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# Weathersfield School District

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## SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

### Promoting Safe Walking & Biking to School

July 2010



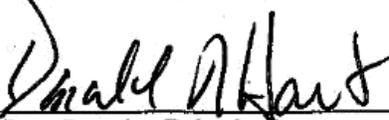
International Walking to School Day (Oct. 7, 2009), one of four Weathersfield School Park-and-Walk events.

*Developed with federal transportation funds administered by the  
VTrans Safe Routes to School Program*

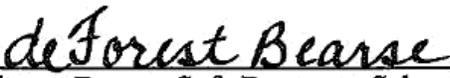


Prepared by Becka Roof, Going Green  
L3C 14 Winter St., Montpelier, VT 05602

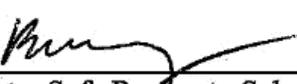
This plan was developed by the Weathersfield Safe Routes to School Team. The Team endorses this plan, as indicated by the signatures below:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Don Hart, Interim Principal  
Weathersfield School

8/5/2010  
\_\_\_\_\_  
date

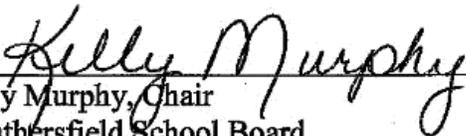
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
deForest Bearse, Safe Routes to School Coordinator  
Weathersfield Planning & Zoning staff

8-5-2010  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
BJ Esty, Safe Routes to School Team Leader  
Weathersfield School staff

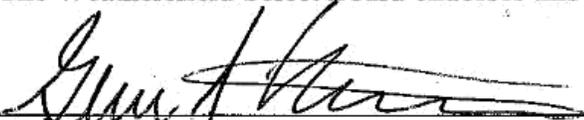
8/15/10  
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date

The Weathersfield School Board endorses this plan:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kelly Murphy, Chair  
Weathersfield School Board

8/16/10  
\_\_\_\_\_  
date

The Weathersfield Select Board endorses this plan:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Glenn Fisher, Chairperson  
Weathersfield Select Board

5 Aug 2010  
\_\_\_\_\_  
date

*"This report was funded in part through grant[s] from the Federal Highway Administration [and Federal Transit Administration], U.S. Department of Transportation. The views and opinions of the authors [or agency] expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the U. S. Department of Transportation."*

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## INTRODUCTION

Evaluation and Planning, followed by action steps in Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Engineering combine together to create a successful Safe Routes to School Program. These elements are known as the 5 Es.

This school travel plan lays out the ways in which the Weathersfield School – serving Weathersfield, Vermont including the villages of Perkinsville and Ascutney – is promoting and plan to promote walking and bicycling to school. This plan was developed as part of the school’s participation in the VTrans Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program.

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## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TEAM

BJ Esty	Weathersfield School SRTS Coordinator Weathersfield School Secretary
deForest Bearse	Town of Weathersfield Zoning Administrator, Parent
Gary Cross	Weathersfield School Administrator (Fall 2009)
Jason Rasmussen	Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission (SWCRPC)
Laura Berry	Weathersfield School Physical Education Teacher, Athletic Director Grades K-4, WalkSmart/BikeSmart Educator
Diane Day	Weathersfield School 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher, Athletic Director Grades 5-8, WalkSmart/BikeSmart Educator
Jen Christoffer	Weathersfield School Nurse

### ***With input from:***

Don Hart	Weathersfield School, Acting Principal (Spring 2010)
Richard Brown	Weathersfield Police Chief
Stan Spencer	Parent, Ascutney Trails Association
Courtney McKaig	Parent
Glenn Fisher	Weathersfield Selectboard Member

*Many additional community and parent volunteers supported Weathersfield's first Walk to School Day in October 2009, and subsequent Walk to School Days in Spring 2010.*

The Weathersfield School Safe Routes to School team identified the following goals at a meeting in October 2009:

1. To promote students safely walking to school.
2. To educate students on pedestrian and bicyclist rules of the road and safety measures.
3. To promote health and physical activity, and to help students develop healthy life habits.

## **About the Weathersfield School**

The Town of Weathersfield is part of the Windsor Southeast Supervisory District, bordering the Connecticut River in southern Windsor County Vermont (southeast Vermont). It is a rural community with an estimated population of 2,832 (2008), with 86% of adults having high school diplomas or college degrees. It primarily serves as a bedroom community to the Upper Valley, Claremont and Springfield. However, Weathersfield has a number of small businesses and home occupations are very common.

