

Safe Routes to School

Travel plan

For

Rutland City Public Schools

And

The City of Rutland

c/o Rutland City Public Schools

6 Church Street

Rutland, VT 05701

802-773-1900

## Information on Schools and Sites and Assessment of the Current Levels of Walking and Biking

The Rutland City Public Schools Safe Routes to Schools Grant included our four schools that house our Pre K-8 students. Rutland Northeast and Rutland Northwest Primary Schools serve our PreK-Grade 2 population. They are located within the northeast and northwest quadrants of the city. Rutland Intermediate School (grades 3-6) and Rutland Middle School (grades 7 and 8) are located at our Library Avenue campus.

Rutland Northwest Primary School serves 297 students in Pre K-Grade 2. The students and families at Northwest reside in the most concentrated low income areas of the city. As a result, Northwest's Free and Reduced Lunch population remains above the 70% mark. Our students tally data from the school year 2008-2009 gives us an indication of how the children arrive at Northwest. That collection of student reported information yielded the following results:

<u>Method of Transportation</u>	<u>Percent of Students</u>
Bike	0 %
Walk	5 %
School Bus	45 %
Family Vehicle	32 %
Car Pool	6 %

Note: The percentage of walkers reported seems high. This may be due to enthusiasm generated within the program.

Rutland Northeast Primary School serves 250 Pre K-2 students. Northeast provides an educational experience to students who reside, mostly, on the east side of US Route 7. These students and families tend to arrive from more single family homes. The Free and Reduced Lunch percentage at Northeast remains above 50 %. Our students tally data from the school year 2008-2009 gives us an indication of how the children arrive at Northeast. That collection of student reported information yielded the following results:

<u>Method of Transportation</u>	<u>Percent of Students</u>
Bike	0 %
Walk	4 %
School Bus	62 %
Family Vehicle	32 %
Car Pool	< 1 %

Rutland Intermediate School and Rutland Middle School sit on the same campus, connected by two catwalks and services. RIS currently has 633 students in

school is increased, the BGCRC benefits by having more students access the after school programs they offer.

The Rutland Area Physical Activity Coalition (RAPAC) has supported the program by educating students about the benefits of walking and biking to school and also about bicycle safety. They are a great resource as a partner.

The Tapestry program serves many of the district's most economically disadvantaged students. During the afternoon sessions the Tapestry staff makes safe routes to school a regular focus.

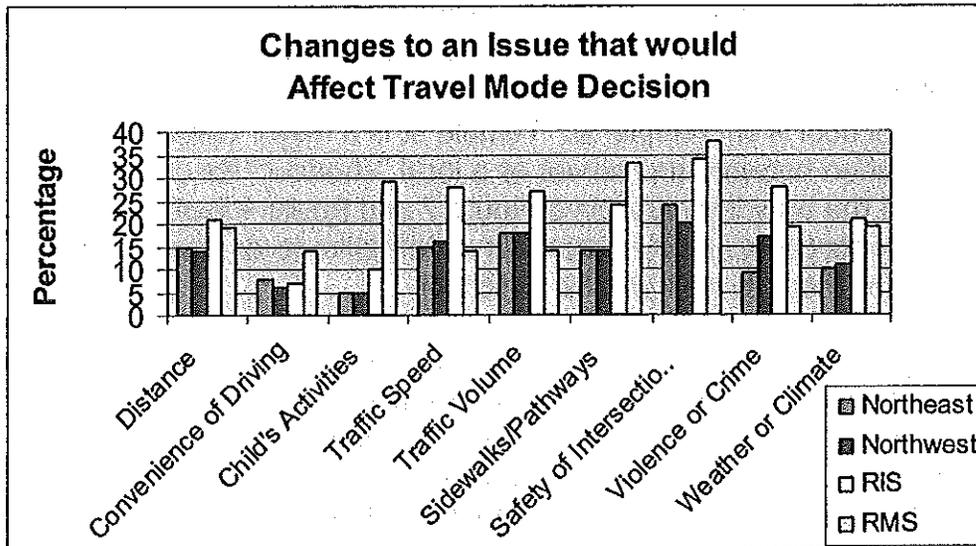
A most supportive and interested stakeholder is the Rutland Regional Planning Commission. The team at the planning commission sees our travel plan as a key element in supporting community effort to build a structure that supports a healthier and more active constituency.

