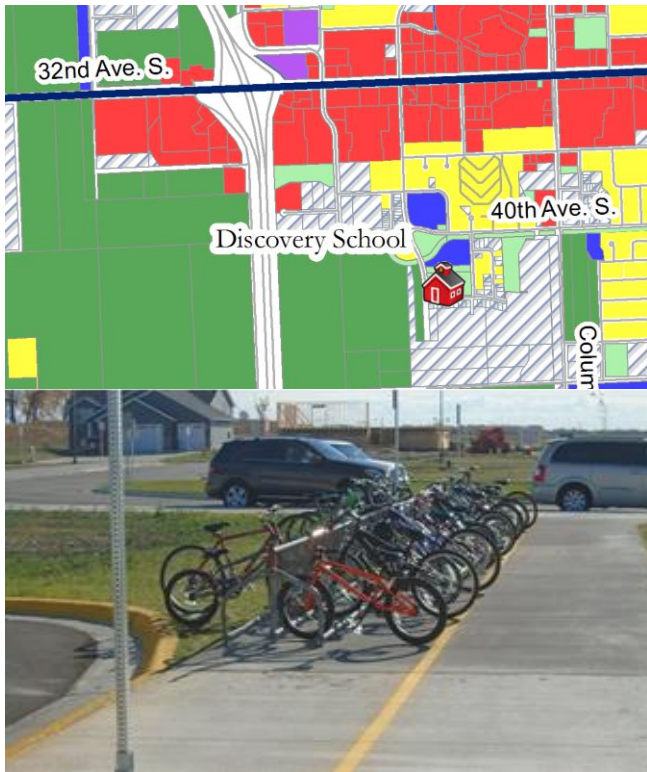


Grand Forks - East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization

DISCOVERY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (GRAND FORKS, ND)

SAFE ROUTE TO SCHOOL INITIATIVE



Cover Photos: © Kshitij Sharma, 2015 & Others

In Cooperation with*



2015 FINAL

* The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Grand Forks –East Grand Forks MPO, Cooperating Agencies, Neither of any State or U.S. Federal Agencies.



Discovery School Safe Routes to School Initiative

ADDENDUM

I. The Safe Route to School Initiative

The Discovery Elementary School Safe Route to School (SR2S) Initiative has been advanced in closed cooperation with the assistance and active participation of the Discovery Elementary School, the Grand Forks School District Administration, Safe Kids Grand Forks, the Community Resources Bureau Grand Forks Police Department, Grand Forks-East Options Resources for Independent Living, the City of Grand Forks Engineering & Planning Departments and the Advanced Traffic Analysis Center (ATAC) at the North Dakota State University.

The Safe Routes to School Program strives to:

- Enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school
- Make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging healthy and active lifestyle from an early age
- Facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity (approximately 2-mile radius) of primary and middle schools (Grades K-8).

II. Traffic Studies

The Discovery Elementary School opened on August, 2015. Prior to its construction and opening, the MPO commissioned a “Travel Demand Analysis and Intersection Capacity Utilization/Level of Service Analysis” in 2013. The study was a focused “site impact” analysis. The study was centered on the analysis of “the traffic impact on the school site,” rather than on the impact of nearby intersections on traffic conditions on adjacent streets. The objective was to provide recommendations to minimize pedestrian/vehicle conflicts and to assure the children’s safety in their way to and from school. The school ‘on-site review’ entailed:

- An assessment of the proposed location for short-term/visitor parking spaces
- Consideration of the proposed location of parking areas (student, staff, visitors, and buses), and whether these should be separated from student loading/unloading areas
- Consideration of vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic operations as well as, any relevant roadway geometry and traffic control (s) within and around the school premises.

In addition, field observations were conducted to gather information on existing traffic characteristics:

- Traffic controls
- Pedestrian traffic devices
- On-road pedestrian and bicyclist vulnerability, and
- Evaluation of walking and biking distances for school grade users, including persons with disabilities.
- Drafting a “Safe Route to School” map for Discovery School.

III. School Opening

Prior to its opening in August of 2015, and interested in promoting safe walking and biking for children on their way to and from school, the MPO initiated the Discovery School Safe Routes to School. This initiative included an Advisory Committee to guide staff in the advancement of all the proposed tasks. Four meetings were organized to further consider safety and traffic conditions in and around the school premises. A technical review was implemented to evaluate the existing traffic conditions prevailing on the school site prior to school opening. Subsequently, two technical observations took place:

- a) First Day of School (On-site traffic movements: Arrival/dismissal activities, student's arrival & dismissal, crossing guard on premises, and driver's and student's behavior).
- b) Typical School Day (On-site children's pick-up observations, on-site pedestrian and bicyclist movements and parking patterns on adjacent streets).

The observations included evaluation of traffic movements on school premises. In addition, the Safe Route to School Map prepared by the MPO for the Discovery School was handed out to all parents and adults accompanying children to school. School maps inform students and families about walking and bicycling route to school. Although expecting comments and input from parents; the MPO did not receive any comments identifying areas in the map that required improvements.

In accordance with the Safe Routes to School Principles, a Parent's Survey was administered. The objective is to gather parents' views on whether to allow children to walk or bike to and from school by themselves. Parents identified traffic and pedestrian movements on 40th Ave S., as well as speed and driver's behavior as reasons not to let their kids ride or walk by themselves to school. These comments were brought to the attention of the Advisory Committee for consideration. Finally, a survey was administered to assess the "Essential and Medium Priority" School & Community-based programs that the Discovery Elementary would like to see implemented to improve on the safety of the pedestrian and bicyclist on their way to and from school. According the School Administration, the presence of a Crossing and Student Guard programs was deemed as "essential." These concerns pointed at locations adjacent or in proximity to the school; but outside school premises.

The comments included the following concerns involving 40th Ave S:

- Lack of a grate on the box culvert under Columbia Rd at 40th Ave S.
- Installation of traffic signals on S Columbia Rd at the intersections of 36th and 40th Ave.

Other comments by parents alluded to pedestrian/bicyclist crossing safety at the S Columbia Road at 40th Ave S intersection. This is the nearest signalized intersection to the Discovery school. The intersection is also the designated crossing place as identified on the "Safe Routes to School" map. Through the street design process, and prior to the construction of the Discovery School, it was determined by engineers that signals were warranted at 36th and 40th Ave S. The signals were installed last summer. These signals are warranted as per the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTC). The traffic signals must address all modes of transportation. In addition, prior to school opening, a caution beacon was installed at the intersection of Ruemmele Road at 40th Ave S. The implementation of these traffic movement and safety devices has increased safety for children in their way to and from school. It is also expected that the presence of these devices contributes to improvements on driver behavior as they approach S Columbia Rd @ 40th Ave S., the nearest signalized intersection to the Discovery school.

IV. Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety is our Main Concern

A non-fatal traffic accident involving a school child was recently reported in September, 2016. The police report has not yet been made available. The circumstances surrounding this event have not been determined. According to the Grand Forks Engineering Department, this unforeseen event happened almost a year and a half after the signals had been turned on. Installation of the Flashing Yellow was part of the original signal design. Comments received from parents whose children attend Discovery School have made it evident that there are some perceived safety concerns around 40th Avenue South.

The safety of children walking or biking on their way to and from school is of significant importance for all the agencies and departments involved in the Safe Routes to School. Furthermore, a great deal of resources is invested in drivers, pedestrians and bicyclist's education and behavioral modification. Despite the promotion of educational opportunities for the benefit of parent and students; still the intersection has been perceived and described by local media as "a dangerous road." Existing traffic signals with crosswalks on S Columbia Rd at the intersections of 36th and 40th Ave., were part of the original signal design. In addition, they may serve to address parents' concerns on vehicle speeds, and driver's carelessness.

Counting on the 6E's supporting the Safe Route to School program, a number of enforcement, engineering, and educative agencies have been working arduously since school opening day. The objective is to assure a safe and secure walk or bike ride to and from school for children.

V. A Proactive City Approach

At least three non-fatal traffic accidents have taken place in or around the vicinity of the Discovery Elementary School over a year and half after traffic signals were turned on. Consulted staff from the Engineering Department, indicated that the City constantly monitors all traffic control devices, and replaces or upgrades them as needed. Staff also researches new traffic signal technologies and endeavors to apply them in Grand Forks.

In addition, the following activities have been strengthened:

- 1) Law enforcement actively patrols all schools. Law enforcement has an ongoing campaign to educate all drivers on their responsibilities about yielding and slowing down before approaching crosswalks and other safety items.
- 2) The Department of Engineering has changed the flashing yellow left turn signal to green at 40th Avenue and Columbia.
- 3) Safe Kids Grand Forks works constantly to provide education to students and parents on crosswalk safety. This has included educating students crossing at Columbia and 40th during dismissal.

The MPO works closely with the Discovery Elementary School, the Grand Forks School District Administration, Safe Kids Grand Forks, the Community Resources Bureau Grand Forks Police Department, and Grand Forks-East Options Resources for Independent Living, the City of Grand Forks Engineering & Planning Departments and the Advanced Traffic Analysis Center (ATAC) at the North Dakota State University.

The MPO will be advancing a comprehensive Consultant supported School Safety Study. The objective is to assess the current status of a number of recommendations proposed to enhance the safety of school-age children and members of vulnerable populations on their way to and from school, whether biking or walking. Resulting findings will be submitted to the corresponding stakeholders for review and consideration. It is our expectation that sound strategies will be developed and implemented to reduce any type of crash injuries, reduce bicycle crashes at intersections, improve safety awareness and behavior, and increase use of bicycle safety equipment. The objective is to reduce any conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users for the betterment of our communities.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development and implementation of the Discovery Elementary School SR2S Program is a community initiative authorized by the MPO Executive Policy Board. This initiative is funded with federal, state and local resources.

OUR MANY THANKS!

Thanks to the parents, students and administration of the Discovery Elementary School for their cooperation and enthusiasm. Many Thanks to the members of the Steering Committee and Consultant for their dedication and active participation in advancing this initial phase of the Discovery Elementary School SR2S Program:

MEMBERS STEERING COMMITTEE

Ms. Ali Parkinson, Principal, Discovery Elementary School
Mr. Jody Thompson, Assistant School Superintendent, Grand Forks School District
Ms. Jane Williams, City of Grand Forks, Engineering Department
Ms. Patty Olsen, Safe Kids Grand Forks
Ms. Carma Hanson, Safe Kids Grand Forks
Lieutenant, Jeff Burgess, Grand Forks Police Department, Community Resource Bureau (Retired)
Ms. Stephanie Erickson, City of Grand Forks, Planning Department
Ms. Ali Rood, Mobility Manager, Cities Area Transit (CAT)
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Photos: © Kshitij Sharma, 2015

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Discovery Elementary School Safe Route to School study addresses transportation infrastructure, access, safety and mobility for pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-motorized users on the transportation network in proximity to the Discovery Elementary School site. The study provides an assessment of the area's land use, roadway physical conditions, and demographics. The study assesses motorized and non-motorized transportation, traffic operations; as well as roadway geometry, and location and operations of traffic controls within and around school premises.¹

THIS REPORT:

1. Outlines the purpose of the study in the context of the Safe Routes to School program
2. Establishes the objectives supporting the program
3. Describes participating stakeholders by their corresponding "E's" & their relationship to this Initiative
4. Reviews a number of background policy & studies supporting the Discovery Elementary School Safe Route to School
5. Presents an overview of the characteristics of the newly built Discovery Elementary School, and its location
6. Describes the existing site conditions, as observed pre and post construction; as reported by stakeholders; or as discussed at the Steering Committee
7. Reviews a number of recommendations that resulted from the review of the Technical Memorandum Comments prior and post construction; and
8. Presents a brief explanation on the source of funding.

In addition, the following materials are included in the Appendix for the convenience of the reader:

- A brief reference to a pre-construction Traffic Impact Analysis conducted during the planning phase
- Highlights of the pre and post construction observational activities advanced by the Consultant on the school site and adjacent neighborhood's street to improve access to and from school
- Agendas and Minutes from the corresponding Stakeholders Meetings
- Discovery Elementary School Safe Route to School Map.

FINDINGS:

A number of activities to assess existing conditions in and around the school have been advanced in the context of the Discovery SR2S. Data from site and engineering traffic impact assessments, key stakeholder's comments, parents and student's input have been collected and analyzed. The first sections of this report documents those conditions.

A number of recommendations to address site specific or neighborhood-wide barriers have been proposed. Positively, the School Administration has indicated its willingness and steps taken to address them. The pre and post school construction studies conducted by our Consultant have been instrumental in shedding light on site specific barriers, level of service, level of congestion and capacity of the planned street network. Those studies have served to address site-specific sidewalk construction, parking lot design and operation, and related improvements on traffic operations and safety.

¹ Center for Disease Control. Walk This Way! Taking Steps for Pedestrian Safety at <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/PedestrianSafety/>

A number of critical concerns have been brought to our attention either by the administration, stakeholders and/or received from parent's survey feedback. According to responses to the Parent's Survey, the number of students living one mile or further from school is over 55%. According to parent's responses, perceived distance, apparent lack of sidewalks or pathways, perceived traffic and speed on the route, and safety at intersections have the potential to affect parent's decisions to not allow a child to walk or bike to school. In the case of Discovery Elementary, these perceived factors may contribute to low numbers of students either walking or biking to and from school. These factors may include the school location in a newly developing area; distance from residential limits; and reduced transit services.

In order to create solutions, to correlate primary program goals to strategies involving the 6 E's to address the barriers to walking and bicycling identified in and around Discovery Elementary, it is recommended to select at least one or various strategies from each category. In addition, proposed strategies must address barriers to walk and bike around the suggested 2-Miles radius around the school. In part, these solutions may include repairs, replacement or construction of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure or installation of traffic devices.

NOTICE:

The Discovery Elementary School Safe Route to School Study started in June, 2015 and culminated in June, 2016. The purpose of this study is to address safety for pedestrian, bicyclist and other non-motorized users around the walking radius of the Discovery School site.

A Steering Committee was composed of community stakeholders representing the 6E's principles guiding the Safe Routes to School Program. The analysis of Existing Conditions entailed –among others- the consideration of the following: the comments made by parents through the Parent's Survey administered by Safe Kids Grand Forks; distribution of the Safe Routes to School Map produced by the MPO; technical observations by the Consultant at school Opening Day and during a "typical" school day.

However, the most prolific comments were gathered at four meetings of the Steering Committee. As a result, conditions indicated in the Minutes that were deemed "existing" "planned" or "proposed" could have been addressed through the development of the study. As indicated by a stakeholder, providing this notice is important "because comments made over a year ago as planned or proposed now exist; this is a rapidly developing area and as such, those terms referencing a time frame can quite likely be out of date within the time period of the complete draft report."

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Walking and biking bring great benefits for children, their households and their communities. Walking and biking to and from school offers opportunities for children to learn vital independence and responsibility skills. For many, walking to and from school offers enjoyable recreational opportunities. Walking and biking facilitates the learning process of becoming closely familiar with local streets, housing characteristics, traffic and land use patterns and access to parks and neighborhood's recreational facilities.

2. GOALS

The Safe Routes to School Program (SR2S) is part of the Federal Transportation Bill. The program facilitates the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools². The program provides funds to substantially improve the ability of elementary and middle school students to walk and bicycle to school.³ The SR2S is administered by the Local Government Division of the North Dakota Department of Transportation. The goals of the Discovery Elementary School Safe Routes to School Initiative are in accordance to the goals of the United States and North Dakota Department of Transportation Safe Routes to School Program. The objective of these programs is to:

- Enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school
- Make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging healthy and active lifestyle from an early age
- Facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity (approximately 2-mile radius) of primary and middle schools (Grades K-8).
- Increase daily physical activity for children and their families
- Reduce pedestrian and bicycle injuries
- Reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality around schools
- Reduce carbon emissions for a greener school community
- Save families gas (and money!) by reducing car trips.

A desired outcome of the Discovery Elementary School Safe Routes to School Initiative is to facilitate children's access and mobility to other neighborhood destinations every day. Other desired outcomes include, among others:

- More children walking and bicycling to and from schools
- Improved partnerships among schools, local municipalities, parents and other community groups, including non-profit organizations
- Encouragement of healthy and active lifestyles
- Improved community safety
- Reduced fuel consumption⁴

² Safe Routes to School Program Guidelines, North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT)

³ Safe Routes to School Program Guidelines, North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT)

⁴ Safe Routes to School Program Guidelines, North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT)

3. STAKEHOLDERS

The development and implementation of the Discovery Elementary School SR2S Program is a community initiative authorized by the MPO Executive Policy Board. This initiative is funded with federal, state and local resources.

This Discovery Elementary School SR2S Program is advanced in cooperation with vital community agencies and organizations including:

- The Discovery Elementary School Administration
- The Grand Forks School District Administration
- The City of Grand Forks Engineering Department
- The City of Grand Forks Planning Department
- Safe Kids Grand Forks
- The Community Resources Bureau Grand Forks Police Department
- Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- Options Resources for Independent Living (A Non-for-profit; Non-regulatory Agency).
- Consulting services provided by: the Advanced Traffic Analysis Center (ATAC) at the North Dakota State University

In addition, the City of Grand Forks Mayor's Office, offers various community involvement and school-based pedestrian and mobility initiatives. Some community initiatives promoted by the Mayor's Office are advanced in cooperation with the Public Health Department. Those programs promote pedestrian safety. They also strive to improve the health of local pedestrians and bicyclists.

3.1 Study's Approach

Program implementation is based on a six "E's" multidisciplinary approach that includes **E**ducation, **E**ncouragement, **E**nforcement, **E**ngineering, **E**valuation, and **E**quity.

Among others, the program strives to:

- Advance safe walking and bicycling to and from the Discovery Elementary School everyday
- Reduce traffic congestion around school by encouraging walking and biking
- Increase roadway safety for pedestrian and bicyclist by reducing all traffic conflicts with motor vehicles; and
- Contribute to improvement of the health and well-being of the children of Grand Forks.

3.2 Safe Routes to School Principles

The Safe Routes to School is an international movement evolving constantly. Most recently in response to demographic changes in the country, location of new school sites, and concerns for equity and inclusion, the movement has added an E for equity to the traditional 5 E's of Safe Routes to School. As a result, the Discovery Elementary Safe Route to School initiative is designed and advanced according to the following **6** "**E**s" principles.

Accordingly these principles entail:⁵

1. Education

Teaching students and community members about the broad range of transportation choices, and making sure they have the skills and know-how to be safe from traffic and crime while walking, bicycling, and using public transportation.

2. Encouragement

Using events and activities to promote walking, bicycling, public transportation, and physical activity.

3. Engineering

Making physical improvements to the streetscape and built environment that decrease the risk of injury from motor vehicles and discourage crime and violence, increasing street safety for all.

4. Enforcement

Partnering with local law enforcement to ensure traffic laws are obeyed in the vicinity of schools (this includes enforcement of speeds, yielding to pedestrian in crossings and proper walking behaviors), and initiating community enforcement such as crossing guards programs.⁶

5. Evaluation

Monitoring and documenting outcomes and trends through the collection of data, including the collection of data before and after the intervention(s). Evaluation includes assessing which approaches are more or less successful; ensuring that a program or initiative is decreasing health disparities and increasing equity; identifying unintended consequences or opportunities to improve the effectiveness of an approach for a given community.

6. Equity

Ensuring that Safe Routes to School initiatives are benefiting all demographic groups, with particular attention to ensuring safe, healthy, and fair outcomes for students with disabilities, low-income students, Native American students, students of color, female students, LGBTQ students, students whose families speak a language other than English, homeless students, and other demographic groups.

⁵ Safe Routes to School National Partnership at <http://saferoutespartnership.org/blog/6-es-safe-routes-school-embracing-equity>

⁶ SRTS Program Guidelines NDDOT

3.3 Stakeholders by 6 “E’s” & Their Relationship to this Initiative

- **Education**

Safe Kids Grand Forks

Ms. Patty Olsen, Community Resource

Ms. Carma Hanson, Coordinator

The Grand Forks Safe Kids Program has been promoting safe riding and walking strategies for school aged children for over 20 years. The program is advanced in cooperation with local community and corporate stakeholders. Through educational activities, Safe Kids promotes desired behaviors and encourages solutions to potential access, mobility and traffic conflicts observed on school grounds and surrounding streets.

Safe Kids produces “School Drop & Pick-Up” base maps to educate parents and children on concerns related to access to, mobility around and egress from school premises. In addition, Safe Kids promotes proper helmet use, share road, and other children safety initiatives. The agency also advises children and parents on how to exit from passenger vehicles, and wrong directions on school premises. Through its outreach educational activities the agency addresses potential poor driver and student’s behaviors, and traffic congestion. Safe Kids works in partnership with the School Districts in North Dakota and Minnesota.