The Weathersfield School serves students living in the town of Weathersfield, including the villages of Perkinsville and Ascutney. The school is located in the village of Ascutney, in the far northeast corner of the attendance area. It previously served as the town's middle school, with the old elementary school located in Perkinsville. The Weathersfield School in Ascutney was recently renovated to serve as a consolidated K-8 school; it opened as the combined school in September 2008. In 2009, grades K-8 had 210 students.

## **Existing Routes for Walking/Biking**

The school is situated at the end of Schoolhouse Road, which is a Class 3 paved town road that branches off of Route 5 in Ascutney. According to school records, 52 students (26%) live within a 2-mile radius of the school building and 12 students within a 1-mile radius. (A distance of two-miles is generally considered to be adequate for bicycling to school, and one-mile for not providing bus service or walking.) However, the unofficial school policy is that any student that wishes to ride the school bus may do so, regardless of distance from the school. In order to get to the school, students must navigate busy roads that do not presently have continuous sidewalks: Routes 5, 12 and 131 and Thrasher Road.

Although the Weathersfield School is located in Ascutney village, there are no existing sidewalks that connect to the school, and only a short section of sidewalk in the village near the town library. One crosswalk transverses Route 5, connecting Ascutney Park Road to Proctor Library. The speed limit in much of the village on Route 5 is 35 mph.

The town has several times considered the idea of constructing sidewalks along Route 5, Schoolhouse Road and Thrasher Road in Ascutney. In 1997, the town developed the *Ascutney Village Sidewalk Feasibility Study* for this proposed sidewalk network. In the late 1990s, the town had obtained a state grant to construct the sidewalk but decided not to move forward with the project and "turned back" the money. In October 2009, the town applied for a Transportation Enhancements Grant to construct a sidewalk between Proctor Library and Schoolhouse Road. However, the grant was removed from consideration when the town did not include the 20% match in the 2010-11 town budget.

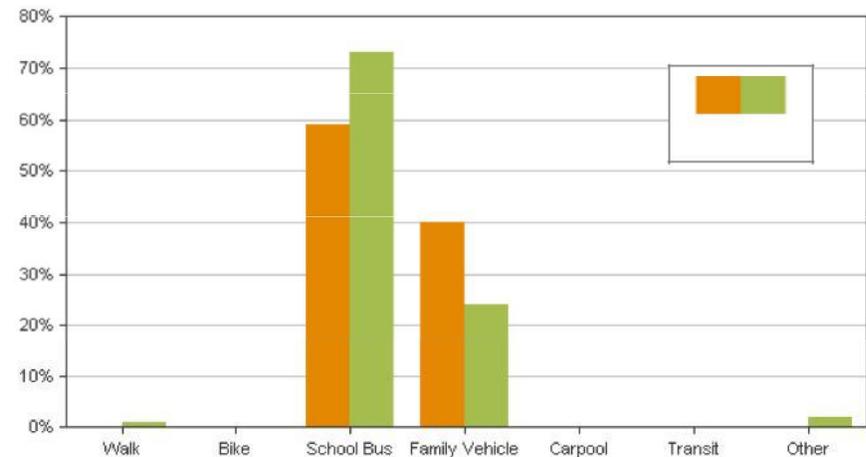
## **Pre-Program Levels of Walking/Biking**

According to pre-program classroom tallies taken in September 2009, 66% of the student body takes the school bus, and 32% are driven by parents. One or two students, representing 0.7% overall, walk and 0% bike.

Anecdotally, some students walk to the Proctor Library about a half-mile away after school. Students may participate in library activities or wait for parents to pick them up. The school does not remain open after classes have concluded for the day, so children cannot stay at the school to wait for their parents. The library is open after school on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

As is typical, more students are driven to school in the morning by their parents. In many communities, these students would then walk home after school. In Weathersfield, however, the return trip is largely by school bus.

**Morning to Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison**



### Physical & Cultural Barriers to Walking/Biking

#### Physical Barriers

There is a complete lack of pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure along the main routes that students would

Weathersfield School • Spring 2009		
Issues which Affect Parent's Decision to Allow or Not Allow Their Child to Walk or Bike to/from School Separated by Children who Do and Do Not Already Walk or Bike To/From School:		
Issue	Child walks/bikes to school	Child does not walk/bike to school
Convenience of driving	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.7%)
Time	1 (50.0%)	19 (32.2%)
Before/after-school activities	1 (50.0%)	5 (8.5%)
Adults to walk/bike with	0 (0.0%)	12 (20.3%)
Crossing guards	0 (0.0%)	11 (18.6%)
Violence or crime	0 (0.0%)	19 (32.2%)
Weather or climate	0 (0.0%)	18 (30.5%)
<b>Number of Respondents Per Category</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>59</b>
<i>No Response: 0</i>		

have to take to get from their homes to the school. Additionally, the town is very rural and homes are scattered throughout the community. Most students live too far away to walk to school. The roads are generally not conducive for children to bicycle along, due to traffic volumes, traffic speed or steepness. Traffic studies showed speeding along all roads in the vicinity of the school (see Appendix 3.)