<u>Person</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Role</u>
Diana Pfenning	Tapestry	Director
Larry Bales	Boys and Girls Club	Director
J. Nixon-Carter	RAPAC	Director
Alan Shelvey	Rutland DPW	Superintendent
Chris Greene	Rutland City Police	School Resource Officer
John Rice	RCPS Maint and Trans	Director
Rob Bliss	RCPS	Assistant Superintendent
Susan Schreibman	RRPC	Transportation Planner

### **Identification of the Physical and Cultural Barriers Rutland Students Face**

Each school campus has unique barriers to walking and bicycling to school. While Rutland City covers a relatively small area in terms of square miles, the city contains some highly trafficked areas and major arteries that can create barriers for students. In addition to the high volume of traffic on adjacent streets to all of the schools, traffic counts taken in October 2008 noted that excessive speed was an issue on Temple Street and Pierpoint Avenue. The city is well cared for by its Department of Public Works, but aging sidewalks or newer neighborhoods with a lack of sidewalks give walkers and bikers varying terrain to navigate. Also, the location of the school districts many caring crossing guards is reviewed annually, but may need to be reviewed with an eye on updated information.

A parent survey was distributed in Fall 2008 and the following charts summarize the responses.



Northwest and Pierpoint Primary Schools reside on Pierpoint Avenue. As stated in the cover letter, Pierpoint Avenue is one of the many “unofficial bypass” routes of Rutland City. Vehicles seeking to travel north to west or west to north, and avoid the downtown area, make Northwest a busy neighborhood. The Northwest neighborhood is one of the older sections of the city. While most of the streets have sidewalks, they are not all in good repair. There is a very real safety concern shared by many parents whose children attend Northwest. Less than a year ago, a drive-by shooting occurred on Cleveland Ave., a block from the school. Many of the nearby homes are subdivided into small apartments where parents fear criminal and drug related activities occur. The aforementioned February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008 murder occurred within the Northwest area of attendance. Crossing guards are present to help children walk safely to and from school, but few do. As at Northeast, the age of the students plays a big role in parental decisions about allowing children to walk or bike to school.

Many of Northwest’s students live on the South Side of Business Route 4. They are “cut off” from walking to school by a busy road and distance during the morning and afternoon.

The parent survey indicated that the amount of traffic, followed by the distance, violence or crime and speed of traffic were the four top issues affecting their decision to allow or not allow their children to walk or bike. Parents noted that if the safety of intersections and crossings was improved, that decision would be different. Distance is not a factor that can be altered however perception of violence/crime or safety, and speed are issues that can and should be addressed.

Northeast Primary School’s barriers include its proximity to Route 4 East. Route 4 effectively creates a barrier between the school and the southern half of its

for Northwest and Northeast School parents- the safety of intersections and crossings.

In conclusion, it is obvious that given the schools' locations, the safety of intersections and crossings is the major factor affecting a safe route to school.

### **Identifications of Current and Preferred Routes for Rutland Students Walking and Biking to School**

Northwest Primary School has limited options for routes to walk and bike to school. Given the age of the students and the distance which some would need to travel, walkers and bikers arrive via Pierpoint Avenue north and south. Walkers coming from the south travel on State St. or Columbian Ave. Students arriving from the north must, at some point adjoin with Crescent Street from the branching neighborhoods and then get to Pierpoint.

Northeast Primary School's walkers and bikers can arrive from a variety of directions. Some arrive from the sidewalks of Temple St. However, the majority of walkers arrive from the entrance at Mountain View Land because they come from the Little Lambs day care center which is next door to the school.

At the Library Avenue Campus of Rutland Middle and Rutland Intermediate Schools students who walk and bike can come from all directions. The adjoining streets have sidewalks on both sides for the most part, but they are in poor repair. The campus truly sits within an "urban" grid of streets which run north-south and east-west.

### **An Outline of What Steps Will be Taken to Overcome the Barriers in Rutland**

#### **Intersections- Safety and Markings**

Intersection safety includes both driver behavior and yielding to pedestrians in intersections as well as intersection design and marking. Drivers do not always yield to pedestrians and need to be mindful of pedestrian rights. Maintaining crosswalks that are bright and visible is not always possible, particularly in the bad weather. Crossing guards at intersections helps to address this.