- **Encouragement**

Discovery Elementary School

Ms. Ali Parkinson, Principal Discovery Elementary School

Mr. Jody Thompson, Grand Forks School District Assistant Superintendent

School programs are advanced in partnership with Safe Kids, Grand Forks’ Office of the Mayor, Department of Public Health and other local agencies interested in children safety and well-being.

City of Grand Forks Cities Area Transit (CAT)

Ms. Ali Rood, Mobility Manager

The availability of transit services is also an important component of the overall Safe Routes to Schools’ accessibility, connectivity and mobility strategies. Cities Area Transit (CAT) is the public transportation provider in Grand Forks, ND and East Grand Forks, MN. CAT provides fixed route bus, ADA paratransit (Dial-A-Ride) and Senior Rider service.

The mission of CAT is to provide quality, affordable transportation, which improves the quality of life and increases the economic vitality of the community. CAT staff works closely with the MPO to plan service modifications and expansions in a fiscally constrained manner.

CAT buses serve every school in Grand Forks, with the exception of Discovery Elementary School.

<http://www.grandforksgov.com/government/cities-area-transit>

- **Engineering**

City of Grand Forks Engineering Department

Ms. Jane Williams, Principal Engineer & Mr. David Kuharenko, Sr. Civil Engineer

The department plans, designs and constructs infrastructure within the right-of-way. It also monitors and accesses the existing transportation plan and updates traffic control devices as needed. Engineering also evaluates the existing system and develops projects to help ensure a “state of good” repair of the local transportation network.

Engineering’s objective is to plan, design and construct safe streets, sidewalks and multi-use paths for all modes of transportation. This is accomplished through land use planning, transportation planning, street design, signing, striping and ongoing monitoring and operation of the transportation system.

The Department of Engineering is responsible for the accommodation of pedestrian and bicyclist according to enacted Ordinances within the city’s roads right-of-way. The department works on establishing safer and fully accessible crossings, walkways, trails and bikeways. It also implements operational and physical improvements to infrastructure adjacent to school premises. The objective is to reduce potential conflicts with motor vehicle traffic.

The City of Grand Forks complies with all federal, state and local laws and regulations including Title VI, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq. Title VI was enacted as part of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. The Engineering Department ensures equity and non-discrimination during the planning, design, construction and operation of the transportation system.

<http://www.grandforksgov.com/government/engineering>

City of Grand Forks Planning Department

Ms. Stephanie Erickson, Planner

The Planning Department assists in creating a high quality living and working environment for the City’s and surrounding residents. The Planning Department assures orderly and harmonious development. It manages growth and development in a manner that supports housing choices and economic development efforts.

The Planning Department protects the quality of life for the residents of all ages; works with other Federal, State and local agencies in planning, programming, and budgeting public transportation, walking/biking infrastructure, utilities and services.

Those objectives are accomplished by planning, designing and programming for the special and temporal interrelationships among resources, facilities, and activities of the community. Through the Land Development Code (Zoning and Subdivision Regulations), the Planning and Zoning Commission, upon recommendation from the Planning and Community Development Department, recommends to the City Council the mix of land uses, the location and placement of all public and private structures, parking needs, landscaping, signage, parks, schools, and roadways throughout the City of Grand Forks and its surrounding area.

<http://www.grandforksgov.com/government/city-departments/planning-community-development>

- **Enforcement & Enactment**

City of Grand Forks Police Department – Community Resources Bureau
Lieutenant Jeff Burgess (Retired)

In partnership with the community, the Community Resources Bureau employs traditional and nontraditional methods to reduce the fear of crime and is proactive in stopping crime and protecting life and property. The Community Resource Bureau's (CRB) objective is to foster a strong relationship between police officers and the Grand Forks community. CRB's main emphasis is to administer community policing programs and activities within the community, to help reduce crime and the fear of crime. CRB's philosophy in reducing crime is to have partnerships with residents, encouraging all residents to claim ownership in the community, thereby working towards a better quality of life for everyone. To aid in achieving this philosophy, CRB officers are specifically trained in school-based programs, community policing, and crime prevention techniques.

This training allows CRB officers to help resolve neighborhood concerns such as illegal drug activity, residential and business safety concerns, as well as neighborhood disturbances and nuisance complaints. Often CRB officers act as liaisons between city residents and various governmental entities.

<http://www.grandforksgov.com/government/city-departments/police-department/police-bureaus>

- **Evaluation**

Grand Forks-East Grand Forks MPO
Mr. Earl Haugen, Executive Director

The MPO is the regional transportation policy-making body enabled by U.S Federal legislation to incorporate the Safe Routes to School (SR2S) program's needs within a competitive funding program called the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). Safe Routes to School was removed as a separate program under MAP-21, but is still an allowable activity under Transportation Alternatives. Most recently, Safe Routes to School projects must compete alongside a range of other types of bicycling, walking, trail, historic preservation, and environmental mitigation projects, instead of having guaranteed funding set aside as it was done prior to MAP-21 with little involvement from MPOs. Given these changes, it is important to examine the impact of the role of MPOs on the availability of funding for Safe Routes to School initiatives and to identify best practices.

Funding from the State-run Safe Routes to School support infrastructure projects like sidewalks, crosswalks, and shared use paths. Although non-comprehensive, the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) also funds eligible non- infrastructure projects including public awareness, traffic education and enforcement, encouragement activities, funding for volunteer training, and safety education.

<http://www.theforksmmpo.org/>

- **Equity**

Options Resource Centre for Independent Living
Mr. Corey Birkholtz, ADA/Accessibility Specialist

Assists individuals with disabilities to live independently in the communities of their choice and strives to eliminate barriers of attitude, architecture and communication. <http://www.myoptions.info/>


Consulting Services:

North Dakota Great Plains Transportation Institute -Advanced Traffic Analysis Center (ATAC).
Mr. Kshitij Sharma, Associate Research Fellow

The Advanced Traffic Analysis Center (ATAC) is one of the main departments of the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute (UGPTI) at North Dakota State University. The UGPTI is the focal point of transportation research, education, and service at NDSU. ATAC's primary role is to provide support to decision makers who are responsible for planning, operating, and funding transportation systems at the local, regional, and state level. To successfully accomplish this role maintains state-of-the-art computer hardware and software; and provides effective facilities for conducting research, training, and service.

<http://www.atacenter.org/>

4. POLICY & STUDIES SUPPORTING DISCOVERY ELEMENTARY SR2S

 number of policy documents and studies attest for the MPO's, City Departments, and other agencies' concerns for the safety and mobility of children and vulnerable populations. The rationale supporting the safety of children walking and biking to and from school and to other community destinations is outlined in the following documents:

4.1 The Grand Forks School Traffic Control Device Strategy (2008)⁷

Concerning the implementation of Safe Routes to School, children's safety is the main concern for the MPO. The MPO provided funding to an engineering consulting firm to evaluate traffic controls, including pavement markings and signage, to identify the need to develop traffic control strategies, and parking issues for private and public schools areas. The study included active public involvement and stakeholder's participation. The objective was to create a more uniform approach to traffic control, and promote a "consistent behavior on the part of the motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists." The report suggests a number of "best practices" in the paving markings, traffic signal controls, flashing beacons, pedestrian countdown and accessible pedestrian signs.

4.2 The 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Update (2013)

The LRTP adheres to the Safety, Accessibility & Mobility planning factors outlined by the tenets of MAP-21. In terms of roadway safety, the objective is to drastically reduce the numbers of traffic fatalities and serious injuries. Consideration for safety includes all modes of transportation, including bicycle and pedestrian mobility. Another goal is related to the condition of the infrastructure supporting accessibility and mobility. The purpose is to maintain infrastructure assets in good repair through the preservation, and improvement of the existing bike and pedestrian system.

4.3 Bike & Pedestrian Plan Element (2013)

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is an element of the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The LRTP has a 25-years horizon, and it is updated every 5 years. The bicycle and pedestrian element states that "the safety of children (while) walking and biking to and from school has been a major concern for the school district, city officials, and parents." Most recently, through the plan update, the Scope of work suggests that the Plan strives to support connectivity to schools, transit network, business and recreational centers. The Bicycle and Pedestrian elements suggest a number of *—how to—* multimodal Mobility Education and trip planning strategies to improve children's walkability and bike ability safety.

As pedestrians—people who travel by foot, wheelchair, stroller, or similar means—are among the most vulnerable users of the road.⁸ Thus, related activities to increase children's safety include promoting the use of safe biking practices such as proper use of helmets; understanding of the use of the road including pedestrian safety; and proper use of crosswalks among others.

The rate of pedestrian deaths generally increases with age. (However); as pedestrians, children are at even greater risk of injury or death from traffic crashes due to their small size, inability to judge distances and speeds, and lack of experience with traffic rules.⁹

⁷ Ulteig Engineers, Inc. (2008) at <http://www.theforksmmpo.org/PDFs/SchoolDeviceFinalReport.pdf>

⁸ Center for Disease Control. Walk This Way! Taking Steps for Pedestrian Safety at <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/PedestrianSafety/>

⁹ Center for Disease Control. Walk This Way! Taking Steps for Pedestrian Safety at <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/PedestrianSafety/>

Note: In 2012, more than one-fifth (22%) of the children ages 5 to 15 who were killed in traffic crashes were pedestrians (Table 3). Children age 15 and younger accounted for 6 percent of the pedestrian fatalities in 2012 and 18 percent of all pedestrians injured in traffic crashes.¹⁰ NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis. Traffic Safety Facts, 2012 Data.

4.4 Grand Forks/East Grand Forks School Safety Study Summary (2014)¹¹

The study was guided by concerns for safety in school areas. Factors contributing to the initiation of this study included:

- First, the objective was to “evaluate pedestrian safety and traffic circulation at each school and provide short and long-term improvements.”
- Second, the study assessed existing conditions around the school sites, and evaluated the improvements proposed since 2004 to 2012 in all the 16 elementary and middle schools located in the planning area.

The assessment used primarily an Engineering approach. Other improvements included Enforcement and Educational initiatives. The study was supported by proactive School District, Law Enforcement agencies, and children's safety advocates. The study considered traffic control, pedestrian activity, parking concerns and pick-up and drop-off areas on or at adjacent areas to schools. Proposed short, mid and long term improvement to address existing conditions included safety and educational activities; increased enforcement of posted speeds, and No Parking zones; repainting and improvement of pedestrian cross-walks, and re-alignment of pick-up and drop-off zones.

Thus far, a number of the recommended short, medium and long-term improvement strategies recommended by Grand Forks/East Grand Forks School Safety Study Summary (2014), have been implemented. However, the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks MPO (GF-EGF MPO) is currently preparing a Grand-cities-wide school-site study to:

- a) Follow up on the implementation of the recommended strategies
- b) Assess existing safety and traffic circulation; evaluate pedestrian activity and parking requirements; and
- c) Assess school's site pick-up and drop-off conditions.

It is anticipated, that the Recommendations Review study will contribute to improvements to bicycle and pedestrian safety; promote more physical activity for students and parents; contribute improve student's health; and will reduce traffic congestion. The proposed Recommendations Review study will be developed in 2016. It will improve bicyclist and pedestrian safety for over 8000 students attending (16) Grand Forks and (3) East Grand Forks Schools. Recommendations resulting from this Discovery Elementary School Initiative will be considered in the upcoming School Safety Study scheduled for Y2106.

¹⁰ NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis. Traffic Safety Facts, 2012 Data

¹¹ Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Safety Study (2014). Advanced Traffic Analysis Center (ATAC) University of North Dakota, Fargo (ND).

4.5 Safe Routes to School Maps (2015)¹²

Concerns for children’s safety, mobility and well-being are reflected in the MPO’s historical involvement in the development and distribution of Safe Route to School Maps. Currently, maps exist for all the sixteen (16) schools in the Grand Forks; and for three (3) schools in the East Grand Forks School Districts.

All the Safe Route to School Maps corresponding to the schools in Grand Forks and East Grand Forks School Districts were updated in 2015 to reflect existing traffic realities at or in proximities to school areas. The maps incorporate children’s walking distance radius and strive to make all features consistent from site to site.

The objective is to provide recommended “safe” routes for parents, students and residents. Current Safe Routes to School identify pedestrian, and bicycle facilities along the route. They also feature a clear view of the location of critical traffic signals: caution beacons, stop signs, safe crossings, signalized intersections; roadways and multi-use paths when available.

The Safe Routes to School Maps are developed by the Grand Forks - East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), in partnership with the City of Grand Forks Engineering Department, the City of East Grand Forks Planning Department, Safe Kids Grand Forks, and the two local school districts. The maps are a guide for parents and caregivers and include safety tips for walking and biking. School Maps are available for download at <http://www.theforksmpo.org/Pages/SafeRoutes2SchoolMaps14.htm>



Photos: © Kshitij Sharma, 2015

Pick-Up/Drop & Parking Lot Areas at Discovery Elementary School, August, 2016

¹² The Safe Routes to School Maps are developed by the Grand Forks - East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), in partnership with several stakeholders including Safe Kids Grand Forks, City of Grand Forks School District, Police, Engineering and Planning Departments.

5. DISCOVERY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OVERVIEW¹³

Young pupils, teachers, administrative support staff, residents, and parents rejoiced on August 31, 2015 on the opening day of the Discovery Elementary School. Directed by Ms. Ali Parkinson, Principal, Discovery Elementary School is a modern facility built and opened in 2015. The school offers kindergarten to grade 5 programs. It currently serves the educational needs of over 300 students. Initially, it will serve 363 students. However, the building is capable to accommodate 700 students in 36 classrooms.

The school was built at a cost of \$15.6 million. The building is imbued with modern educational and technological advancements. These include: an energy efficient establishment; the latest digital resources available; interactive projectors, USB-compatible charging stations; and multiple and mobile furniture.



Credit: http://www.gfschools.org/pages/gfschools/Departments/Buildings_and_Grounds

Discovery Elementary School boasts a 91,988 square foot building. It accommodates 93 parking spaces; and features a dedicated drop-off driveway space for parents. Counting on a partnership with the Parks District, expansion plans include construction of a grass seeded park and playground to be ready by fall, 2015. Future facilities are expected to be completed by 2018.

Recreational facilities including a Park building, hockey and skating rinks, basketball court, and north parking lot are expected for completion by 2017. Other modern amenities include a professional learning commons area; a typical elementary court-size gym; a 260-seats cafeteria; and furniture that support differentiated learning styles. In addition, the school offers more than 250 student desks; 4,400 e-books, 929 chairs; and approximately 12,500 library books.

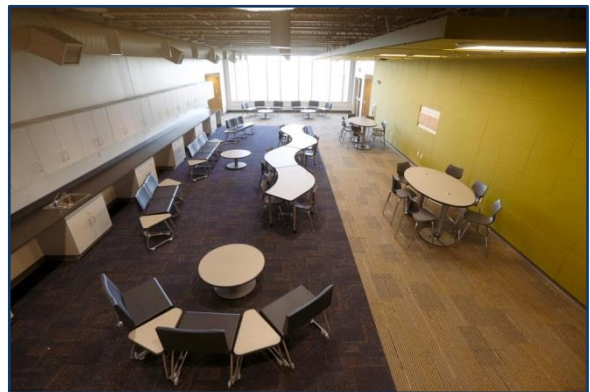
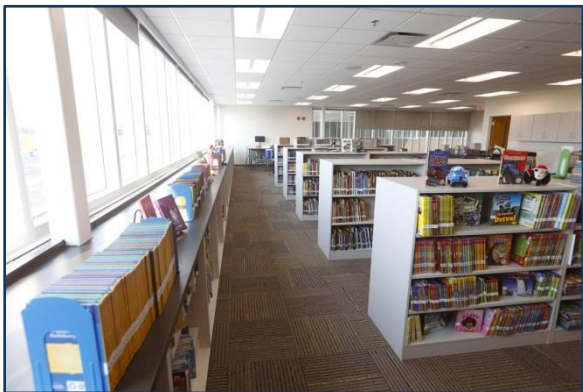
¹³ Summary written with notes from Discovery Elementary Website and TOUR GUIDE: Discovery Elementary set to open as modern education model, Grand Forks Herald, Jennifer Johnson on Aug 14, 2015

In response to growth and development pressures in the south-east of the Grand Forks, Discovery Elementary was built bigger than Century's school initial size. In the near future, it is expected, there will be additional outdoor recreation on the school grounds. In contrast with the existing "old neighborhood" based schools, Discovery Elementary is planned to serve the educational needs of those living in one of the fastest growing local development suburbs; including students previously allocated to Century and Kelly schools. As a result, plans are in place to accommodate future expansion and developments.

In this regard, due to its location and site's footprint, Discovery Elementary is a "suburban" school. Those facilities demand a close examination of the relationship between school location, transportation choices, air quality standards and traffic congestion. The built environment (neighborhood densities, street network, traffic volumes), has the potential to encourage or discourage children's walking and bicycling activities.

Hence, it becomes imperative to identify transportation infrastructure and non-transportation infrastructure barriers and to consider improvements to increase walking and biking as mode of transport. Thus, concerns for the location and installation of traffic controls, management of parking activity, congestion in proximities to school premises, organization of pick-up and drop-off areas on or at adjacent areas to suburban schools have become an imperative in the design of Safe Routes to School Programs.

Modern Amenities Supporting Different Learning Styles at the Discovery Elementary School¹⁴



¹⁴ Source: Photos Discovery Elementary Website and TOUR GUIDE: Discovery Elementary set to open as modern education model, Grand Forks Herald, Jennifer Johnson on Aug 14, 2015

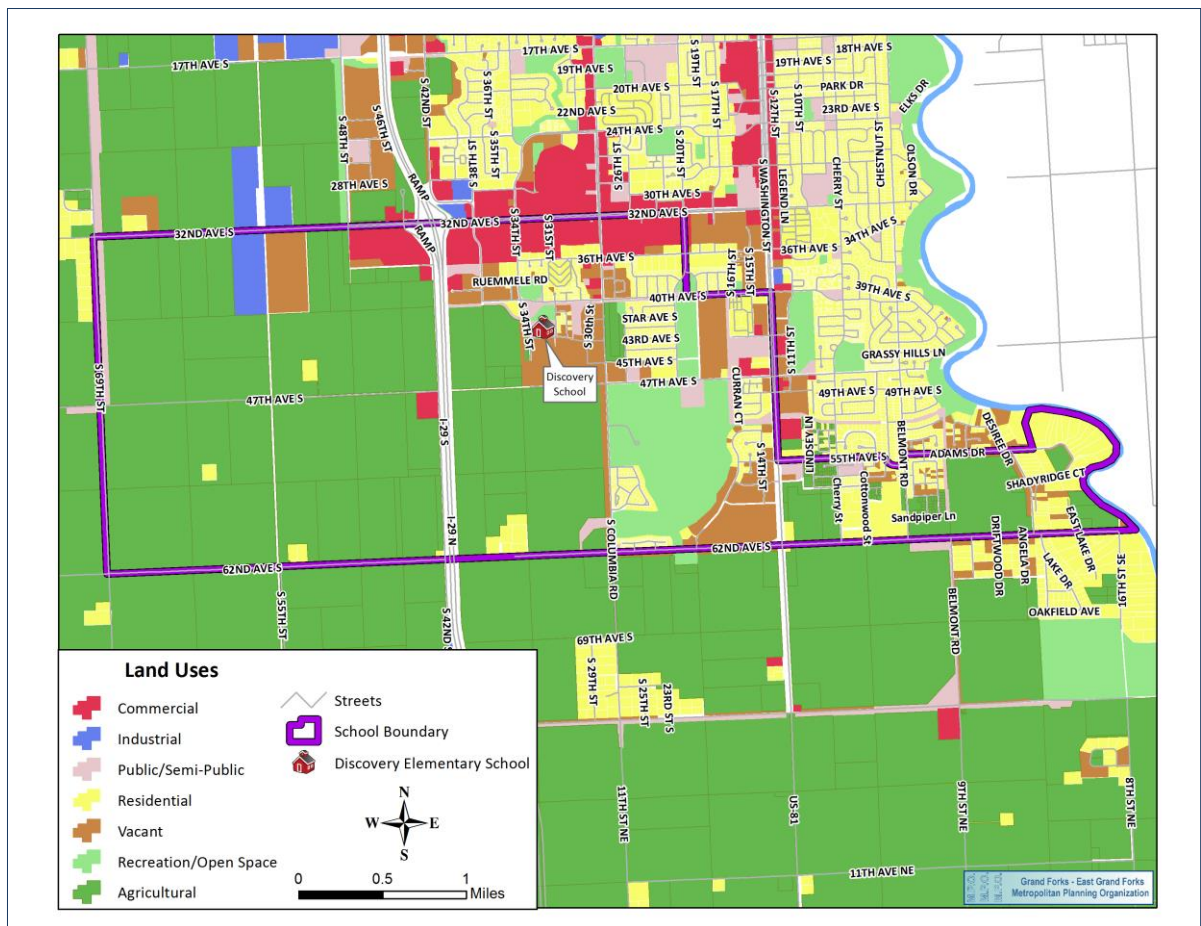
6. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Discovery Elementary School is located in the South-West Grand Forks. The school is located in a 277 acres residential and commercial Planned Unit Development. The area is bounded by Interstate Highway 29 on the west, Columbia Road on the east; South end Drain way on the north, and 47th Avenue South on the south. Map 1 below shows the current boundaries for Discovery Elementary School.

