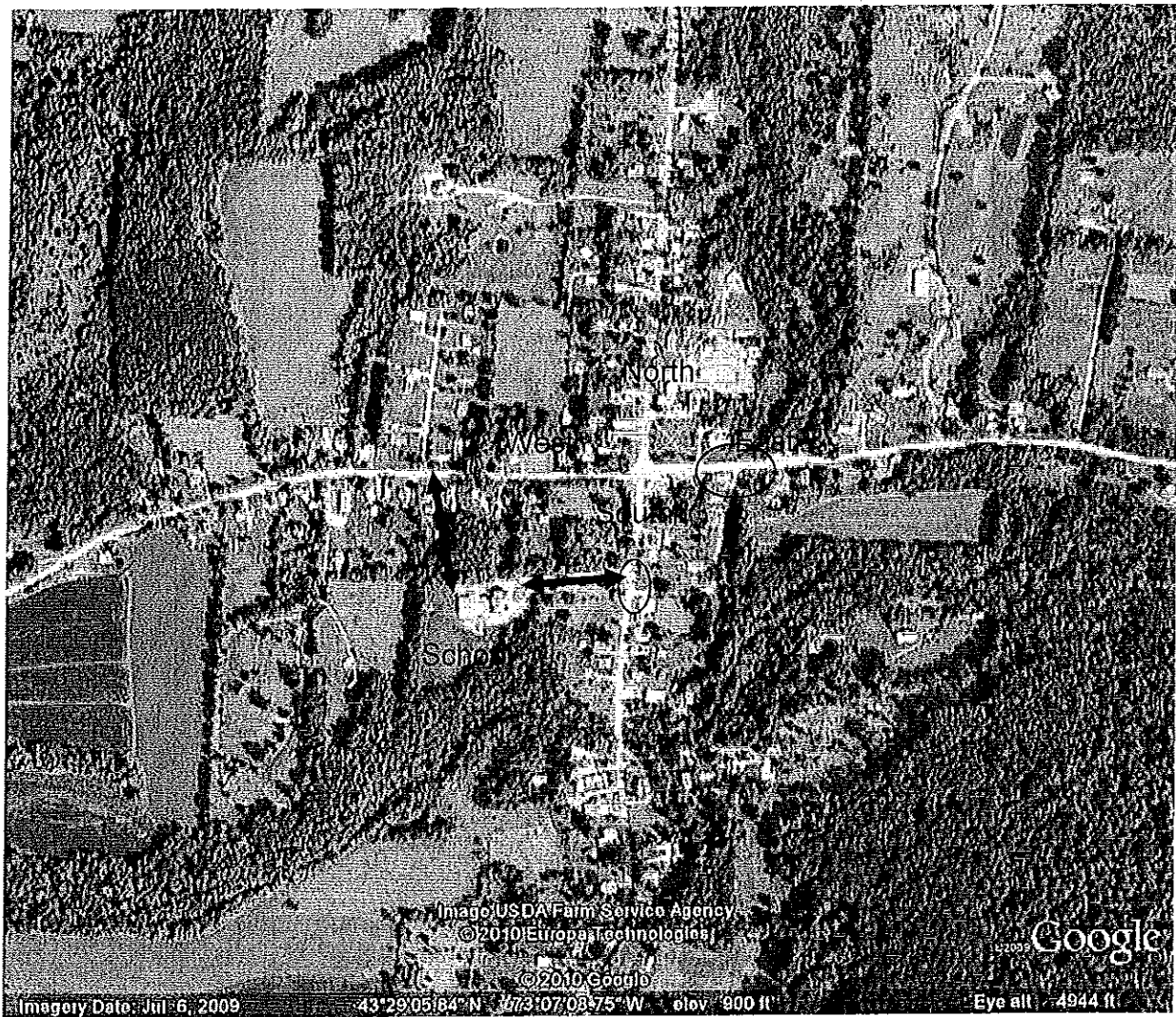


Figure 2
Number of Students vs. Travel Time to School





Ovals represent the sidewalks in town. The Black arrows represent current public routes to school; walking, biking, and, from South Street only, vehicular.



The ovals represent sidewalk.
The black arrows show the driveway and circle area for pick up and drop off. This is also used for walking and biking. The dashed arrows show a path that some students use to walk to school. Biking on this route is an option but limited. This is not a road way for vehicles.



- Black box is the outline of school.
- - - represents staff and handicap parking.
- • • • represents staff parking.
- █ represents visitor parking.
- Circle area is defined in two sections, dirt and grass.
- Arrows represent traffic flow.

Appendix B
Technical Assistance Report for Feasibility Study