### Cultural Barriers

The school nurse reports that 50% of the students in grades 6-8 are medically obese.

The Weathersfield School conducted the pre-program parent surveys from the National Center for Safe Routes to School in the Spring of 2009. Results from these surveys identified traffic speed, traffic volume, and distance as the top concerns. Lack of infrastructure was also a concern, but was definitively lower than concerns about traffic speed and volume. Preliminary results of the Spring 2010 post-program surveys reinforce those same concerns.

Although the Safe Routes to School application had identified rushed morning times, after school activities, and fear of predators as key concerns, the parent survey data did not bear this out.

Notably, close to 30% of Weathersfield School parents also reported that changes in traffic speed / volume could affect their decision to allow their children to walk to school. Only 13% of parents said that having adults to walk/bike with would affect their decision; however, having adult chaperones and police/fire department assistance on October's Walk to School Day apparently did make the difference. About half of the student body participated!

The Spring 2010 off-road route – which got students away from traffic concerns related to Route 5 – also appeared to adequately address those concerns, as well as reduced the need for significant levels of traffic control support needed in Fall 2009.

### **Program Summary**

The 2009-2010 Weathersfield SRTS program involved the following elements:

- Pre-program parent surveys
- Designated SRTS Team and Coordinator
- Designated two WalkSmart and BikeSmart educators
- Attended training workshops
- Four walk to school events
- Educational programs (e.g. bike rodeo, BikeSmart, WalkSmart)
- Provided a walking in school program, encouraging students to walk laps in the gymnasium
- Coordinated with police to provide traffic enforcement during events
- Post-program parent surveys
- Evaluated programs
- Developed a School Travel Plan
- Conducted an infrastructure assessment





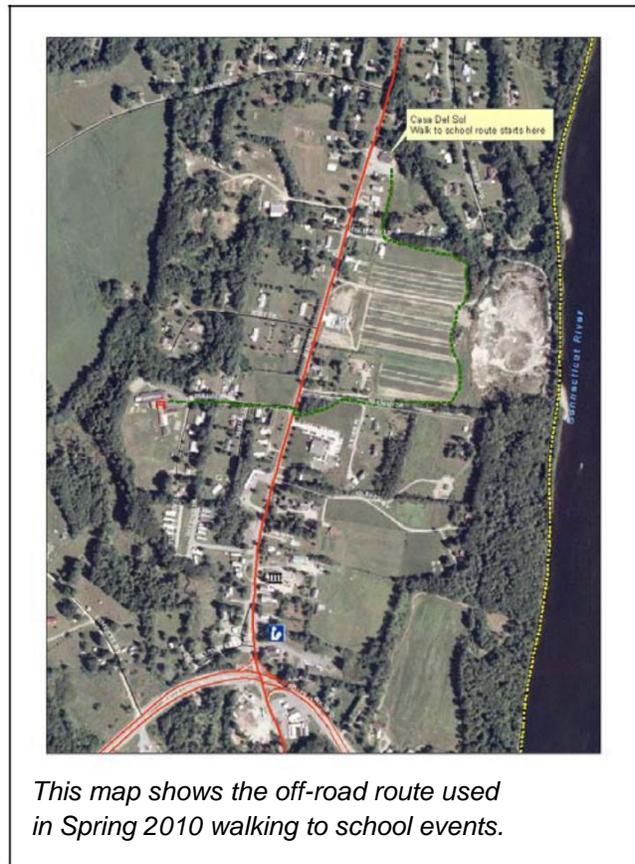
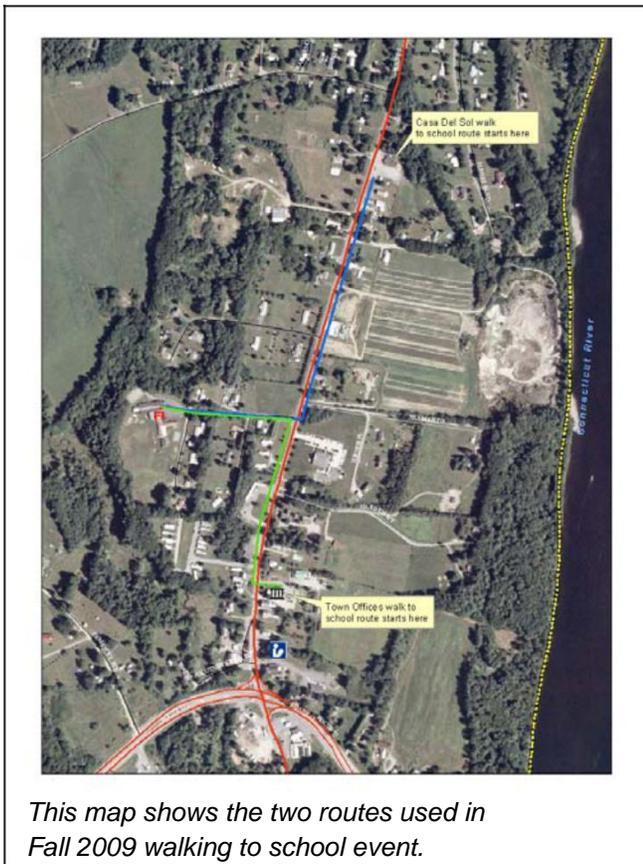
- Applied for SRTS Infrastructure Program to implement proposed traffic calming measures