6.1 Land Use & On-site Existing conditions

Currently, the planned neighborhood is under construction. A number of projected school expansion and the construction of remaining streets and proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities, will be realized as the development grows. Map 1: illustrates the School boundary and the existing land uses in proximity to Discovery Elementary School.

Map 1: School Boundaries & Existing Land Uses in Proximity to Discovery Elementary School



6.2 Site Location

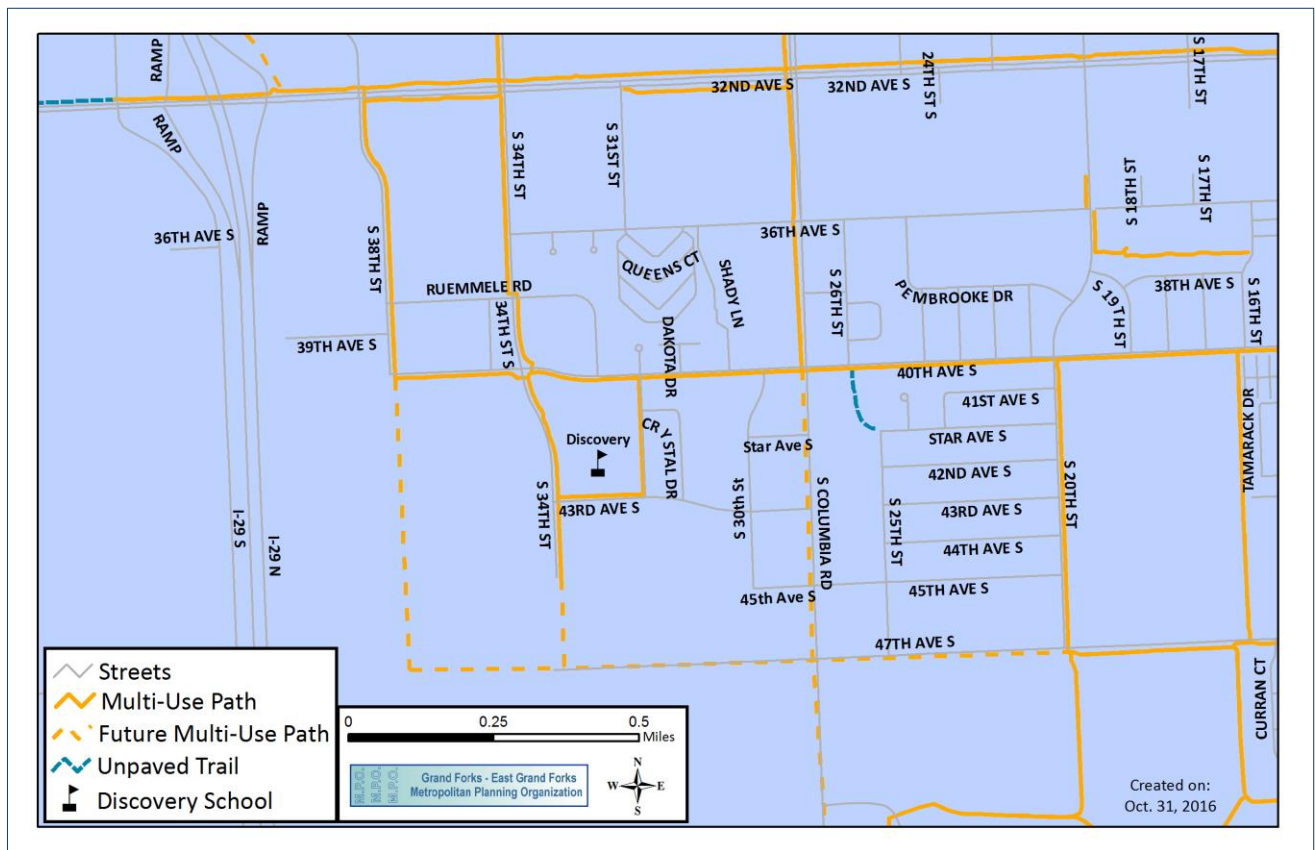
The Discovery Elementary site is anchored in the Southern States “Planned Unit Development.” See Map 2.

Table 1: Existing & Proposed Shared Use Paths & Pedestrian Facilities by Functional Classification¹⁷

STREET	FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION	EXISTING	PROPOSED*
South 38th St.	Minor Arterial	8 foot-wide SUP located on the east side of South 38th Street terminating near the Southend Drainway.	PENDING: Extend east 8 foot-wide SUP to 47th Avenue South
		5 foot-wide sidewalk located on the west side of South 38th Street terminating near the Southend Drainway.	PENDING: Extend west 5 foot-wide sidewalk to 47th Avenue South
South 34th St. (At least all facilities extend as far as 40th Ave S.)	Collector	8 foot-wide SUP located on the west side of South 34th terminating at 36th Avenue South.	Shared Use Path will be extended south to Ruemmele Road as part of the South Pointe Apartment project. DONE ✓
		5 foot-wide sidewalk located on the east side of South 34th Street terminating midway between 36th Avenue South and Ruemmele Road.	Consideration should be given to moving the SUP to the east side of South 34th Street south of Ruemmele Road so it could be used for Kiwanis Park and the proposed elementary school at South 34th Street and 43rd Avenue South. DONE ✓
		SUP will be extended south to Ruemmele Road as part of the SouthPointe Apartment project	PENDING: Shared Use Path would extend south to 47th Avenue South. Minimum width would be 8 feet,
		10 foot-wide SUP located on the west side of South Columbia Road terminating at 36th Avenue South. Extends to 40th Ave. S.	PENDING: Extend 10 foot-wide SUP south to 47th Avenue South.
S Columbia Rd.	Principal Arterial	5 foot-wide sidewalk located on the east side of South Columbia Road terminating at 36th Avenue South	PENDING: Extend 5 foot-wide sidewalk south to 47th Avenue South.
40th Ave. S	Collector	10 foot-wide SUP located on the south side of 40th Avenue South between Ruemmele Road to South Washington Street	Extend SUP west from Ruemmele Road to South 38th St. DONE ✓
		5 foot-wide sidewalk located on the north side of 40th Avenue South from Ruemmele Road east to Clearview Drive	Extend sidewalk west from Ruemmele Road to South 38th Street DONE ✓
47th Ave. S	Minor Arterial		PENDING: Extend Shared Use Path and Sidewalk from termini east to Interstate.
Other Streets	Local		
			PENDING: Construct 5 foot-wide concrete sidewalks on each side of the street.
			PENDING: Sidewalks to be constructed at the time of construction on the lot.
*According to the Grand Forks Department of Engineering, sidewalks cannot be installed prior to the construction of driveways and the installation of utilities. Installing sidewalks prematurely can create safety issues later, the idea is to have all of the construction vehicles, and excavations done before establishing a pedestrian path.			

¹⁷ Source: City of Grand Forks Land Use Development Code, Article 9.

Map 3: Existing & Future Multi-use Paths in Proximity to Discovery Elementary School.



6.3 Technical Memoranda & Reports on Existing Conditions at the Site

In addition, site specific existing conditions were studied and documented through the following Technical Memoranda and Reports:

6.3.1 CPS, Ltd (2013) Utility, Paving & Park Planning Document –Southern States Development, Grand Forks

The purpose of the document is to provide utility, paving and park information of the development. The document outlines key elements –that when built- have the potential to support Safe Routes to School and other mobility initiatives. The document defines prospective streets and pedestrian facilities; discusses park dedication and illustrates the planned bikeways (Shared Use Paths – SUP) within the development. For more information on established Access Controls, see: City of Grand Forks Land Use Development Code, Article 9.

6.3.2 New Elementary School Study –Phase 1 Technical Memo, May 2, 2013 (School Traffic Safety Review)

The objective is to estimate how many trips flow from or to a specific area to another within the region. The analysis used a geographic unit called a transportation analysis zone (TAZ). This unit is regularly used to create trip generation rates for the proposed area.

As a “planned unit development” the purpose of the analysis was to “anticipate” how the planned or existing road network would behave once the site is developed. The study was advanced to provide a “reasonable” or “plausible” response to the following questions:

- a) Take a closer look at the area’s land use characteristics;
- b) Estimate how many trips will people make?
- c) Estimate where jobs and people will locate?
- d) Assess how will people travel? And
- e) Evaluate what routes will people take?

The study is important for the planning of safe routes to school. It forecast which stretches of the roadway network will attain acceptable level of operation in and around the school site. Attained results may contribute to the selection of roadway segments more appropriate for mobility of non-motorized transportation.

6.3.3 GF-EGF New School Study Phase II: Comments & Recommendations on Site Plan_130912¹⁸

The MPO requested ATAC’s comments on the proposed draft site plans (Concepts 5.1 and 5.2) for the new school. The objective of the Study Review were to determine physical site conditions that may prevent pedestrian and bicyclist from having conflicts with vehicular traffic either at access points, visitors and staff parking lots, or pick up and/or drop areas within the school premises.

The comments were divided into two sections – Phase 1 comments (with respect to Concept 5.1) and Phase 2 comments (with respect to Draft Site Plan Concept 5.2).

The complete reports are available in the Appendix for the interested reader. Among others, the analysis addressed the following concerns:

Phase 1 (Draft Site Plan Concept 5.1)

- The driveway on the south side of the site
- The diagonal parking on the south side of the drop-off lane
- The short-term/visitor parking
- Exclusive left-turn into the campus from 43rd Ave S
- Exclusive left- and right- turn lanes out of the campus leading to 43rd Ave S
- It is recommended that a sidewalk be placed from the NE corner of the school along the north side of the driveway to 32nd Street.
- It is recommended that the parking spot on the entry driveway (closest to 43rd Ave S) be eliminated.

Phase 2 (Draft Site Plan Concept 5.2)

- Exclusive left- and right- turn lanes out of the campus leading to S 34th St.
- Feasibility study of midblock crossing (or a crosswalk at the exit driveway on the west) to cross S 24th St north of 43rd Ave S.

In addition, the report addressed the following concerns:

¹⁸ ATAC (2013) GF – EGF New School Study Phase II: Comments & Recommendations on Site Plan_130912

- Short-term visitor's parking and parent drop-off/pick up
- Bus operations, including the orientation and location of bus zones; service drives; and separation of bus operations from adjacent parking lots.
- Pedestrian and Bicyclist movements anticipating conflicts with vehicular traffic, and access according to proposed plan.
- Site Selection/Design, internal vehicular movement, roadway widths and proposed sidewalks.

The final plans were reviewed by Consultant (ATAC) after seeing the final construction of the school building layout. This concern will likely lead to the use of the street network to loop back to the entrance which will lead to parking on the street and possibly double parking in the one-ways.” The complete reports are available in the Appendix for the interested reader. Upon request, a draft Technical Memorandum Comments on Concepts 5.1 & 5.2 (November, 2013) is also available. However, this report states that “pedestrians/bicyclists should not have conflicts with vehicular traffic. Also, pedestrians/bicyclists should not have to walk/bike between parked vehicles.

- Bicycle access should be included in the site plan. Also, facilities should be provided for bicycle access and storage.

The new site plan can be re-visited with Safe Kids Grand Forks’ comments to decide where students should be directed to mitigate any remaining conflicts. Pedestrian desire lines should be kept in mind during the re-designing efforts. Bicycle traffic will likely be coming from the northeast where the current trail is located. If the bus and service access is moved to the West side (as discussed above) there will be an opportunity for the bike and pedestrian traffic from the NE to not have any conflicts. Similarly, pedestrians/bicyclists coming in from other directions also need to be considered while re-designing the site plan.”

6.4 School Site Characteristics

Figure 1. School Site Concerns



Source: Discovery Elementary School Website

- School access/driveway and parking characteristics**

The school has a total of 4 driveways providing access to two surface parking lots (two driveways per lot). The driveways for the east parking lot are one-ways. Both of the driveways are located on S 32nd St.

The driveways for the south parking lot are one-way and have two lanes. The entry driveway is located on 43rd Ave S and the exit driveway is located on S 34th Street. The right lane in the driveway is pick-up/drop-off only lane and the left lane is designated drive-through.

- Traffic control**

The traffic movements into the school driveways are controlled. The movements out of the school are all stop-controlled. The single lane exits for the east parking lots (onto S 32nd St) are shared between left-and right-turning vehicles. The two-lane exits from the south parking lot (onto S 34th St) have an exclusive left- and right-turning lane.

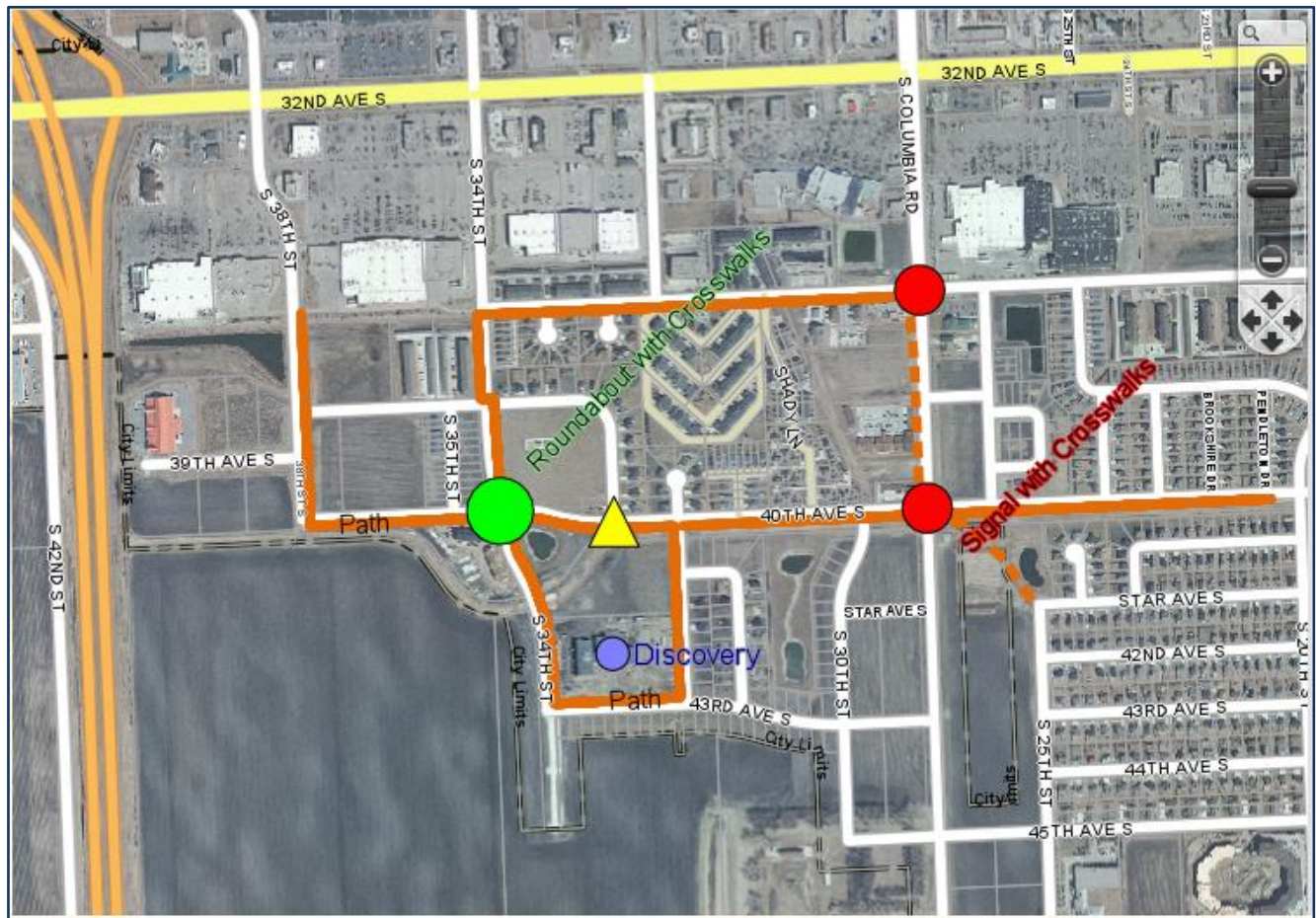
Intersections in close vicinity of the school are listed in table 4 below.

Table 2: Intersections in close vicinity and their traffic control.

Intersection	Type*	Control
43 rd Ave S @ S 32 nd St	3-way	At S 32 nd St., stops for 43rd Ave.S
43 rd Ave S @ S 34 th St	4-way	At 43 rd Ave S., stops for 38th St. S
40 th Ave S @ S 32 nd St	3-way	At S 32 nd St., stops for 38th Ave S.
40 th Ave S @ S 34 th St	4-way	Modern roundabout
* In addition, all intersections have marked school crosswalks and appropriate signage, school signing, posted speed limits and other required traffic control devices.		

The nearest signalized intersection to the school is S Columbia Rd @ 40th Ave S.

Map 4: School Related Signalized Intersections & Traffic Controls



Credit: Jane Williams, Principal Engineer, City of Grand Forks, ND Engineering Department

- Arrival/dismissal activities

The pick-up/drop-off takes place at both south and east parking lots. The east parking lot is used for arrival/dismissal of K & 1st grade students. The east parking lot is now used for arrival/dismissal of kindergarten students. The south parking lot is used for arrival/dismissal of 1-5 grade students.

- Operational/Safety characteristics School staff



School staff was observed helping students get to their respective buses/vehicles. This contributed the most to student safety and traffic safety. Photos: © Kshitij Sharma, 2015

- **Bus operations**

The buses were staged in a single-file fashion on the west side of the east parking lot. The buses entered from the north driveway and exited through the south driveway. Up to 3 buses were observed picking up students. Two of the buses were Type A and one was of Type C configuration.* See note below.

- **Type of School Buses in Service**

Type A Configuration



The Type A school bus is made of a bus body constructed upon a cutaway front-section vehicle with a left driver's door, designed to carry 10 or more people.

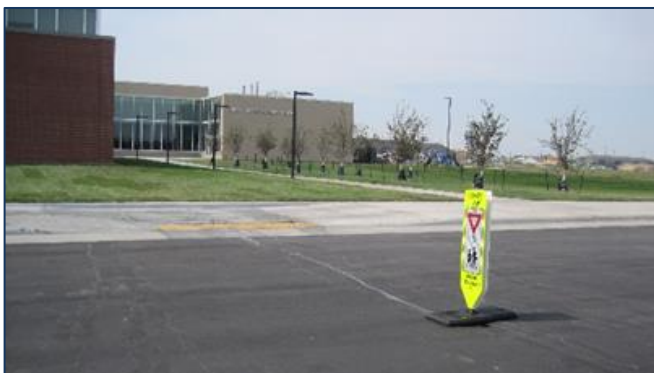
Type C Configuration



The Type C school bus is what many people imagine when they think of a “traditional” school bus. Often called a “conventional” bus, the body is installed upon a flat-back cowl chassis with gross vehicle weight rating of more than 10,000 pounds, designed for carrying more than 10 persons.¹⁹

- **Dismissal – East side**

There are two dismissal points at the site: East Side, and South Side. Dismissals are arranged according to school grade.



The East parking lot is used for arrival/dismissal of Kindergarten students. The crosswalk on this lot is clearly painted. Photo: © Kshitij Sharma, 2015

¹⁹ Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons. Text at <http://www.americanbussales.net/seven-different-school-bus-types/>

- **Dismissal – South side**



The south parking lot is used for arrival/dismissal of 1-5 grade students. Photo: © Kshitij Sharma, 2015

As time progressed, the queue grew and eventually wrapped around the nearby intersection of 43rd Ave S and S 32nd Street. Some vehicles were unable to turn into the school driveway prior to dismissal and hence picked up students out on 43rd Ave S. No double parking was observed and there was only one incident where a student was picked up in the drive-thru lane. No parents were observed alighting from their respective vehicles.