Northwest School is located close to a busy intersection (Pierpoint and Crescent Street) where traffic is turning from north to east or south to west and is fairly predictable. Rutland Intermediate School and Rutland Middle School are surrounded by intersections with major collectors and movement is less

to be an issue, nor can volume be controlled except by more students traveling either on buses, walking and biking.

### **Sidewalks and Pathways**

While Rutland a decent network of sidewalks adjacent to the schools there are several issues with design and maintenance. Several sidewalks are missing "links" and are not continuous along a block. Many have surfaces that are broken and not smooth. Some sidewalks are not separated from the roadway by a grass strip and in some places vehicles are parking on the sidewalk, forcing people to walk very near to the moving vehicles.

A number of streets have sidewalks on one side of the street, but not both sides, and some are not cleared well in the winter, both of which force students to cross the street if they want to walk on a sidewalk. A good example is found on Pierpoint near Northwest School. Alternative routes, such as the proposed Rutland Creek Path, or other trails or dead-end roads which lead to trails to school would create an alternative that will encourage safer travel to school and more walking and biking.

### **Implementation Recommendations and Identification of Primary Lead**

#### **Intersections**

- Ensure that crosswalks are visible and maintained.( Rutland City DPW and Schools)
- Increase enforcement of pedestrian rights in crosswalks (Rutland Police , Crossing Guards)
- Increase education of school children on protecting themselves while in intersections. (Schools)
- Mount a public relations campaign to educate drivers about pedestrian rights and safety.(Rutland City Police, VTrans, Schools, RRPC)

#### **Traffic Speed**

- Ensure that pedestrian signs, school signs and speed limit signs near both schools are in place and meet current standards for retroreflectivity. (Rutland DPW)
- Ensure that appropriate warning and regulatory signs are in place. (Rutland DPW)
- Increase enforcement of posted speeds near both schools. (Rutland Police)
- Install speed display trailers periodically along the roadways near the schools, especially in the fall when school resumes and in the spring when walking and biking increase.(Rutland Police and VTrans)



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May 14, 2010

Aimee Pope  
Safe Routes to School Coordinator  
Vermont Agency of Transportation  
National Life Building – Drawer 33  
Montpelier, VT 05633

Re: 2010 SR2S Infrastructure Application

Dear Aimee,

On behalf of the City of Rutland, I am pleased to submit these Safe Routes to School Infrastructure applications to the Vermont Agency of Transportation on behalf of the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee. The Rutland City Schools has two projects, both of which help to eliminate barriers to walking and/or biking to school by providing safety improvements for the small scale project and a safer route in the large scale project.

The small scale, VTrans-managed project is to upgrade the four intersections around Rutland Middle/Intermediate school complex. This complex is located in a dense residential and commercial area of the City with a major collector bordering one side of the complex. With through traffic and school traffic intermixed, it is critical that the signs, crosswalks and sidewalks be improved to state and federal standards where safety is crucial.

The second application is for the construction of the section of segment 1 of Rutland Creek Path which serves as a safe route to Northwest Elementary School. Crosswalks across Crescent and Earl Streets, a collector and dead end road, respectively and continuing on to a 10-foot-wide, paved, multi-use path on its own alignment from the dead end of Earl Street to the school will provide students safe access along East Creek, eliminating the need to travel on busy streets with limited sidewalks. The engineering and permitting are complete and this project is ready for construction on city-owned land where right-of-way clearance has been granted. As part of a larger path, this segment is going to be cleared and grubbed by Stafford Forestry students this spring and fall.

We understand that the City will have maintenance responsibility for the facilities after construction and also that we will be reimbursed for expenses up to the awarded amount.

Thank you for your consideration of these worthwhile and exciting projects.

Sincerely,

Christopher C. Louras  
Mayor, City of Rutland

# SafeRoutes

Vermont Safe Routes to School



Infrastructure Program Grant Applications

for

**Safety Improvements at  
Rutland Intermediate School/  
Rutland Middle School Complex  
&  
Safe Route to Northwest Primary School**



The City of Rutland & Rutland City Public Schools  
May 2010