### Walk to School Day in Weathersfield • How did it go?

Due to the dispersed location of students in Weathersfield, a park-and-walk model is the best fit for this school. To kick off the Safe Routes to School Program, the Weathersfield SRTS program participated in the International Walk to School Day event on October 7, 2009. To maximize student participation the team established two drop-off zones – one for older children from the Mexican restaurant on Route 5 and one for younger children from the town hall. Parents and school staff supervised the route, which was marked off with traffic cones and punctuated by the "Slow Down, Event Today" yard signs. Police and fire departments provided vehicle support with flashing lights – adding to the excitement for the kids while also increasing safety by alerting motorists to the unusual event of so many young pedestrians walking along Route 5. Approximately 90 students participated.

Three additional walk to school day events were held in Spring 2010. The Spring events involved one walking route, starting at the Mexican restaurant. Walking along Route 5 in Fall 2009 required significant levels of support for traffic control. Therefore, the Spring events secured permission from private landowners to walk through yards and fields between Route 5 and the Connecticut River, then crossing Route 5 and walking along Schoolhouse Road to the school. The town and school established a pilot program using a white dashed chalk line along each side of Schoolhouse Road to demarcate pedestrian routes. Approximately 80 students participated in each event.

The Spring off-road walking route worked very well. It is the preferred route for future events as long as private landowners agree to allow this occasional use by students and parent volunteers. Without their support however, this program is not sustainable without finding other off-road routes or providing the necessary infrastructure to improve safety.



The following lists the proposed next steps and recommendations. (See Appendices 4 and 5 that include more detailed recommendations (next steps, timelines, and who is responsible for each step) for Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Evaluation. See Appendix 6 for an infrastructure assessment.)

1. Provide educational programs at the Weathersfield School to support the SRTS program:
  - a) Continue to conduct an annual bike rodeo;
  - b) Provide bicycle educational programs (BikeSmart);
  - c) Provide pedestrian educational programs for event days.
2. Encourage safe walking and bicycling programs for Weathersfield School students and the community:
  - a) Conduct walking to school program about four times a year, including International Walking to School Day;
  - b) Provide a walking in school program, walking laps either in the gymnasium or around the athletic fields;
  - c) Consider establishing a Saturday morning bike club, working with a local cycling group and utilizing area facilities, such as the Toonerville Trail or dirt roads in the flood control area in Perkinsville;
  - d) Explore establishing a family-friendly 5K race and walk event in order to encourage physical fitness and raise funds to support future SRTS activities.
3. Enforce traffic safety in the vicinity of the school:
  - a) Ask town police department and state police to assist with traffic speed enforcement;
  - b) Support walking to school events by highway, police or fire departments helping with traffic safety during events.
4. Provide a safe infrastructure to support the SRTS program (See Appendix 6 for a more detailed infrastructure evaluation):
  - a) Seek grant funding to install a radar speed feedback sign as a cost-effective traffic calming measure. (*Application submitted in Spring 2010.*);
  - b) Promote walking to school utilizing the Park-and-Walk model:
    - i. Obtain permission from private landowners to continue the use of the Spring 2010 off-road walking route or similar alternate routes;
    - ii. Establish a pedestrian lane with a white, dashed painted line along Schoolhouse Road;
    - iii. Install “School Zone” signs along Schoolhouse Road and Route 5 per 19 V.S.A. §921;