- **South parking lot use**

In addition to the driveway, the South parking lot is currently being used for arrival/dismissal of 2-5 grades. A few parking spaces were seen available a couple of minutes into dismissal. The parents and students were observed using the marked/raised crosswalk to get to/from school entrance. Photos: © Kshitij Sharma, 2015

- **East parking lot use**



Several safety concerns arise due to the concurrent use of East parking lot for multiple modes of transportation. All busses park on the south side of the east lot. Parents are no longer required to walk between buses. Photo: © Kshitij Sharma, 2015

A couple of vehicles were observed picking up students along the South edge of the parking lot. Note that this edge does not have a sidewalk forcing the cars to be parked a few feet away from the curb. This further hampered maneuverability of buses through the tight space left between parked cars.

Photo: © Kshitij Sharma, 2015

- **Crossing guards**



A crossing guard was seen posted at the marked/raised crosswalk located in the South driveway. The students/parents and drivers were observed obeying the instructions of the crossing guard.

Photo: © Kshitij Sharma, 2015

- **Bike usage**



A number of bikes were observed parked at the bike racks located in the southwest corner of the East parking lot. The students were observed walking their bike out of school during dismissal. Photo: © Kshitij Sharma, 2015

- **Driver behavior**

Except for a few incidents (on-street pick-up, pick-up at no parking area in east parking lot, pick-up in drive-thru lane in South driveway, and vehicles parked in no parking zones on surface streets), courteous, calm, and compliant driver behavior was observed. For example, the parents have been instructed to walk their children to- and from- the waiting area in the east parking lot and no violations of this instruction were observed during dismissal. Despite spillback onto 43rd Ave S and S 32nd Street, no double parking was observed in the South driveway.

- **Student behavior**

Except for a few incidents of running in the crosswalk, obedient student behavior was observed. Students were observed keeping behind marked lines designated as waiting areas.

- **Short-term improvement strategies**

Short-term improvement strategies listed below are recommended for immediate implementation. These would alleviate several traffic safety and operational concerns.

- **Exclusive parking lot use**



The East parking lot must be exclusive to buses and staff. No pick-up/drop-off activity should take place in the East parking lot. The south parking lot must be exclusive to pick-up/drop-off activities and visitor parking.

Photo: © Kshitij Sharma, 2015

- **Staggered dismissal procedure**

Note that the total duration of dismissal (at current level of enrollment and staff strength) was approx. 12 minutes. A dismissal procedure where class dismissal times are staggered between 2:50 pm and 3:00 pm is highly recommended.

Some rules for exceptions (e.g. for siblings in different grades) may be required and can be set as deemed fit by the school staff. Such dismissal procedure would undoubtedly lengthen the dismissal time. However, it would result in higher level of traffic safety and better traffic operations on campus.

- **Addition of bike racks**

A cement paved area was installed for bike racks on the South-East corner of the East parking lot.

- **Sidewalk installation**

A sidewalk has been installed along the South end of the East parking lot.

- **Ramps for school crosswalk**

Ramps for the school crosswalk located at Crystal Drive were found to be missing during the dismissal observations. Since the time the observation took place, that ramp has been installed. Job has been done.

- **Long-term improvement strategies**

As the school district grows and there is more housing built within the school boundaries, additional resources, including staff would be required. Depending on the timing when the school is expected to reach full capacity, the following strategies must be considered for continued high levels of traffic safety and smooth traffic operations.

- **Continuation of short-term improvement strategies**

It is recommended that certain short-term improvement strategies be adopted for long-term. These include exclusive use of parking lots and staggered dismissal procedures.

- **Additional parking**

Additional visitor parking lot may be constructed on the Northwest side of the school site. This parking lot must be downstream of the loading/unloading area and must be designated exclusively for visitor parking (for a limited time period). If constructed, the driveway to the parking lot should line up with the future street planned along S 34th St.

Additional staff parking may be required and an expansion of the east parking lot must be looked into accordingly. The South parking lot may need expansion as well, depending on whether or not the additional parking lot in the northwest is built.

6.5 Traveling Conditions as Reported by Students and Parents

The National Safe Routes to School collects information about student's travel to and from school at the classroom-level. Data collection is part of an on-going comprehensive effort to collect information about student travel, important concerns, and parental attitudes. Data is collected through the Student's Tallies and Parent's Surveys.

The results will help determine how to improve opportunities for children to walk or bike to school, and measure parental attitude changes as local SRTS programs occur. Data collection serves to evaluate the Safe Route to School (SR2S) program before a series of transportation infrastructure improvements and educational programs are enacted.

However, according to the New Jersey Department of Transportation,²⁰ the findings presented are not necessarily representative of the entire school-based population and are intended to be directional in nature. The survey response rate did not produce results that are statistically significant. The intention of the survey is to learn the behavior of students walking and biking to school. While the findings are descriptive, they do not necessarily represent the walking and biking behaviors of the broader population.

6.5.3 Student's Tallies

This activity was advanced by Safe Kids Grand Forks in cooperation with the Discovery Elementary School. The tabulation of the complete results was shared with the members of the Steering Committee in attendance. See Appendix for the Tallies Report.

The Highlights of the Student's Tallies include:

Summary Student's Tallies	
• Discovery Elementary School	• Participating Classrooms: 19
• Data Collected on : October, 2015	• Report Generated on: November 16, 2015
• % Students reached by SRTS Activities: 76-100	• School Enrollment: 350 Students

The Tallies include information on the following variables:

²⁰ New Jersey Safe Routes to School Parent/Caregiver Survey Report, Metuchen, New Jersey, 2014

a) Comparison Morning and Afternoon Travel by Mode

Based on the number of trips, (80%) children primarily arrived at the school in the morning; and (72%) departed from school by family vehicle in the afternoon. About 4% (bike) and 3% (pedestrian) arrived at, or departed from school in the morning or afternoon time. About 8% of the students arrived to or departed from the school by using School Buses.

b) Comparison Morning and Afternoon Travel by Day

Morning or afternoon trips by day (Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday), remained slightly the same. On Wednesday morning, there was an increase on total number of trips. However, those either arriving at or departing from school by bicycle and pedestrian trips remained the same.

c) Comparison Morning and Afternoon Travel by Weather

Number of trips changed significantly by weather condition. Trips were higher for overcast conditions (1898) comparing to Sunny (363), Rainy (0), or Snow (0). During the overcast day, Trips were higher by family vehicle (77%). On the same overcast weather conditions, bicycles (6%) and walking (3%) trips remained the same.

6.5.4 Parent's Surveys

The Parent's Survey²¹ was administered by school staff. The survey serves to collect information about student travel patterns; and strives to capture important information on parental attitudes on whether kid's bike and walk trips are appropriate.

For instance, important written comments made by parents are included in the report. Among others, these include: roadway safety; pedestrian/bicyclist crossing safety at the Columbia Road at 40th Street intersection level; location of school site; school parking lot, and children's drop-off or pick-up. Those comments will be analyzed and addressed through the recommendations and proposed initiatives –if appropriate.-

The survey results will help determine how to improve opportunities for children to walk or bike to school, and measure parental attitude changes as local SRTS programs occur. Safe Routes to School programs are required to administer the survey in order to become eligible for federal Safe Routes to School funding.

See Appendix for the Parent's Survey Report. The Highlights of the Parent's Survey include:

Summary Parent's Surveys	
• Discovery Elementary School	• Participating Classrooms: 19
• Data Collected on : 16/11/2015	• Report Generated on: 12/2015
• % Students reached by SRTS Activities: 76-100	• # Questionnaires Distributed: 375
• #Questionnaires Analyzed:113	• Response Rate: 30%

²¹ The questionnaire was in English. Versions of the same questionnaire are available in Arabic, Chinese, and other languages.

A summary of the survey's results shows:

Participating children were 40% female and 60% male as indicated by their parents. Kindergarten (22) students represented the larger group (22%) followed by 4th graders (21) (19%). The estimated distance from school was more than 2 miles for (31%); 1 mile up to 2 miles for (24%); and ½ mile up to 1 mile for (23%) of the students. The typical mode of arrival (75%) and departure (61%) from school is by the family vehicle. Considering the arrival and departure by distance the child lives from the school, the prevalent mode, was the family vehicle. The longer the distance the greater the percent of those using family vehicle.

The percent of children, who has asked for permission to walk or bike to/from school, declines, according to the distance they, live from school. The further the distance the lower the number of students walking or biking to school. When asked for permission, Yes corresponds to 83% of children living less than ¼ mile; and to 25% of children living ¼ mile up to ½ mile.

Accounting for children that did not ask for permission to walk or bike to/from school, No corresponds to 17% of children living ¼ mile; and 75% corresponds to children living ¼ up to ½; 81% corresponds to children living more than 2 miles away.

The decision not to allow a child to walk or bike to/from school by parents of children who do not walk or bike to/from school is affected by a number of factors. Among others, include perceived: a) Safety of intersections and crossings (68%); b) Speed of traffic along route (68%); c) Amount of traffic along route (65%); d) Distance (63%); and e) Weather or climate (61%).

The decision to allow a child to walk or bike to/from school by parents of children who already walk or bike to/from school is affected by a) Safety of intersections and crossings (73%); b) Sidewalks or pathways (73%); Distance (64%).

Parents' opinions about how much their child's school encourages or discourages walking and biking to/from school indicated that 57% remained neutral (neither encouraged nor discouraged). Parent opinions about how much fun walking and biking to/from school is for their child was neutral for 34%; fun for 30% and very fun for 21%. Parents' opinions about how healthy walking and biking to/from school is for their child were very healthy for (57%) and healthy for (25%).

A number of comments were provided by parents. Concerns dealing with distance to/from school, intersection safety, school's location, road safety were considered as some of the factors preventing children from walking and biking to/from school. Complete survey results are in the Appendix.

6.6 School Observation Assessment

The following comments are the result of the School Observations conducted on August 31st (First Day of School); and on October 14, 2015 (Typical Day at School/Pick-up observations). These comments were shared with members of the Steering Committee at the Meeting held on December 7th, 2015, and go along with the attached PowerPoint presentation.

6.6.1 First Day of School

- First day of school was chaotic (traffic wise), as expected. A lot of parents wanted to take pictures in front of the south entrance to the school.

- Most vehicles came from the northeast of the school site. On 40th Ave S north of school traffic queued from east of S 32nd St on 40th Ave S to the north of the school site. Although, not allowed, vehicles were parked on 43rd Ave S, S 32th St., and S 34th St as well in addition to residential streets in the vicinity of the school (e.g. Crystal Dr).
- The school bus, due to vehicles parked on both sides of S 32nd St and uncourteous drivers, could not turn into the school driveway during drop-off. Children were dropped off on street by the bus.
- In the east parking lot, the parents walked their children to and from their cars as instructed by the school staff. There was no double parking in the south driveway.

6.6.2 Typical Day at School (On-site Children's Pick-up Observations)



Approx. 15 minutes prior to dismissal, buses are seen staged in the east parking lot and cars are seen lined up in the south driveway.

Photo: © Kshitij Sharma, 2015

The temporary crosswalk sign was observed in the east parking lot. Note that there is a ramp on the school side of it but it leads to a parking spot on the other side.

A number of bikes were observed in the bike racks. Encouragement programs advanced by the Discovery Elementary School in partnerships with other local organizations appear to have achieved positive results.



During dismissal, the school staff was observed actively assisting children. The staff was observed coordinating with school bus drivers and parents to ensure student safety. The children seemed obedient and stayed behind the yellow lines marked on the perimeter around the school. Photo: © Kshitij Sharma, 2015



Parents were seen walking their kids to and from their cars in the east parking lot. Photo: © Kshitij Sharma, 2015



A few incidents were observed where students were picked up in the No Parking Zone in the east parking lot making it tricky for buses to maneuver around them. Photo: © Kshitij Sharma, 2015

Approx. 12 minutes prior to dismissal, spillback from the queue in the south driveway was observed. The queue then grew and was observed extending onto S 32nd St north of 43rd Ave S. The south parking lot filled up just a couple of minutes into dismissal. As a result some children were picked up on 43rd Ave South. Photo: © Kshitij Sharma, 2015

A few illegally parked vehicles, probably belonging to construction crews working nearby, were seen parked on S 32nd St.

- The ramps south of Crystal Drive have been installed.
- Voluntary Crossing Guards helped students safely cross the raised crosswalk leading into the south parking lot.
- The duration of dismissal was approx. 12 minutes.
- A gravel path was installed by the City. Also, according to statement from Safe Kids, the path is safe for biking and walking. The school and Safe Kids brought up safety concerns due to lack of a grate on the box culvert under Columbia Rd at 40th Ave S. According to the Grand Forks Engineering Department, the installation of a grate to prevent children from using the culvert as a conveyance is not recommended. In addition, please notice that in the past, a stakeholder advocating for the mobility of disable people and others, has questioned the compliance of the gravel pathway with the American with Disability Act. The City of Grand Forks is compliant with ADA. In terms of firmness, stability and slip resistance, the gravel path has been built according to ADA regulations.

6.7 Existing Conditions as discussed at the Steering Committee

This section presents a brief summary of the comments on existing conditions brought to the attention of the members of the Discovery School SR2S Steering Committee. Some comments have been adjusted to reflect their status. Comments are arranged by corresponding meeting. Complete Meetings are available in the Appendix.

6.7.1 First Meeting (Monday, July 13, 2015)

- A gravel path is being added from the west end of Star Ave S to the sidewalk on the south side of 40th Ave S. This is to provide an outlet for that subdivision and a clear path around the storm water collection pond.
- Sidewalk and Bike path along S. Columbia Rd. (36th to 40th Ave S). This project consists of constructing sidewalks and bike paths along S. Columbia Rd. between 36th and 40th Ave S. A 10 foot wide multi-use walk will be installed along the west side and a 5 foot wide sidewalk along the east side.
- Traffic signals will be added on S Columbia Rd at the intersections of 36th and 40th Ave S
- A caution beacon has been added at the intersection of Ruemmele Rd and 40th Ave S.

6.7.2 Second Meeting (Monday, September 14, 2015)

- Roundabout (Tall weed interfering with visibility)
- Traffic concerns on school premises
- Drainage ditch being used as an underpass by some bicyclists-
- Proposed construction on Columbia Road Proposed underpass
- Suggested sidewalk construction on north side of school premises

6.7.3 Third Meeting (Monday, December 7, 2015)

- Student's Tallies Results & Parent's Survey Results
- School Observations: Aug 31st – First Day of School
- School Observations: Oct 14th – Typical Day at School (Pick-up observations)

6.7.4 Fourth Meeting (Wednesday March 16, 2016)

In total, 11 recommendations (included in this report) were made back in November, 2013. At the MPO request, ATAC put together the current status, implication of the current status, and school staff comments. The review aimed at addressing the following on-site related conditions:

- Length of spill over parking on-site
- Diagonal Parking on-site
- Short term parking location on-site
- Short term parking spaces on-site
- Exclusive left-turn lane to school at 43rd Avenue South

- Exclusive right & left-turn to school at South 34th Street
- Sidewalk on north side of parking lot on-site
- Raised cross-walk connecting sidewalks on the north and west side of the east parking lot
- East parking lot use by buses (recommended for exclusive use for staff and buses)

All the proposed recommendations, including initial traffic impact analysis studies were performed before and after school construction. Supporting engineering justifications were submitted for consideration of staff at Discovery School.

6.8 Existing Conditions as Reported by Stakeholders

6.8.1 School Safety Patrol

The school administration would like to consider establishing a more permanent school guards program at Discovery Elementary. However, these are some considerations to the program:

- a) Lack of funding available to cover expenditures by the school district
- b) Lack of volunteer personnel to take care of the crossings
- c) For school staff volunteering as Crossing Guards, the perception is that the school is located too far away from the intersection of 40th at Columbia Road. It is apparent, the staff crossing guards cannot leave school early enough to get to 40th and Columbia due to their responsibilities in the school.

6.8.2 Safety at Intersections

School District is still interested in the construction of an underpass at 40th at Columbia Road. Children have continued using the culvert as a passage way. Children are still going through the culvert; this situation is potentially dangerous. Parents have expressed concern about this intersection to the school administration. The school district has voiced this traffic concern throughout the past Safe Routes planning meetings.

When considering the concerns voiced by the School District, the stakeholder representing the Engineering Department brought the following concerns to those in attendance:

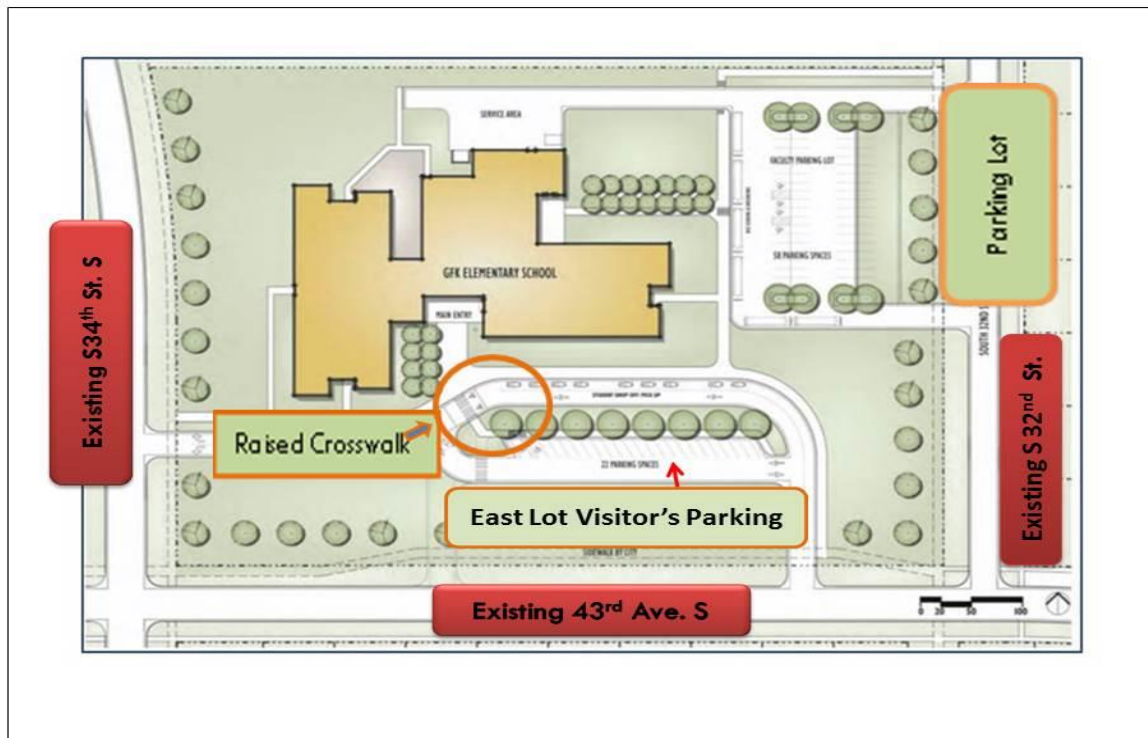
- Need to advance a due diligence study
- Need to develop the main concept design
- Existing physical constraints (at site location)
- Need to request warrants to consider the underpass including the need for mitigation
- Required right of way could be more than existing right of way available
- Consider whether the project is or could be eligible for federal funding; and
- Gas main remains a concern. Its presence could impact the design of required underpass.

According to the School District, perceived roadway's area speed continues being a factor preventing children from safely walking/biking to/from school. It is proposed that in the event 43rd becomes an intersection, that a flashing crossing walk system be added. It was discussed whether the system was Hawk or a Beacon System)?

However, according to the stakeholder representing the City of Grand Forks, Engineering Department; the traffic control signal at 43rd and Columbia has not been determined, it depends on how the east side of Columbia develops, it could possibly be a traffic signal (most likely; but must be studied to ensure warrants have been met). The interested reader is invited to read attached minutes for a complete discussion on the topic.

6.8.3 On School-site

Figure 2: On-site Existing Facilities



- School District plans to set sidewalk on east side of bus pick-up leading up to 32nd by spring
- Raised crosswalk on East side of parent's drop of by June or spring 2016. Other needs include adding parking availability for school events; and parking on Northside
- Conflicting movements on parking lot (parents, buses, staff)
- Crystal Drive missing ramp: The accessible ramps at Crystal and S 32nd St are being installed next summer
- School District is recommending fencing of the retention pond.