- iv. Install signs along Schoolhouse Road reducing vehicle speeds during school hours;
  - v. If private landowner support for walking routes does not continue, explore constructing sidewalks. This would involve updating the 1997 sidewalk feasibility study, and seeking funding to develop a sidewalk network in Ascutney connecting to the Weathersfield School;
  - c) Improve vehicle and pedestrian safety at the intersection of Routes 5, 12 and 131;
  - d) Explore providing improved pedestrian facilities (e.g. sidewalks or trails) connecting neighborhoods to school bus stops in Perkinsville and hamlet areas throughout Weathersfield.
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of the Weathersfield SRTS program regularly, and develop next steps or new programs accordingly.

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) movement started in the 1970s in Odense, Denmark, to address disturbing trends in traffic incidents involving students walking or bicycling to school. In the early 1990s, walking and bicycling advocates initiated a similar program in the United Kingdom, and the program then spread to other countries around the world. Pilot programs in the U.S. were initiated in the late 1990s in California and Massachusetts. Interest then spread across the country, with some states initiating programs using state funding sources. In Vermont, a pilot program was conducted from 2004-2006 with regional funding from the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization.

The national Safe Routes to School program began in 2005, when Congress incorporated funding for Safe Routes to School into the federal transportation bill (SAFETEA-LU), with small population states like Vermont receiving a minimum of \$1 million per year for five years. SRTS provides 100% federal funds, with 10%-30% of each state's allocation going to education and encouragement, and the remaining 70-90% to infrastructure projects.

The VTrans Safe Routes to School Program began in earnest in the spring of 2006, by soliciting schools to participate in education and encouragement activities. Another round of schools was selected in 2008, and a third round in 2009. The Weathersfield School was a part of this third round.

Schools that are participating in the education and encouragement activities are eligible to apply for infrastructure grant funds, also administered by VTrans. Schools participating in any round of the education /encouragement program will be eligible to apply, so long as the school is actively continuing to promote walking/biking to school.

In the 2007 grant round, VTrans accepted applications for projects up to \$250,000, and awarded a total of \$1.4 million. These grants provide 100% federal funds to key improvements identified in the School Travel Plan. No local match is required. As many as 60 schools could be eligible to apply for infrastructure funds in 2010.

The 2010 infrastructure grant round was announced in February 2010, with a letter of intent due March 15 and the full application due in May. A total of \$1 million is available, with the maximum award of \$250,000. About 75 communities will be eligible to apply for infrastructure funds in 2010.

While VTrans currently has remaining funds to award based on the federal allocation from SAFETEA-LU (2005-2009), a future and additional grant rounds awaits the new federal transportation bill. As of June 2010, federal transportation funds are operating under a continuing resolution.



Summary:

Schoolhouse Road

Traffic Volume: 515 Average Weekday  
Speed Limit: 25 mph  
Actual Speed: 32 mph (85th percentile)

VT Route 131 near Cemetery Rd.

Traffic Volume: 9,500 Average Weekday  
Speed Limit: 40 mph  
Actual Speed: 48 mph (85th Percentile)

US 5, north of Riley Dr

Traffic Volume: 4,850 Average Weekday  
Speed Limit: 35 mph (near 40 mph transition zone)  
Actual Speed: 46 mph (85<sup>th</sup>)

US 5, north of Hastings Dr

Traffic Volume: 5,288 Average Weekday  
Speed Limit: 35 mph (near 40 mph transition zone)  
Actual Speed: 41 mph (85<sup>th</sup>)

*Please note that these data reflect average conditions all day long for the study period (and not only during school arrival and departure times).*