6.8.4 Comment Period (Columbia Road from 40th to 47th Avenue South)

Notices inviting residents to participate at the Public Comment process for the construction of Columbia Road from 40th to 47th Street were sent to all listed property owners in the area. During the design phase of the Columbia Rd – (40th Ave S to 47th Ave S) letters requesting public comment were sent to all of the recorded property owners in the area; the registered property owner for parcel 44296900005001 (future Discovery School site) is Grand Forks Public Schools with an address of 2400 47th Ave S, Grand Forks. A question arose during a meeting as to where the notice was sent. Staff verified it had been sent to the record property owner.

According to the stakeholder representing the City of Grand Forks, Engineering Department, the public notice was mailed to the Grand Forks Public Schools. In addition, a follow-up notice on October 22, 2015 was sent via e-mail to emergency services, schools and transit staff (Mike Ferguson, Gina Hardley, Dale Bergman, Bruce Hoeger, Ali Parkinson, and Nancy Dutot) to make certain there was awareness of the project and of the detour routes. Still, School District would like consideration to the given to an underpass at 40th at Columbia Rd. However, several steps must be considered:

- Warrants for an underpass
- Federal funding (If federal funding was not available then it would be local dollars and most likely would include an assessment district.)
- Feasibility Studies
- Gas main/other constraints.

6.9 Equity

Equity is the newly adopted “E” as a SR2S goal. The objective is to assure mobility and accessibility for users with restricted mobility options, and for students with disabilities to the transportation system. A report by the ADA/Accessibility Specialist indicates that:

- The routes connecting the neighborhoods to the Discovery School provide good accessibility for people with disabilities in most areas.
- There is a temporary crushed rock trail system connecting the neighborhood east of Columbia Street and south of 40th Avenue South which will continue to need to be monitored for maintenance attention in order to ensure it remains a firm, stable and slip resistant surface as this type of temporary surface tends to deteriorate due to the weather conditions in our area. See photos below.
- Another concern which may cause difficulty for some people who use mobility devices is the installation of very steep curb ramps along 40th Avenue South. See example of curb ramp near 40th Avenue South and Pendleton Drive which has a slope between 15.4% and 17.4% and is almost twice the allowed 8.33% slope allowed on curb ramps.

This could cause a person using this curb ramp who is in a wheelchair to be unable to independently propel up the ramp or when coming down the ramp be to be either high centered and stuck or have their foot plates hit the roadway and eject them from their wheelchair. See graphic below and photos and graphic in attached PDF.²²

²² Photos supplied by Resource Center for Independent Living.

Mobility and Accessibility for Users with Restricted Mobility Options



Existing Gravel Path

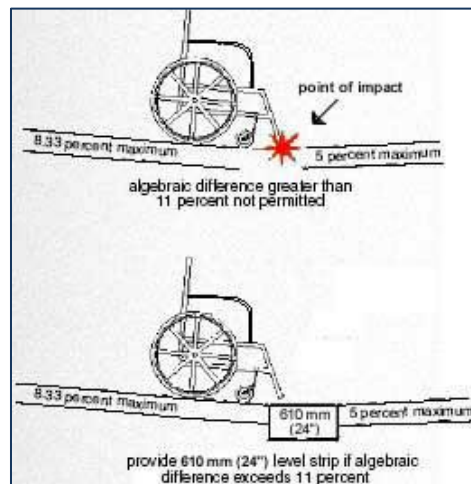


Curb Ramp near 40th Avenue South and Pendleton Drive



Curb Ramp near 40th Avenue South and Pendleton Drive.

(Photos supplied by Resource Center for Independent Living).



Wheelchair Graphic Obtained from: US DOT Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access Part II of II: Best Practices Design Guide.

7 RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

The recommendations listed below, are meant to improve the children's safety on their way to and from school.

7.8 Recommendation Review: Current Status

These recommendations resulted from the review of the Technical Memorandum Comments on Draft Site Plan Concepts 5.1 & 5.2 submitted by ATAC in November 2013. This review includes the current status, implication of the current status, and school staff comments.

Concern # 1	Recommendation	Status	Implication
Length school loading & unloading zone	45 car lengths	28 car lengths	Queue spillover onto 43rd Ave S/S 32nd St
Staff Comments	This is not an issue at the 8am arrival time. This is only an issue at the 3pm pick up time. We continue to educate parents on an "airport loop" philosophy where we ask that parents slowly drive thru the passing lane 1 time if no parking spots are available until a curbside parking spot is available.		

Concern # 2	Recommendation	Status	Implication
Diagonal Parking on-site	Not recommended	Not built	None, concern resolved.
Staff Comments	No diagonal parking necessary		

Concern # 3	Recommendation	Status	Implication
Short-term parking lot	Short-term parking to be downstream of loading/unloading area	Built somewhat past loading/unloading area	
Staff Comments	We currently have a visitor parking lot that parents use at 3pm. All of these spaces are filled each day until about 3:05 pm. An additional visitor lot is recommended on the south side of the current visitor lot. This would allow visitors to park facing north or south. The spaces in the visitor lot are not full at arrival time at 8am. All of the visitor lot spaces are used during school events. Parents also use this lot when picking up their child mid-school day for appointments.		

Concern # 4	Recommendation	Status	Implication
Exclusive left-turn lane out of school @ S 34th St	Okayed as per consultant concept	Built	Potentially improved traffic operations and safety
Staff Comments	No concerns with parents turning left on to 34th street at arrival or dismissal time.		

Concern # 5	Recommendation	Status	Implication
Exclusive left-turn lane in to school @ 43rd Ave S	Okayed as per consultant concept	Built	Potentially improved traffic operations and safety
Staff Comments	This left turn lane to enter the drive thru lane works well at the 8am arrival time. It sometimes becomes backed up at the 3pm dismissal time as parents wait to turn into the curb side parking lane instead of using the drive thru passing lane. We continue to educate parents on an “airport loop” philosophy where we ask that parents slowly drive thru the passing lane 1 time if no parking spots are available and loop around until a curbside spot is available.		

Concern # 6	Recommendation	Status	Implication
Exclusive right-turn lane out of school @ S 34th St	Okayed as per consultant concept	Built	Potentially improved traffic operations and safety
Staff Comments	Parents sometimes have concerns turning right on to 34th street at the 3pm dismissal time if cars are back up trying to enter the 43rd Ave. drive thru lane. No concerns turning right on to 34th street at the 8 am arrival time.		

Concern # 7	Recommendation	Status	Implication
Sidewalk on north side of parking lot	Recommended (Sidewalk on north side of lot)	Built	Students arriving on foot/bike don't have to cross driveway potentially eliminating conflict point, leading to better traffic safety
Staff Comments	A bid is in progress for the district to have this completed in the spring/summer of 2016.		

Concern # 8	Recommendation	Status	Implication
Raised crosswalk connecting sidewalks on the north and west side of the east parking lot	Recommended	Not built	If the driveway leading to the north entrance of the school is in use during drop-off/pick-up, this may lead to decreased safety due to reduced visibility of students in the crosswalk
Staff Comments	A bid is in progress for the district to have this completed in the spring/summer of 2016.		

Concern # 9	Recommendation	Status	Implication
Driveway @ S 34th St	Recommended to be built further north, lining up with a future street	Built to the south	Reduced stacking length resulting in queue spillback. Also, potential future safety/operational concerns due to staggered access from opposing legs (school + future street) onto S 34th
Staff Comments	Currently no concerns with the 34th street driveway during arrival, dismissal and/or school events.		









Concern # 10	Recommendation	Status	Implication
East parking lot use	Recommended for exclusive use of staff and buses.	Currently being used for K-1 pick-up/drop-off. In-pavement crosswalk sign being used on an unmarked crosswalk. Far end of same crosswalk leads into a parking space.	Safety concerns arising from concurrent use by multiple modes of transportation.
Staff Comments	We added safety patrol and teacher supervision to this area at dismissal time for K & 1st grade students who are picked up at this location at 3pm. Continued education occurring with K & 1st grade parents and bus drivers to prevent concerns. No concerns with 8 am arrival time. Busses arrive at 7:30 am, prior to parents dropping off students. A majority of parents drop off their child in the front of the school drop off lane. Ideally if an additional parking lot was built for staff and if ample parking spots were available for parents to park, it would alleviate some of the current congestion in the east parking lot.		

Concern # 11	Recommendation	Status	Implication
East parking lot used by buses	Bus staging okayed as per consultant concept	Concurrently being used by buses and for K-1 pick-up/drop-off.	Parents and students have to walk between parked buses. Multiple conflict points introduced which could potentially lead to crashes/safety concerns.
Staff Comments	The sidewalk has been installed on the northeast sidewalk.		

7.2 School & Community-Based Programs Supporting Safe Routes to School Programs

Based upon Principal's opinion, the following are the "Essential and Medium Priority" School & Community-based programs that the Discovery Elementary would like to see implemented to improve on the safety of the pedestrian and bicyclist on their way to and from school. These programs could contribute to successfully support the SR2T program at Discovery School:

Table 3: School & Community-Based Programs Supporting Safe Routes to School Programs

Support Activities	1- Not a Priority	2- Low Priority	3-Medium Priority	4-High Priority	5-Essential
Crossing Guards					
Student Patrol					
Parent Patrol					
Staff Presence During Drop-off/Pick-up					
Law Enforcement Support					
Neighbourhood Watch Program					
Walking School Bus					
Bike Train					

8 FUNDING SOURCES

The Safe Routes to School Program is administered in North Dakota by the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) through the Local Government Division. The program uses a multi-disciplinary approach and works with public school authorities and staff, parents and other community-based groups identifying and improving on the ability of elementary and middle schools to safely walk and bike to and from school.

2012 SR2S rolled into TAP. Application for funding is no longer a separate process. Special Provisions of the program require that all projects within a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) funded by the SR2S Program must be programmed in a Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Applicants are encouraged to work with community-based partners, and to focus the project on its ability to meet the SR2S Program Goals. Eligible programs include transportation infrastructure projects like sidewalks, crosswalks, and shared use paths, as well as non-transportation infrastructure projects including traffic enforcement, encouragement activities, and safety education. Funding is provided for Non-Transportation infrastructure Projects.

10. APPENDIX

10.1 Technical Memoranda & Reports

10.2 Students Tallies & Parents' Surveys

Disclaimer:

- Survey questionnaires produced by National Safe Route to School Program.
- Parents' responses indicate their perceptions.
- Results are descriptive. No inferential statistical analysis was performed.

10.3 Agendas & Minutes Steering Committee

discovery school srts report body final reviewed nov15_2016
November 15, 2016

10. APPENDIX

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10.3 Agendas & Minutes Steering Committee

discovery school srts report body final reviewed nov10_2016
November 10, 2016

10. APPENDIX

10.1 Technical Memoranda & Reports



*A Center of the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute
North Dakota State University*

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Earl Haugen, GF-EGF MPO
FROM: Kshitij Sharma, ATAC
Subject: **New Elementary School Study Phase I**
Date: May 2, 2013

This memorandum documents the Travel Demand Analysis and Intersection Capacity Utilization/Level of Service Analysis performed for the new elementary school planned at the intersection of 40th Ave S and S 34th St in Grand Forks.

BACKGROUND

A new elementary school is proposed in the south-east quadrant of the intersection of 40th Ave S and 34th St S as shown in Figure 1 below. The Grand Forks-East Grand Forks MPO (MPO) intends to address potential traffic operations and traffic safety issues around the proposed site before the school is expected to be open (Fall 2015). This elementary school is located within a new 288 acre development. The development includes approx. 1300 residential units. The school is ultimately expected to have approximately 600 students. The scope of Phase I of this project is to determine how much of the proposed street network is required to provide adequate mobility when the school opens for its first session.

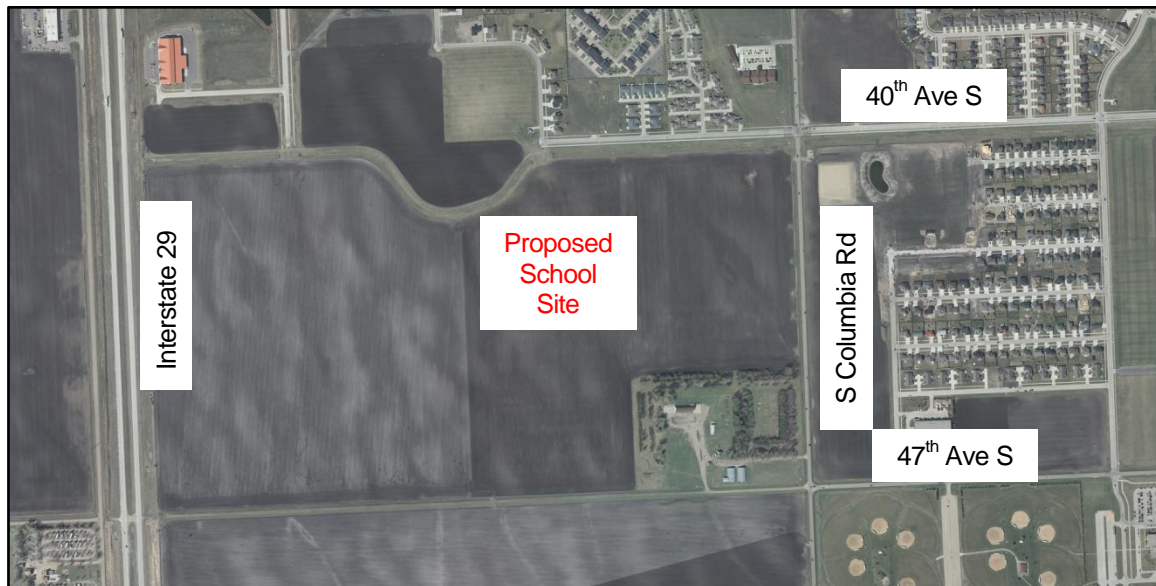


Figure 1 Proposed Elementary School Site

Advanced Traffic Analysis Center

NDSU Dept. 2880, P.O. Box 6050, Fargo, ND 58108-6050
Telephone 701-231-8058 | Fax 701-231-6265 | www.atacenter.org

METHODOLOGY

The 2010 Regional Travel Demand Model (Base Model) was compared to the 2015 Regional Travel Demand Model (Hybrid Model). The 2010 model was used as base since it is the most up-to-date Travel Demand Model for the Grand Forks East Grand Forks MPO. Figure 2 below shows a snapshot of the base network with respective ADTs.

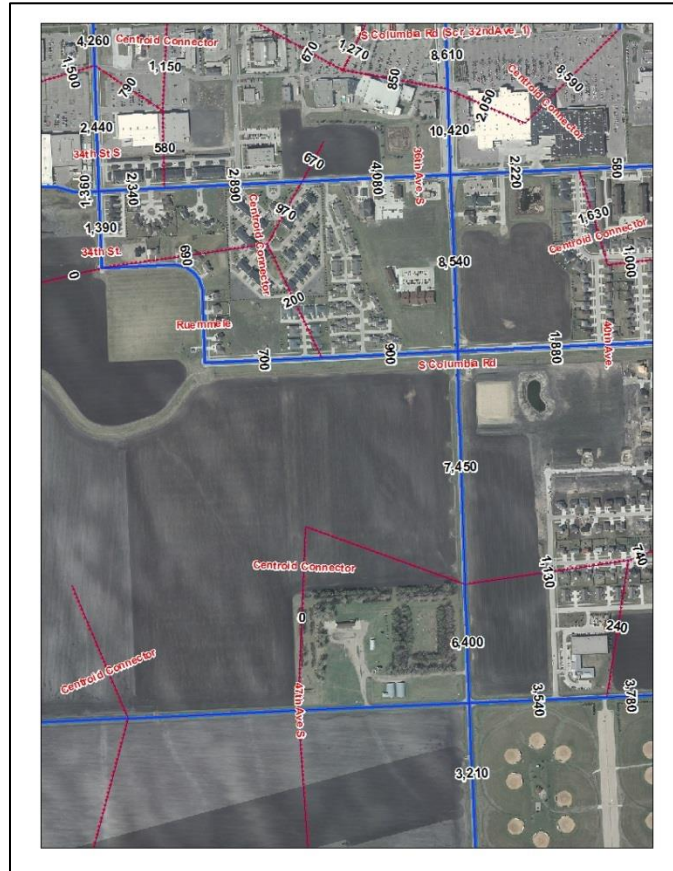


Figure 2 2010 Base Network with ADTs

The Hybrid Model was created by making changes to the Base Model. The changes included:

- ✓ Traffic Growth
 - From 2010 to 2015
- ✓ Geometric Improvements
 - Existing + Committed
- ✓ Expected Socioeconomic Changes between 2010 and 2015
 - As reported by MPO
- ✓ Local Developments
 - School Site
 - Park
 - Residential
 - Commercial
 - Street Network

In addition to the base 2010 model, the Hybrid Models are specifically based on the following assumptions:

➤ **Concept 190**

The MPO provided ATAC with a proposed concept referred to as Concept 190. The concept showed various proposed zones and street network. It also included an interchange at 47th Ave S. However, the interchange was not modeled in the 2015 hybrid model.

➤ **2015 TIP**

A subarea was strategically selected around the zone with proposed school and development. The zones selected are shown in figure below:

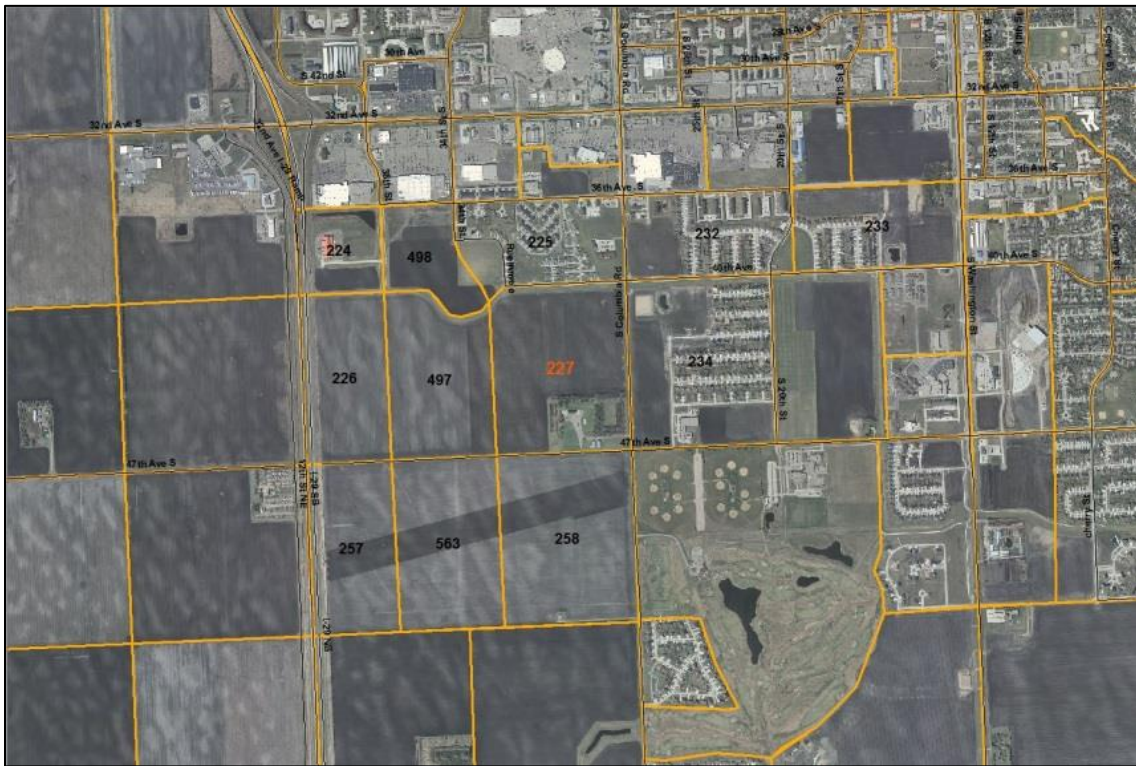


Figure 3 Selected TAZs

The 2015 TIP provided by the MPO, with respect to the selected zones, was then used to create the hybrid 2015 model. No major changes affecting the selected subarea were committed to be completed by 2015. Also, the TIP did not include an interchange at 47th Ave S, which is why it was not included in the model despite being shown in Concept 19O.

➤ **2015 Socioeconomic data**

The MPO provided ATAC with the 2015 socioeconomic data for the transportation analysis zones (TAZs) around the school. Part of the data included the following:

Table 1 Socioeconomic data per Transportation Analysis Zone

TAZ	HOUSING15	1pHH15	2pHH15	3pHH15	4pHH15	5pHH15	6pHH15	7pHH15	TotalEmp15	Service15	Retail15	Other15
224	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	19	21	0
225	210	44	90	46	13	4	4	1	61	58	0	3
232	407	109	143	76	38	9	0	2	20	18	0	2
233	451	30	80	60	80	50	10	0	0	0	0	0
234	209	22	60	30	67	17	3	3	263	219	42	2
227	51	14	21	6	5	2	0	0	48	40	8	0
226	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
258	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
563	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
498	150	71	48	16	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
497	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
257	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Where;

npPHH15 = n person(s) per household (1-7 person households) for year 2015

TotalEmp15 = total employment for each TAZ for year 2015

Service15 = number of service jobs per TAZ for year 2015

Retail15 = number of retail jobs per TAZ for year 2015, and

Other15 = number of other jobs per TAZ for year 2015.

Critical intersections within the subarea were then selected for further analysis. Note that the selected intersections are along S Columbia Rd (Principal Arterial). Also, 47th Ave S is a Minor Arterial and 40th Ave S is classified as a Collector.

Peak period intersection turning movement counts were obtained from respective Travel Demand Model (Base AM, Hybrid 1 PM etc.). The peak period consisted of two (2) hours each for both AM & PM peaks. The peak period traffic volumes were reduced to peak hour traffic volumes by using national average peak hour factors. The peak hour factors used were:

- AM Peak Hour Factor: 0.566
A Peak Hour Factor of 0.566 means that 56.6% of the peak period traffic travelled during the peak hour.
- PM Peak Hour Factor: 0.51
A Peak Hour Factor of 0.51 translates to 51% of the peak period traffic travelled during the peak hour.

The output obtained from the Regional Travel Demand Model did not account for truck traffic. Therefore, using engineering judgment, 4% of truck traffic was assumed for every movement within the subarea intersection analysis. Note that the data obtained from the City of Grand Forks shows less than 2% truck traffic at a major intersection in the vicinity of the subarea.

The selected intersections were then analyzed using Intersection Capacity Utilization (ICU) and corresponding Level of Service (LOS) evaluation procedures. For details on individual intersection evaluations refer to Appendix 1.

MODELED ALTERNATIVES

Hybrid 2:

- In addition to the 2010 base network, Hybrid 2, in accordance with concept 19O, includes:
 - All of Hybrid 1
 - S 34th St from Ruemmele Rd to 45th Ave S
 - 43rd Ave S from S 34th St to S Columbia Rd
 - S 32nd St from 40th Ave S to 43rd Ave S
 - 45th Ave S from S 34th St to S Columbia Rd
 - S 34th St from 45th Ave S to 47th Ave S

Hybrid 2a:

- In addition to the Hybrid 2 network, Hybrid 2a is based on assumption that the north- and south-bound approaches on the following intersections will have exclusive left-turn lanes:
 - S Columbia Rd and 40th Ave S
 - S Columbia Rd and 43rd Ave S
 - S Columbia Rd and 45th Ave S
 - S Columbia Rd and 47th Ave S

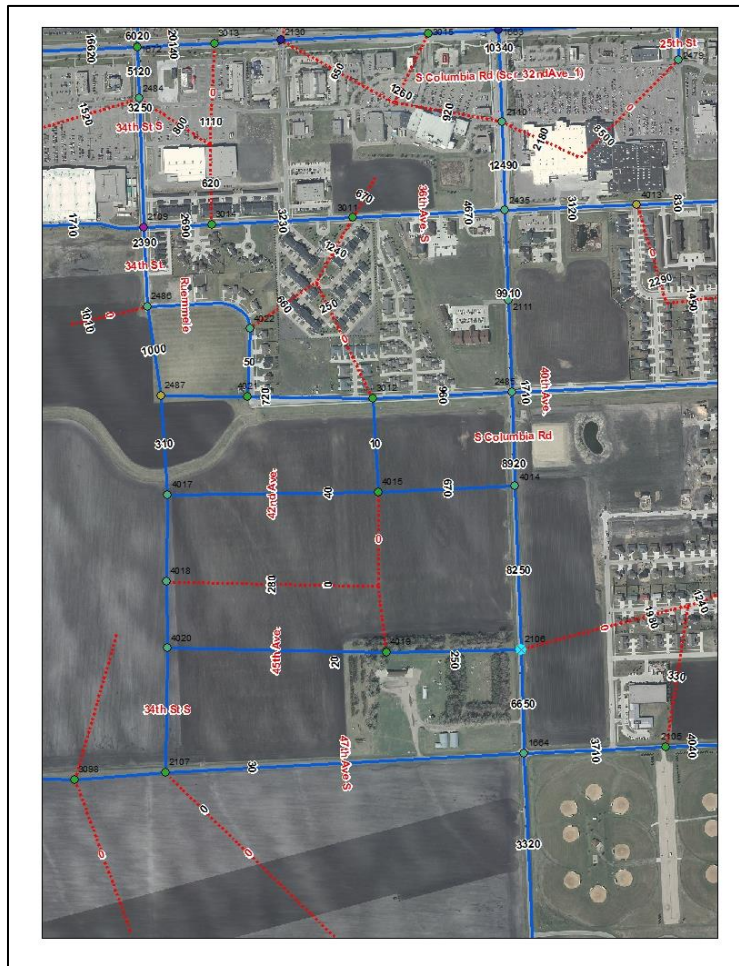


Figure 5 Hybrid 2 GIS Network

RESULTS

As mentioned earlier, critical intersections within the subarea were analyzed beyond Travel Demand Modeling using Intersection Capacity Utilization and corresponding Level of Service evaluation procedures. The base conditions analysis included the following intersections:

- 36th Ave S and S Columbia Rd
- 40th Ave S and S Columbia Rd
- 47th Ave S and S Columbia Rd

Additional intersections, in line with those proposed in Concept 19O, were included for analysis in the hybrid alternatives. These included:

- 43rd Ave S and S Columbia Rd
- 45th Ave S and S Columbia Rd

The summary of ICU & LOS results of respective intersections are presented in the tables below:

Table 2 Intersection Capacity Utilization and Level of Service Results (AM Peak Hour)*

Intersection	AM									
	Base		Hybrid 1		Hybrid 1a		Hybrid 2		Hybrid 2a	
	ICU	LOS	ICU	LOS	ICU	LOS	ICU	LOS	ICU	LOS
S Columbia Rd & 40th Ave S	54%	A	65%	C	58%	B	62%	B	57%	B
S Columbia Rd & 47th Ave S	43%	A	61%	B	56%	B	67%	C	32%	A
S Columbia Rd & 36th Ave S	75%	D	72%	C	72%	C	72%	C	72%	C
S Columbia Rd & 43rd Ave S	n/a	n/a	75%	D	51%	A	57%	B	50%	A
S Columbia Rd & 45th Ave S	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	66%	C	43%	A

Table 3 Intersection Capacity Utilization and Level of Service Results (PM Peak Hour)*

Intersection	PM									
	Base		Hybrid 1		Hybrid 1a		Hybrid 2		Hybrid 2a	
	ICU	LOS	ICU	LOS	ICU	LOS	ICU	LOS	ICU	LOS
S Columbia Rd & 40th Ave S	48%	A	101%	G	79%	D	99%	F	68%	C
S Columbia Rd & 47th Ave S	35%	A	46%	A	42%	A	65%	C	55%	A
S Columbia Rd & 36th Ave S	83%	E	82%	E	82%	E	69%	C	69%	C
S Columbia Rd & 43rd Ave S	n/a	n/a	48%	A	41%	A	43%	A	36%	A
S Columbia Rd & 45th Ave S	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	58%	B	32%	A

*Note: LOS based on intersection capacity utilization and not control delay. Refer to Appendix 4.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

AM Peak Period

As can be seen in the table above, all the hybrid scenarios considered for AM Peak Hour analysis are feasible. Thus, when the new school opens its doors in 2015, the following stretches of roadways are not necessary to attain acceptable levels of operations in and around the new school site:

- 45th Ave S between S 34th St and S Columbia Rd
- S 34th St between 45th Ave S and 47th Ave S

PM Peak Period

As is evident from the table above, Hybrids 1 and 2 show congested conditions during the pm peak hour. The LOS F indicates that the intersection may require a cycle length of over 120s to meet the demand at all the approaches. It also indicates that the intersection would likely experience congestion (during the pm peak hour). LOS G indicates even worse conditions where road users may begin to seek alternative routes due to the congestion experienced during the respective peak hour. Also, unconventionally long cycle length of over 120s may be necessary to be able to serve the demand existing at the intersection.

Hybrids 1a and 2a, on the other hand, are feasible as they represent acceptable operational conditions. Similar to the AM analysis, it can be seen that the construction of the abovementioned stretches of roadways is not necessitated by the school site alone. This is assuming that the base condition of hybrids 1a & 2a is met (exclusive n/s left turn lanes at intersections along S Columbia Rd). However, it is understood that the construction may be necessary to provide access to other developments in the area such as housing, commercial etc.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: ICU Analysis Spreadsheets

Appendix 2: Concept 19O

Appendix 3: 2015 TIP

Appendix 4: ICU & LOS Descriptions

GF – EGF New School Study Phase II: Comments & Recommendations on Site Plan_130912

Short-term/Visitor Parking and Parent drop-off/pick-up

- Short-term/visitor parking spaces should be located past the student loading/unloading area and near the building entrance. Also, parking areas (student, staff, visitors, and buses) should be separated from student loading/unloading areas.
 - Student loading should occur in designated zones to minimize pedestrian/vehicle conflicts. Currently, visitor parking appears to be upstream of the loading/unloading area.
- It appears that the on-site vehicle stacking length for parent pick-up/drop-off is not adequate. For reference, consider the following recommendations:

Location/Agency	Student Population	Loop Drive Stacking Length
Texas	500 or more	750' – 1,500'
SCDOT	200 – 600	900' – 1,200'
	600 – 1,400	1,200' – 1,500'

- Note that the minimum parent drop-off/pick-up queue length is estimated to be 1,000 ft. The stacking length must, therefore, be longer than that.
 - The new pick-up/drop-off and visitor/short-term parking should be designed keeping in mind that enough stacking length is provided.
 - Setting the building further back from the street would also help. Other option could be to have one of the playgrounds in the front.
 - The additional building setback would also increase storage length for vehicles exiting the campus. It is estimated that there will be as many as 45 vehicles on campus during the PM pick-up period. This includes both vehicles waiting to load students and those waiting to exit the campus.
 - A higher setback will also discourage curbside parent pick-up and drop-off along the streets abutting the campus.
 - In case setting the building further back is not feasible, provision of another driveway may become necessary.
- If there is adequate space for the estimated queue length and visitor/short-term parking then we should try to avoid the extra conflicts associated with an additional access to the street.
- It is recommended that the exit from the parent drop-off/pick-up be designed with two lanes for exclusive left-turn and right-turn movements.
- It is also recommended that an exclusive left-turn lane be provided for movement into the campus.

Bus Operations

- The orientation and location of bus zones, parking, drop-off zones, service drives, and playfields should be such that it does not require pedestrians to cross vehicular traffic lanes.
- The bus pick-up and drop-off should be separated from parking lots as well as any pedestrian/bicycle movement. According to the current site plan, the parking on the east side

will conflict with bus traffic (a vehicle – pedestrian conflict exists in the current plan) and should thus be redesigned.

- Although the current site plan meets the recommendation of providing access from two adjacent streets, access could also be provided through 34th St.
 - Having an additional access on 34th St could help simplify and facilitate the separation of transport modes leading in and out of the school.
 - The service access could be moved to the additional access on 34th St.
- Each parking stall for a full-size bus shall be a minimum of 15 ft. wide. Currently they are 11 ft. wide.

Pedestrian/Bicyclist Movements

- As mentioned above, pedestrians/bicyclists should not have conflicts with vehicular traffic. Also, pedestrians/bicyclists should not have to walk/bike between parked vehicles.
- Bicycle access should be included in the site plan. Also, facilities should be provided for bicycle access and storage.
 - The new site plan can be re-visited with Safe Kids Grand Forks's comments to decide where students should be directed to mitigate any remaining conflicts. Pedestrian desire lines should be kept in mind during the re-designing efforts.
 - Bicycle traffic will likely be coming from the northeast where the current trail is located. If the bus and service access is moved to the West side (as discussed above) there will be an opportunity for the bike and pedestrian traffic from the NE to not have any conflicts. Similarly, pedestrians/bicyclists coming in from other directions also need to be considered while re-designing the site plan

Site-Selection/Design

- The combined site size appears to be pretty close to the recommended site size of 16 acres.
- Provide a paved standing area for 25% of the student population next to the main student entry area.
 - Paved area should be enough to accommodate 150 students. Check for adequacy.
- Internal two-way roadways should have a minimum width of 26 ft. face-to-face of curb, or 24 ft. edge-to-edge for an uncurbed facility. Check to see if this recommendation is met.
- Except at pick-up/drop-off locations, sidewalks shall be kept a minimum of 5 ft. away from roadways. Check to see if this recommendation is met.
- All internal traffic movements should be preferably one-way. Parking should be designed accordingly.

10.2 Students Tallies & Parents' Surveys

Student Travel Tally Report: One School in One Data Collection Period

School Name: Discovery Elementary

Set ID: 18939

School Group: Grand Forks Public Schools

Month and Year Collected: October 2015

School Enrollment: 350

Date Report Generated: 11/16/2015

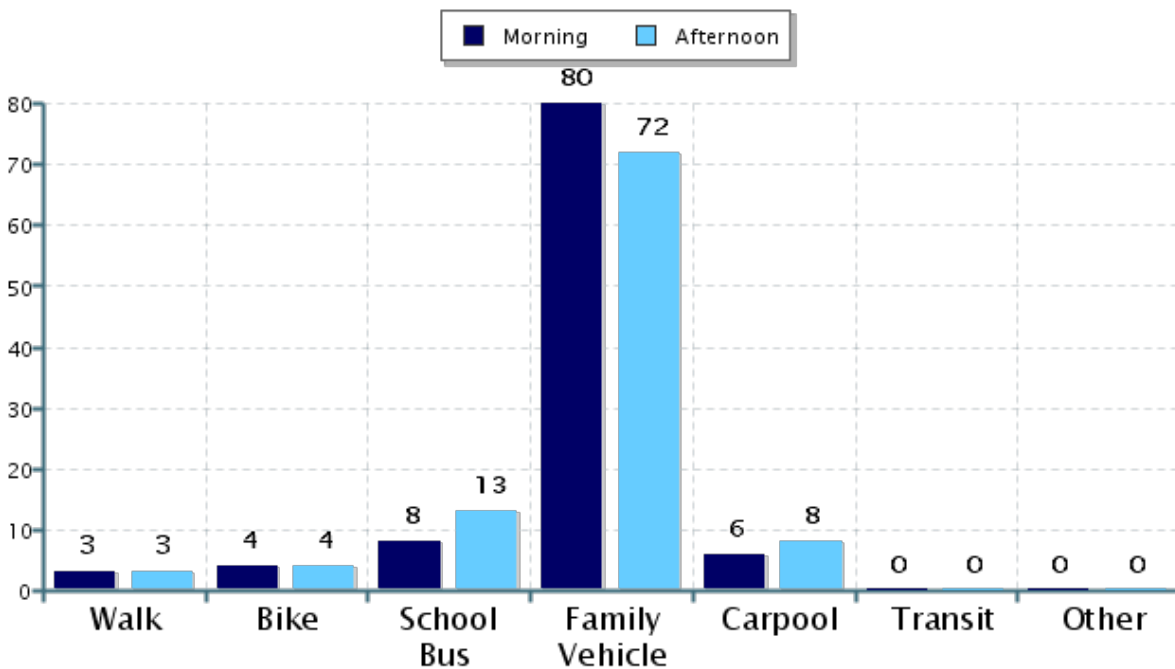
% of Students reached by SRTS activities: 76-100%

Tags:

**Number of Classrooms
Included in Report:** 19

This report contains information from your school's classrooms about students' trip to and from school. The data used in this report were collected using the in-class Student Travel Tally questionnaire from the National Center for Safe Routes to School.

Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison

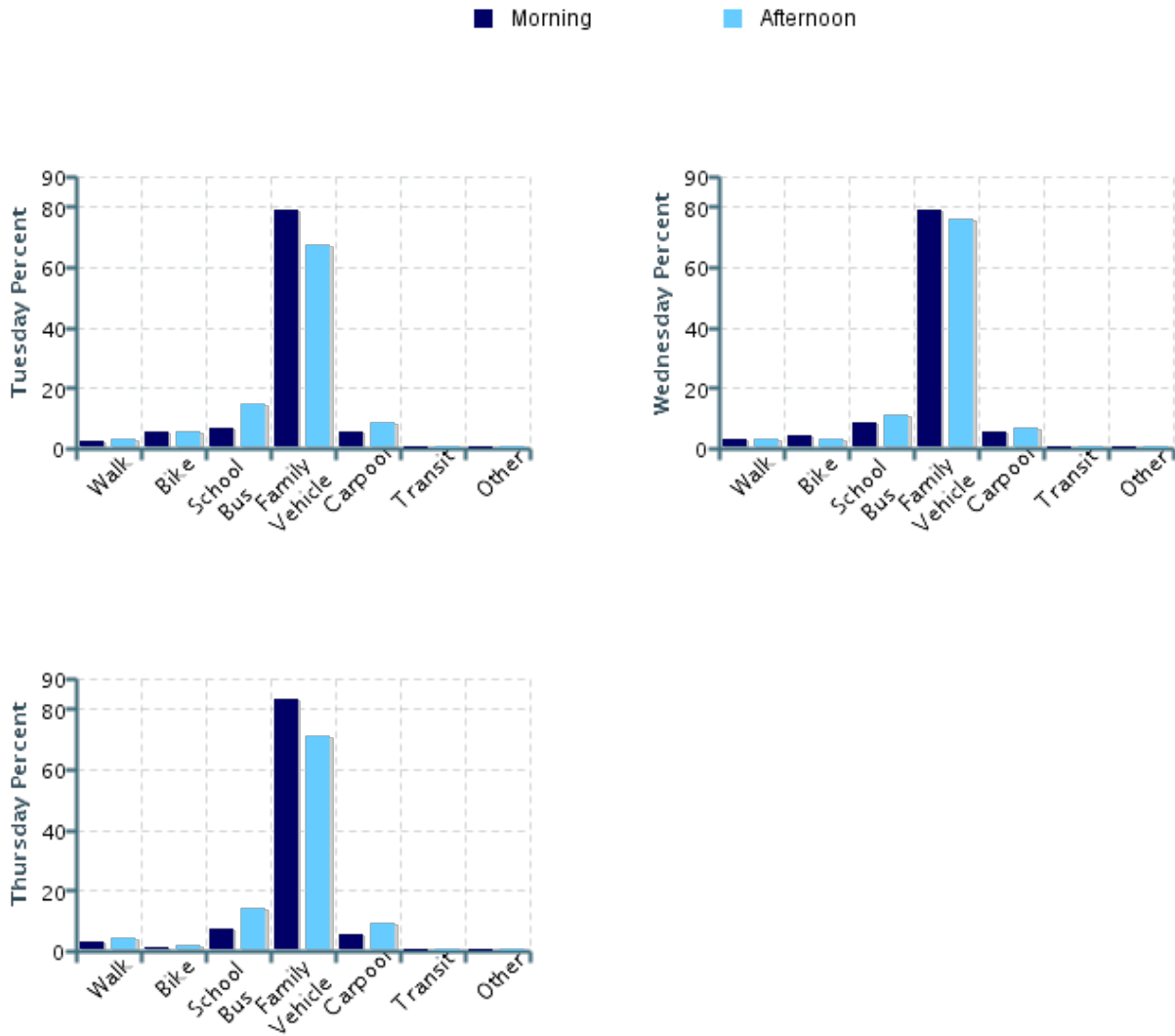


Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison

	Number of Trips	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Morning	1081	3%	4%	8%	80%	6%	0%	0%
Afternoon	1180	3%	4%	13%	72%	8%	0%	0%