<i>Approaches Integrated in Chronological Order</i>			
Spring 2009	Evaluation	Pre-program parent surveys	Zoning administrator, school staff
<b>FALL 2009</b>			
September 2009	SRTS Team Mtg	Kick-off meeting for the program, design event for International Walk/Bike to School Day	All
September 2009	Education	School staff receive training in WalkSmart/BikeSmart safety instruction.	P.E. teacher, 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade teacher
September 2009	Evaluation	Traffic counts including speeds	Regional Planning Commission staff
September 2009	Encouragement	Safe Routes to School table / display at Open House	SRTS team
Sept. / Oct. 2009	Education	WalkSmart instruction, K-2 focus	P.E. teacher, 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade teacher
October 2009	Encouragement	International Walk-to-School Day, event with two drop-off zones for parents and school buses; chaperoned walk with cones separating from roadway, with police and fire department support.	SRTS team, Police, Fire Department, parents
October 2009	SRTS Team Mtg	Team meeting to discuss Education, Encouragement, Enforcement aspects of SRTS	All
November 2009	SRTS Team Mtg	Team meeting to discuss Engineering (infrastructure) aspects of SRTS	All
<i>Given Weathersfield's challenging geography, lack of facilities, and the realities of Vermont winter, the team decided not to try to host walking/biking events over the winter.</i>			
<b>SPRING 2010</b>			
March 2010	SRTS Team Meeting	Planning meeting for bike club, infrastructure application	All
Early April 2010	Education	WalkSmart refresher, all grades; emphasis on safe walking for event	P.E. teacher, 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade teacher
April 2010	SRTS Team Mtg	Planning meeting for Spring events; consider frequent walker punch cards?	All
April 2010	Education / Encouragement	Spring press / PR for April event, especially for local newspaper	School Coordinator, SRTS Team

April 2010 (Fri. before Spring break)	Encouragement	All-School Walk-to-School Day, similar to the October 2009 event. See below for hindsights and improvements. Distribute punch cards, if desired?	SRTS team, Police, Fire Department, parents
April to June 2010	Encouragement	Weekly or monthly walk-to-school days, depending on route (see critique).	SRTS team, Police, Fire Department, parents
April / May 2010	Education	BikeSmart instruction, focus on Grades 2-6	P.E. teacher, 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade teacher
May 2010	Education	Bike rodeo with different grades having different levels of instruction.	P.E. teacher, 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade teacher
May 2010	SRTS Team Mtg	Determine program for 2010-11 School Year; ensure transitions as needed.	All
May & June 2010	Encouragement	Saturday morning Bike Club	SRTS team, local bike group.
June 4, 2010	Education	Bike Rodeo for 5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> grades	P.E. teacher, 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade teacher
June 2010	Encouragement	End of School Celebration & Recognition	School, SRTS Team

In 2009- 10, the Weathersfield School also started a walking & pedometer program, with students walking around the gym in the winter, and outside as weather permits.

<i>At each SRTS Team Meeting, it is recommended to review upcoming events on the matrix.</i>			
Late August	Education / Encouragement	Send home Walking Route flyer, permission slips for walking program in start of school packet. Distribute frequent walker punch cards.	School, SRTS Coordinator
Late August / early Sept.	SRTS Team Mtg	Team meeting	All
September	Education	Presentations on walking safely on event days; WalkSmart classroom presentations especially for grades K-2.	WalkSmart/BikeSmart educators
2 <sup>nd</sup> Week of September	Encouragement	First walking day from the Park & Walk locations. For the first event of the fall, use extra staff / visibility.	SRTS Team, SRTS Coordinator, Police, Fire Department
Sept. – Nov.	Encouragement	Monthly or weekly walking days from the Park & Walk locations.	SRTS Team, SRTS Coordinator
Sept.	Evaluation	Conduct classroom tallies, using the forms created by the National Center for SRTS; send in for computer scanning.	SRTS Coordinator, Classroom teachers
Sept.	Education	Send a couple representatives from the team to the Vermont SRTS Training & Conference (alternate years).	SRTS Team
Oct.	Encouragement	International Walk/Bike to School Day.	SRTS team, walking group leaders
Oct.	SRTS Team Mtg	Team meeting to debrief from September/October promotions, and touch base on winter ideas.	All
Nov.- Dec.	Encouragement	End of fall program acknowledgement, prizes, etc.	SRTS team, walking group leaders
Jan.	SRTS Team Mtg	Team meeting to prepare / organize for any winter promotions (in February?)	All
Feb.	Encouragement	Winter walking program – possibly a snowshoe to school with landowner permission? Arrange a separate date for each grade level to use snowshoes.	SRTS Team
early Mar.	SRTS Team Mtg	Team meeting to prepare / organize for spring walking program and bike club. Arrange permission slips, ensure committed walking leaders, etc.	All

late March	Encouragement	Spring kick-off for walk to school events – Newsletter notices and permission slips to go home prior to the program start.	SRTS Team
late March	Education	BikeSmart classroom lessons, Grade 2-4	BikeSmart educators, P.E. Teacher
April	Enforcement	Ask the police to position the radar speed cart as a spring reminder.	Weathersfield Police
April – June	Encouragement	Monthly or weekly walking days from the Park & Walk locations.	SRTS Team, parent leaders
May	SRTS Team Mtg	Team meeting to debrief on spring programs, determine end of year celebrations, plan for continuation to next school year, and update this matrix for the following year.	All
May	Education	Bike rodeo with different grades having different levels of instruction.	P.E. teacher, 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade teacher
mid-May	Evaluation	Conduct classroom tallies, using the forms created by the National Center for SRTS; send in for computer scanning.	SRTS Coordinator, Classroom teachers
June	Encouragement	End of School Celebration, including recognitions in incentive contests.	School, SRTS Team

In continuing to develop the program for each subsequent year, the team is encouraged to consider:

- What did the team learn from the previous year of the program?
- What can be done to make things run more smoothly?
- What programs can be taken to the "next level" and how to do this?
- Are there parts of the program that worked very well, and should be repeated?
- How to keep the concept "fresh," and volunteers energized?
- Are there any potential safety concerns, and what can be done to alleviate those?
- Without the education/encouragement funding from VTrans, how will the team obtain incentives for the program? *Possibly ask the PTA to provide a small amount of funding for incentives?*
- What is the best way to transfer coordinating and leadership positions from one "generation" of parents to the next?



In a rural town like Weathersfield, with only very short sections of existing sidewalk, many rural roads, and a diffuse student population, the park-and-walk encouragement program is the only feasible option. The current off-road walking to school route that connects the drop-off point at the Mexican restaurant and the Weathersfield School is dependent upon private property owners consent. Without that consent, the program would no longer work. Therefore, options are needed in order to provide continued support for the Weathersfield Safe Routes to School program and to address the goals of this Plan.

To help this model become sustainable, a few options were considered as discussed below.

**A. Provide Off-Road Walking to School Route Along Route 5**

**Option 1** – Continue to obtain permission from property owners to continue using the current off-road walking route for each future walking to school day event. *(Recommended for the immediate future.)*

- Pros** – No new infrastructure/no cost
- Not walking along Route 5
  - Improve pedestrian safety

- Cons** – Takes a lot of effort to organize each event
- May not be sustainable
  - Does not provide infrastructure to encourage regular day-to-day walking

**Option 2** – Establish another drop-off location(s) and route(s), and obtain permission from property owners.

- Pros** – No new infrastructure/no cost
- Not walking along Route 5
  - Improve pedestrian safety

- Cons** – Takes a lot of effort to organize each event
- May not be sustainable
  - Does not provide infrastructure to encourage regular day-to-day walking



*Schoolhouse Road (right) joins Route 5 in an area with no sidewalks and a very narrow shoulder. Across Route 5 on the left is the driveway to a church parking lot, which serves as one potential park & walk location.*



*This map shows the route used in Spring 2010 (green) and the potential new routes (purple, orange).*

**Option 3** – Explore developing a trail network that would connect the school to a drop-off point(s) and/or neighborhoods to the school. This option could involve either an informal trail network or formal trails created by permanent easements. An informal trail network, akin to the VAST (snowmobile) trail system, could support walking/biking to school with informal trails constructed, with landowner permission, on private lands. This approach would provide a cost-effective network in keeping with the rural character of Weathersfield and at little cost. All routes would need to be developed with landowner permission. State law provides private landowners with considerable protection from liability so long as the landowner does not charge a user fee. Depending on the route, a cross-country path might be as simple as a mown path. Similar routes exist in Waitsfield, where the Mad River Path provides public access along the river, and in Duxbury, where an informal mown path is used as a biking route to the middle school.