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison by Day

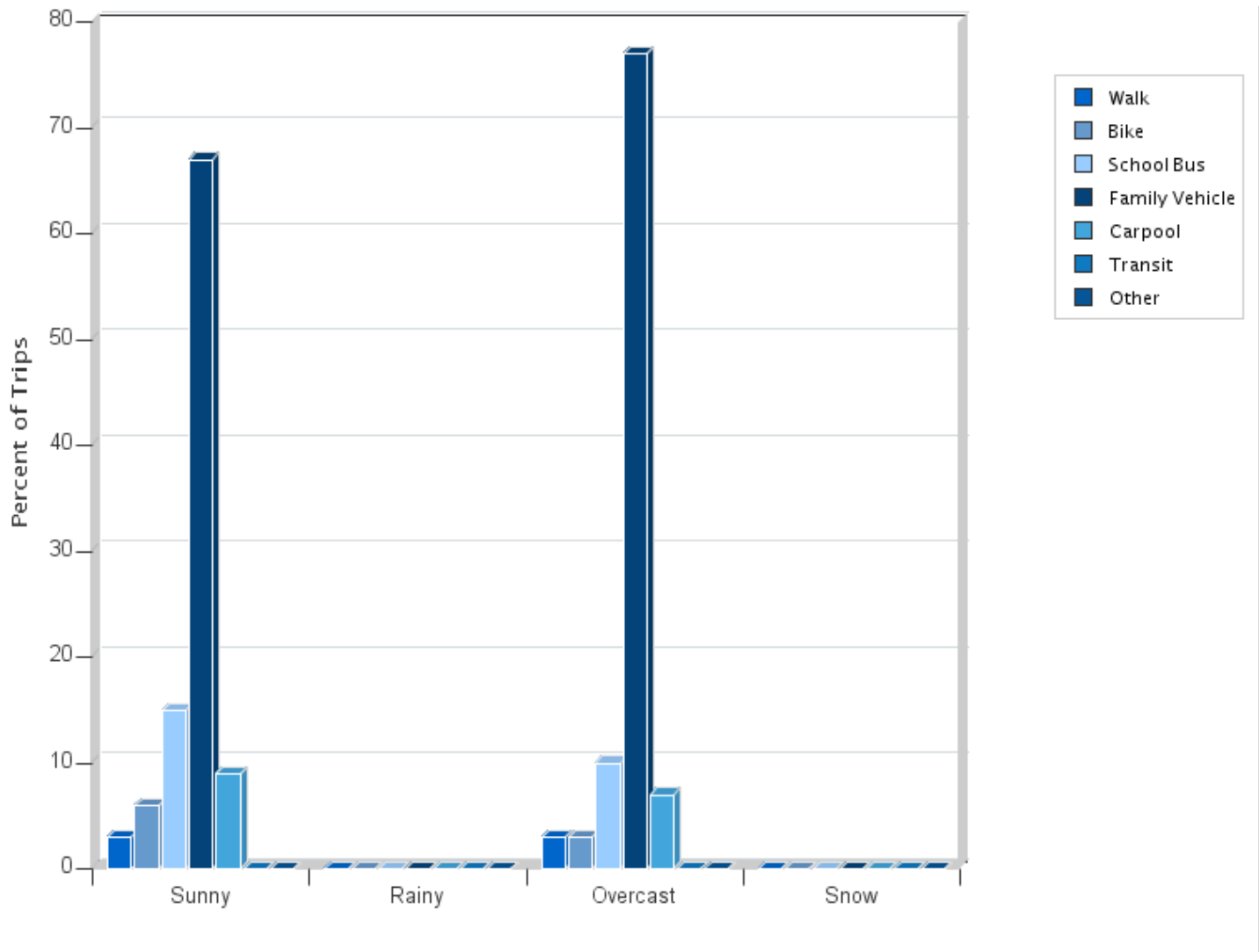


Morning and Afternoon Travel Mode Comparison by Day

	Number of Trips	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Tuesday AM	362	2%	6%	7%	79%	6%	0%	0%
Tuesday PM	363	3%	6%	15%	67%	9%	0%	0%
Wednesday AM	359	3%	4%	8%	79%	6%	0%	0%
Wednesday PM	458	3%	3%	11%	76%	7%	0%	0%
Thursday AM	360	3%	1%	8%	83%	5%	0%	0%
Thursday PM	359	4%	2%	14%	71%	9%	0%	0%

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Travel Mode by Weather Conditions



Travel Mode by Weather Condition

Weather Condition	Number of Trips	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Sunny	363	3%	6%	15%	67%	9%	0%	0%
Rainy	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Overcast	1898	3%	3%	10%	77%	7%	0%	0%
Snow	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

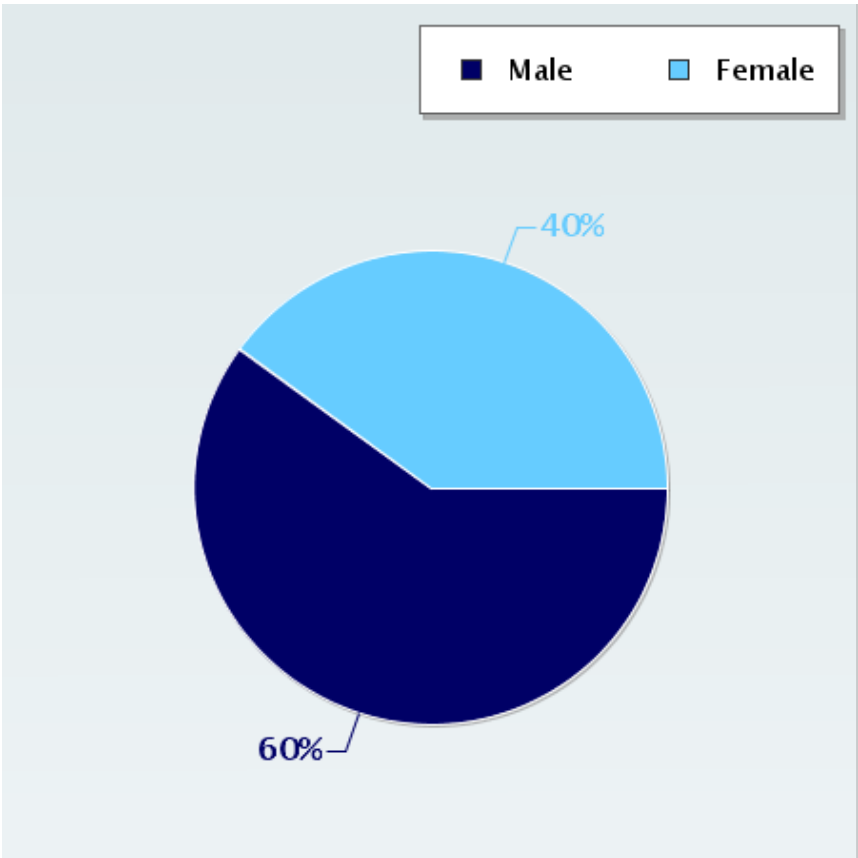
Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Parent Survey Report: One School in One Data Collection Period

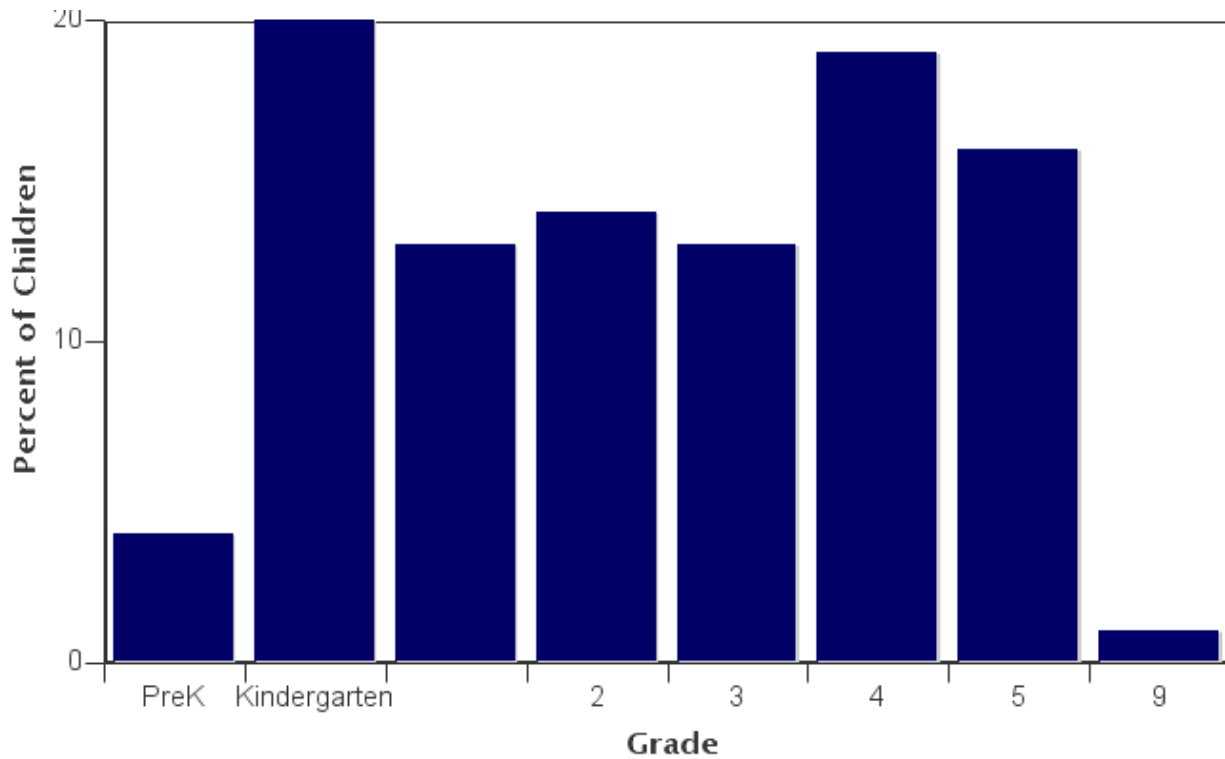
School Name: Discovery Elementary	Set ID: 13478
School Group: Grand Forks Public Schools	Month and Year Collected: November 2015
School Enrollment: 375	Date Report Generated: 12/01/2015
% Range of Students Involved in SRTS: 76-100%	Tags:
Number of Questionnaires Distributed: 375	Number of Questionnaires Analyzed for Report: 113

This report contains information from parents about their children's trip to and from school. The report also reflects parents' perceptions regarding whether walking and bicycling to school is appropriate for their child. The data used in this report were collected using the Survey about Walking and Biking to School for Parents form from the National Center for Safe Routes to School.

Sex of children for parents that provided information



Grade levels of children represented in survey



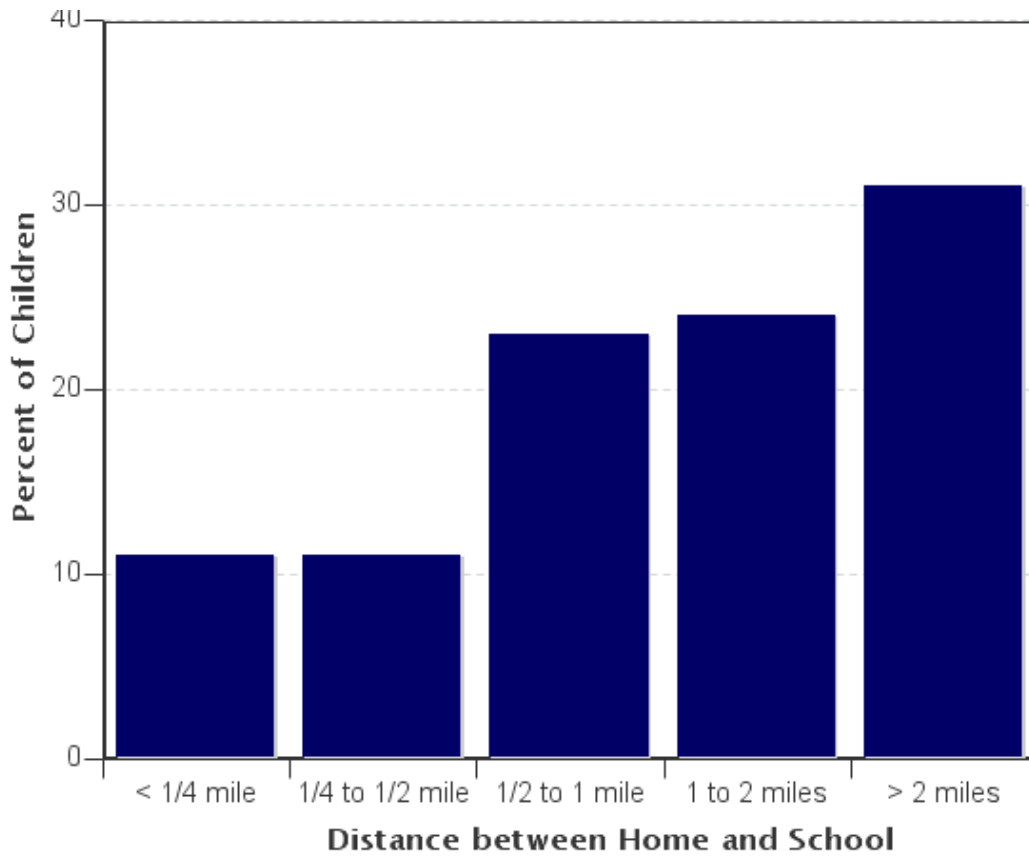
Grade levels of children represented in survey

Grade in School	Responses per grade	
	Number	Percent
PreK	5	4%
Kindergarten	22	20%
1	14	13%
2	16	14%
3	15	13%
4	21	19%
5	18	16%
9	1	1%

No response: 0

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Parent estimate of distance from child's home to school



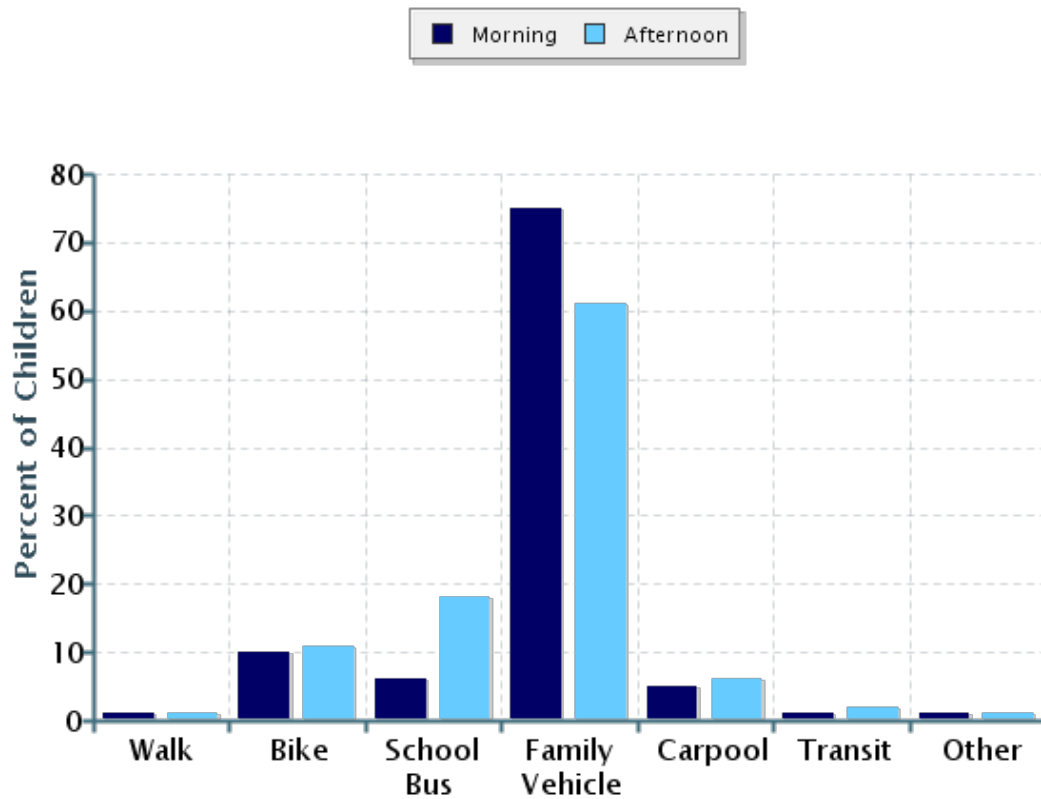
Parent estimate of distance from child's home to school

Distance between home and school	Number of children	Percent
Less than 1/4 mile	12	11%
1/4 mile up to 1/2 mile	12	11%
1/2 mile up to 1 mile	25	23%
1 mile up to 2 miles	26	24%
More than 2 miles	34	31%

Don't know or No response: 4

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Typical mode of arrival at and departure from school



Typical mode of arrival at and departure from school

Time of Trip	Number of Trips	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Morning	110	0.9%	10%	6%	75%	5%	0.9%	0.9%
Afternoon	110	0.9%	11%	18%	61%	6%	2%	0.9%

No Response Morning: 3

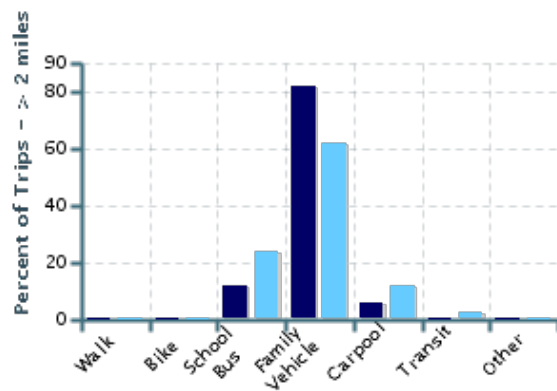
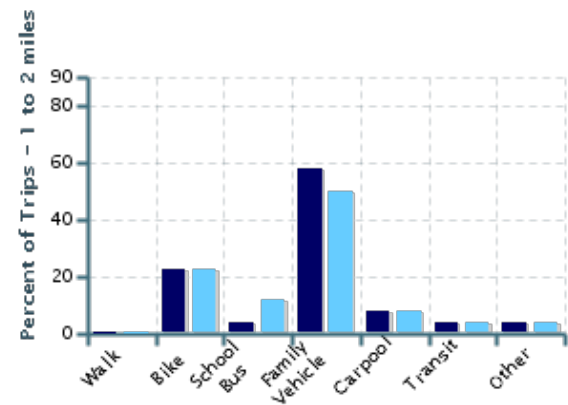
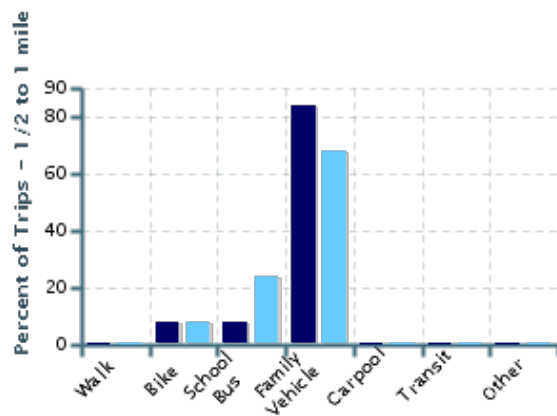
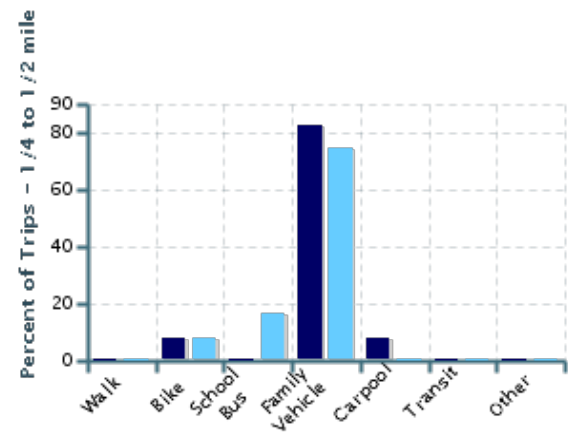
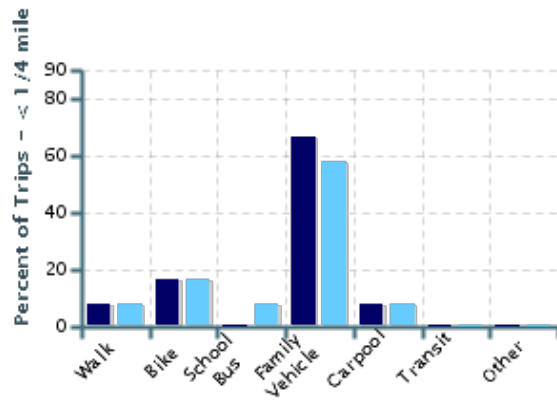
No Response Afternoon: 3

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Typical mode of school arrival and departure by distance child lives from school

■ Morning

■ Afternoon



Typical mode of school arrival and departure by distance child lives from school

School Arrival

Distance	Number within Distance	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Less than 1/4 mile	12	8%	17%	0%	67%	8%	0%	0%
1/4 mile up to 1/2 mile	12	0%	8%	0%	83%	8%	0%	0%
1/2 mile up to 1 mile	25	0%	8%	8%	84%	0%	0%	0%
1 mile up to 2 miles	26	0%	23%	4%	58%	8%	4%	4%
More than 2 miles	34	0%	0%	12%	82%	6%	0%	0%