- Pros** – Minimal cost (e.g. mowing grass, pruning trees)
- Not walking along Route 5
  - Improve pedestrian safety

- Cons** – May not be sustainable
- No permanent right-of-way
  - Need adults to provide supervision and watchful eyes on the trail

## B. Traffic Calming & Safety Improvements

**Option 1** – Install “School Zone” signs along Schoolhouse Road per 19 V.S.A. §921. Establishing a school zone along Route 5 is also recommended. (*Recommended immediate measure.*)

- Pros** – Low cost
- Improve motorist awareness
  - Improve pedestrian safety

- Cons** – Cost to install and maintain signs

**Option 2** – Install signs along Schoolhouse Road reducing vehicle speeds during school hours. (*Recommended immediate measure.*)

- Pros** – Low cost
- Improve motorist awareness
  - Improve pedestrian safety

- Cons** – Cost to install and maintain signs

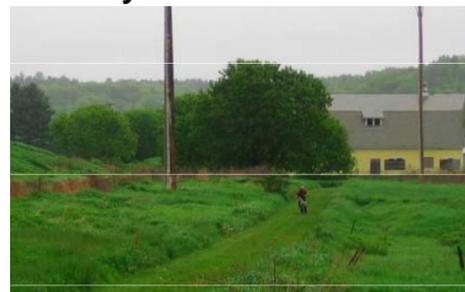
**Option 3** – Install a radar speed feedback sign for southbound traffic along Route 5 at the speed transition zone north of Riley Drive. (See picture of the sign location above.) An additional sign is also recommended for northbound traffic on Route 5 south of Hastings Drive. However, current state

### Mad River Path



*The Mad River Path in Waitsfield is a simple mown path along farm fields, placed with landowner permission on private land.*

### Duxbury Trail



*Middle schoolers in Duxbury bike to school across a historic farm field.*



guidelines do not allow for a placement in this location until a speed transition zone or school zone is established. (*Recommended for SRTS Infrastructure Grant Application.*)

- Pros** – Low cost
- Improve motorist awareness
  - Encourage reduced traffic speeds
  - Provide speed data
  - Improve pedestrian safety

**Cons** – Cost to maintain signs

**Option 4** – Safety improvements to the intersection of Routes 5, 12 and 131. (*Recommended as a long term measure.*)

- Pros** – Improve motorist safety
- Improve pedestrian safety (including students walking to the store after school)

**Cons** – Cost of engineering and constructing improvements (state)

### **C. Improved Pedestrian Facilities along Schoolhouse Road**

**Option 1** – Set up traffic cones to demarcate the student walking zone on the edge of Schoolhouse Road during walking to school events.

- Pros** – Low-cost
- Improve pedestrian safety

**Cons** – Used only during events

- Time consuming set up and clean up for each event

**Option 2** – Establish a pedestrian lane with a white, dashed painted line along Schoolhouse Road, demarcating where students can walk during events or at other times. A pilot project to establish pedestrian lanes on both sides of the road with a white chalk line was tested in Spring 2010. Team members reported that it worked very well. Installing “Share the Road” type signs is also advisable. (*Recommended as an immediate measure.*)

- Pros** – Low-cost
- Can be used at all times; not just during events
  - Improve pedestrian safety

**Cons** – Highway Department must maintain paint

- New to drivers

**Option 3** – Construct a sidewalk along the northern side of Schoolhouse Road as included in the *1997 Ascutney Village Sidewalk Feasibility Study*. The feasibility study should be re-evaluated for changes in right-of-way / permitting issues or design standards. (*Recommended as a long term measure.*)

**Pros** – Provides the infrastructure best suited to adequately address parental safety concerns about walking to school



*A sidewalk along Schoolhouse Road would require grading / drainage improvements.*

Insert chalk line photo

- Improve pedestrian safety
  - Can be used at all times; not just during events
- Cons** – Highway Department must maintain a sidewalk
- Expensive to construct

#### **D. Improved Pedestrian Facilities along Route 5**

If the off-road measures prove not to work or are not sustainable for the long term, the following options may be explored.

**Option 1** – Encourage the state to expand the shoulder width along Route 5 to better accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.

- Pros**
- Provides infrastructure for cyclists
  - Improve bicyclist safety
  - Can be used at all times; not just during events
  - No town maintenance

- Cons**
- Not an adequate pedestrian or bicycle facility for young children
  - Potential right-of-way constraints/costs
  - Cost to construct (state)

**Option 2** – Construct a sidewalk along Route 5, Schoolhouse Road and a portion of Thrasher Road as detailed in the *1997 Ascutney Village Sidewalk Feasibility Study*. This would also include connections to existing sidewalks as well as the provision of pedestrian crosswalks and related signage. The feasibility study should be re-evaluated for changes in right-of-way, permitting or design standards. *(Recommended as a long term measure.)*

- Pros**
- Provides the infrastructure best suited to adequately address parental safety concerns about walking to school
  - Improve pedestrian safety
  - Can be used at all times; not just during events

- Cons**
- Highway Department must maintain sidewalks
  - Potential right-of-way constraints/costs
  - Expensive to construct