Don't know or No response: 4

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

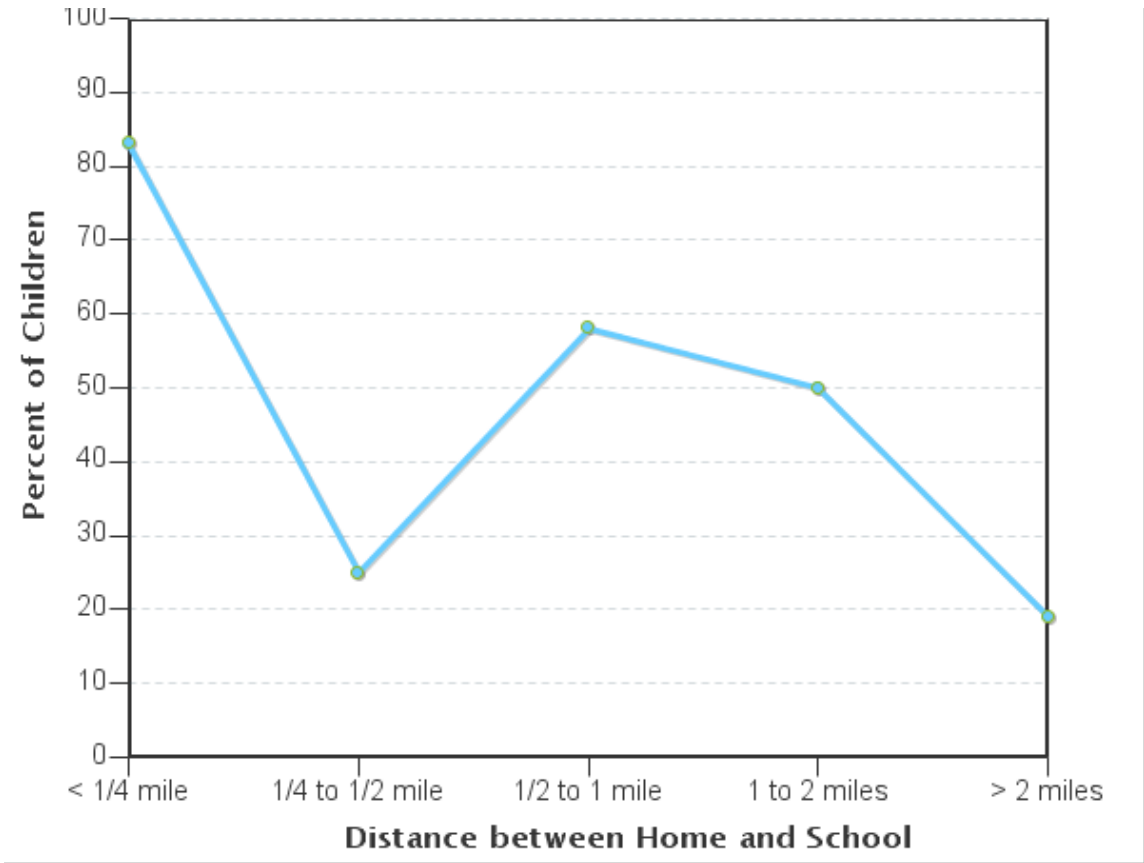
School Departure

Distance	Number within Distance	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Transit	Other
Less than 1/4 mile	12	8%	17%	8%	58%	8%	0%	0%
1/4 mile up to 1/2 mile	12	0%	8%	17%	75%	0%	0%	0%
1/2 mile up to 1 mile	25	0%	8%	24%	68%	0%	0%	0%
1 mile up to 2 miles	26	0%	23%	12%	50%	8%	4%	4%
More than 2 miles	34	0%	0%	24%	62%	12%	3%	0%

Don't know or No response: 4

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Percent of children who have asked for permission to walk or bike to/from school by distance they live from school

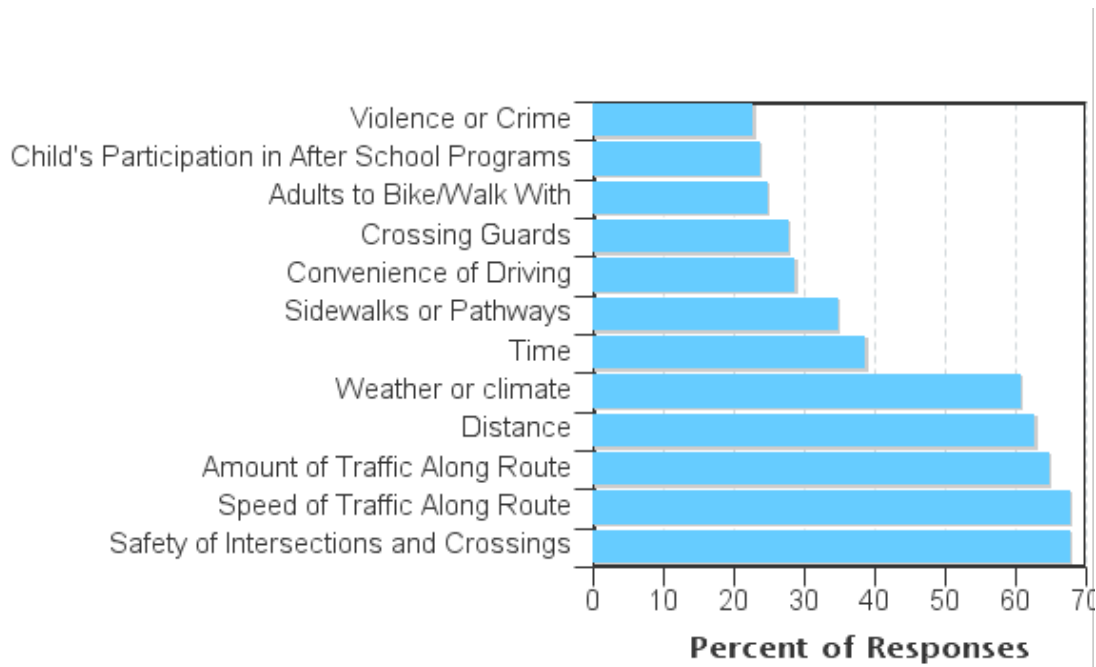


Percent of children who have asked for permission to walk or bike to/from school by distance they live from school

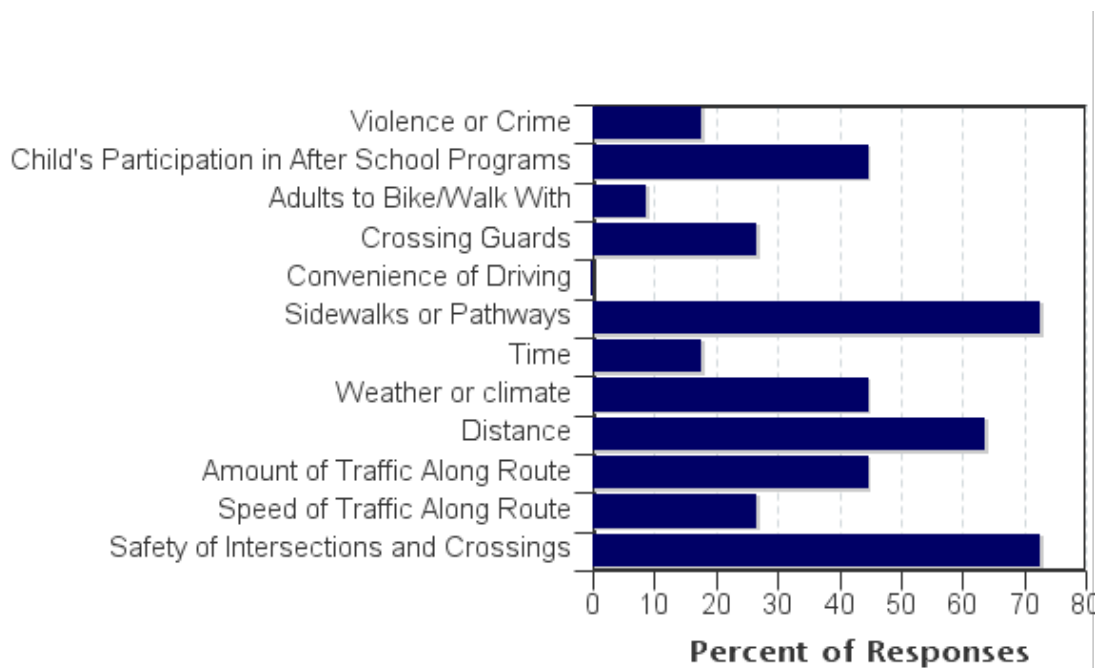
Asked Permission?	Number of Children	Less than 1/4 mile	1/4 mile up to 1/2 mile	1/2 mile up to 1 mile	1 mile up to 2 miles	More than 2 miles
Yes	46	83%	25%	58%	50%	19%
No	60	17%	75%	42%	50%	81%

Don't know or No response: 7
 Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Issues reported to affect the decision to not allow a child to walk or bike to/from school by
parents of children who do not walk or bike to/from school



Issues reported to affect the decision to allow a child to walk or bike to/from school by
parents of children who already walk or bike to/from school



Issues reported to affect the decision to allow a child to walk or bike to/from school by
parents of children who already walk or bike to/from school

Issue	Child does not walk/bike to school	Child walks/bikes to school
Safety of Intersections and Crossings	68%	73%
Speed of Traffic Along Route	68%	27%
Amount of Traffic Along Route	65%	45%
Distance	63%	64%
Weather or climate	61%	45%
Time	39%	18%
Sidewalks or Pathways	35%	73%
Convenience of Driving	29%	0%
Crossing Guards	28%	27%
Adults to Bike/Walk With	25%	9%
Child's Participation in After School Programs	24%	45%
Violence or Crime	23%	18%
Number of Respondents per Category	80	11

No response: 22

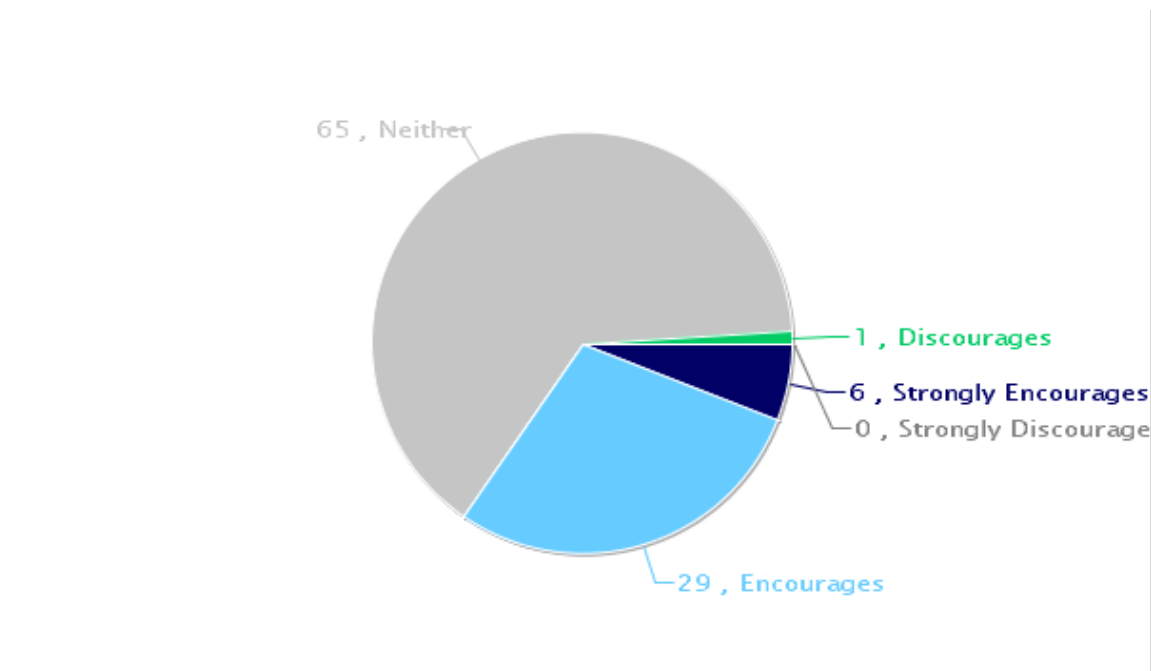
Note:

--Factors are listed from most to least influential for the 'Child does not walk/bike to school' group.

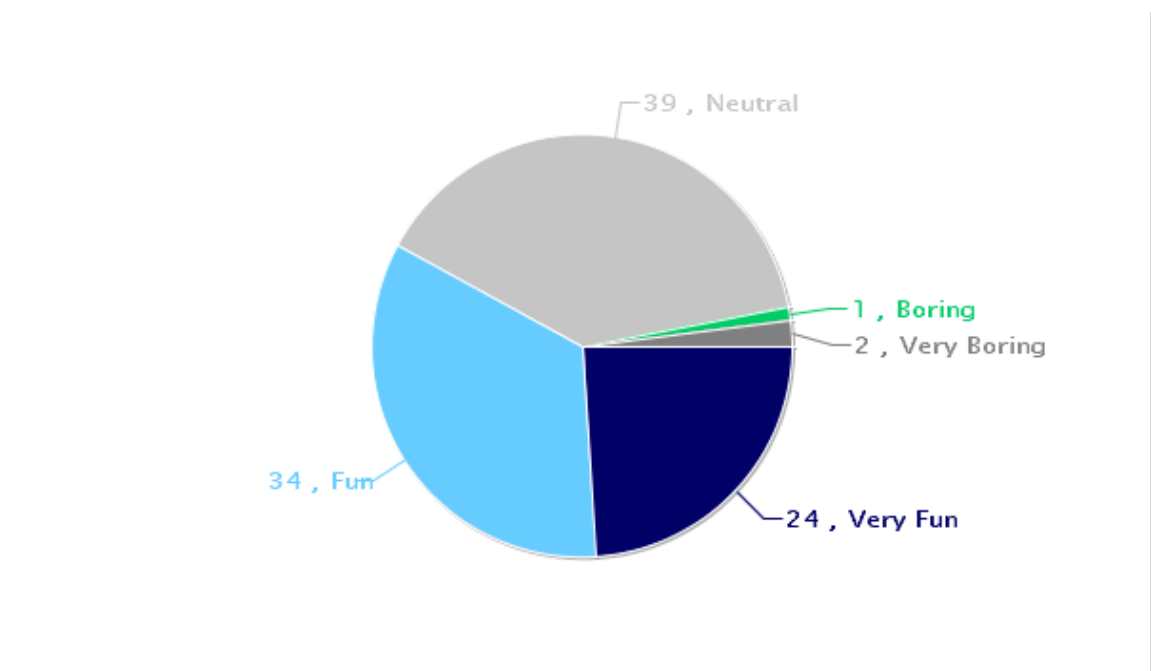
--Each column may sum to > 100% because respondent could select more than issue

--The calculation used to determine the percentage for each issue is based on the 'Number of Respondents per Category' within the respective columns (Child does not walk/bike to school and Child walks/bikes to school.) If comparing percentages between the two columns, please pay particular attention to each column's number of respondents because the two numbers can differ dramatically.

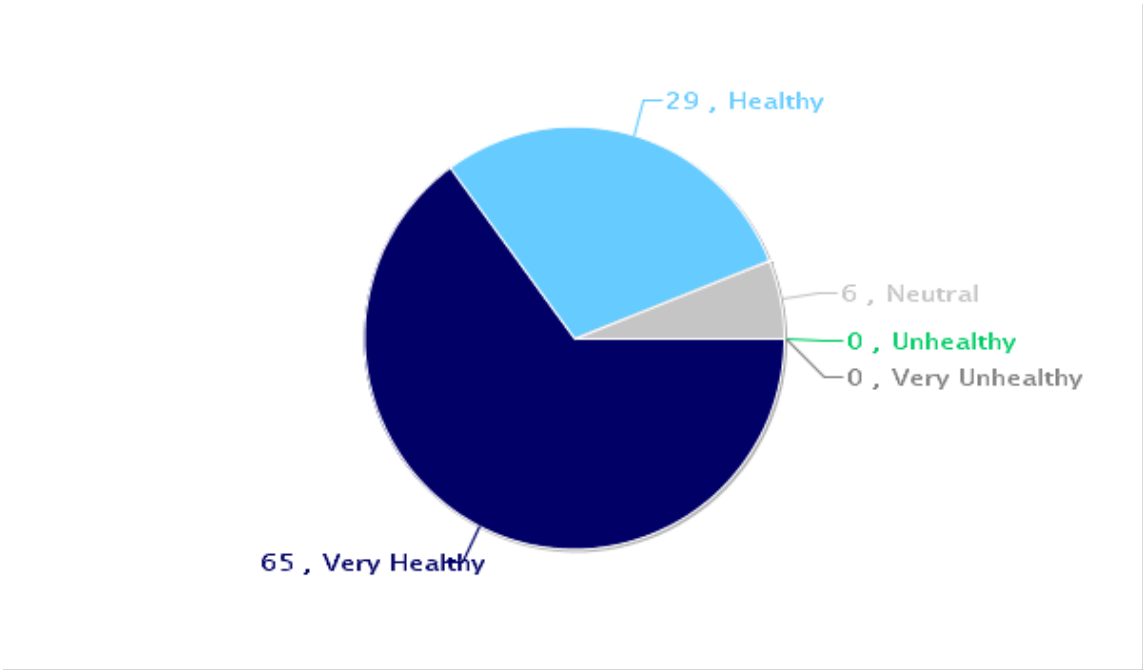
Parents' opinions about how much their child's school encourages or discourages walking and biking to/from school



Parents' opinions about how much fun walking and biking to/from school is for their child



Parents' opinions about how healthy walking and biking to/from school is for their child

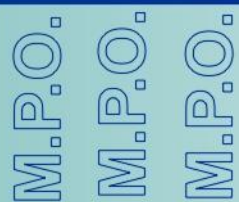


Comments Section

SurveyID	Comment
1360047	A huge thank you to Safe Kids GF and Discovery Elementary for working together to make drop off and pick up safe and smooth
1360089	Living in the Southern Estates Addn, I like the fact that they put I that gravel trail so the kids don't have to go all the way to S 20th to get home. I do with there were addl safety measures at the corner of 40th Ave S and Columbia Rd as well as on the road that turns into the school. It is so busy and there are so many kids in the morning that ride their bikes thru those intersections. It is a little scary at times with the amount of traffic trying to turn into the school.
1360144	My child is still too young to ride her bike to school. As soon as she is old enough, I will have her ride her bike to and from school. In the winter she will take the bus.
1360151	We live too far away from Discovery for me to feel comfortable for my child to ride to school at this point. Maybe if she rode with a friend and the bike path was always in areas where she could be seen but wouldn't have to worry about traffic then I would feel more comfortable.
1360453	We live way too far away for my kids to walk or bike, but when they are in middle school it will be closer, so I anticipate they will likely be able to then as they will be closer and older.
1360495	We attempted a testing walk/bike ride with her friend and her friend's mom, and the kids admitted they weren't ready to tackle it independently yet, but we gave them the opportunity to try (with adult supervision).
1362480	I am only hesitant of my child riding the bike to school because of the main intersection on Columbia and 40th.
1360038	Distance where we live to school is too far for my children to walk.
1360043	I feel the intersection at Columbia and 40th is dangerous for a bike rider. Our child does MASH after school so we pick up after that. He is only in first grade so walking/riding bike is NOT an option by himself as we both work full time jobs.
1360049	We just live to far away and have too many busy intersections to cross in order to have my son walk/bike to school.
1360068	We are too far from this school. They should have left our neighborhood in the Kelly district
1360240	My son currently rides the bus on days he does not have activities directly after school. I would much rather have another option as I do not like how the school system does not have their own busing system. I am not a fan of ow a child can bully another child or e disrespectful of the bus driver, and have NO consequence at school. I have had a number of issues with Deidrich over the last 10 years, with no positive resolve!!!! I just wish Grand Forks School System would step up and make the necessary changes to make our kids safe!!!!!!!!!!!!
1360347	Currently our son is dropped off at daycare and they transport him to and from school. I have considered taking him to school as we live close by. If we lived closer, I would probably allow him to bike to school. I am uncomfortable having him bike to school because of the speed, distance, and major roads he would have to be near and cross. (47th Ave S and Columbia)
1360393	Don't trust the Columbia and 40th avenue intersection.

1360438	I work at the school so it is convenient for him to go with me in vehicle
1360554	We were hoping to have our child ride bike to school but we felt uncomfortable due to lack of bike paths.
1360216	If we lived closer and biking/walking were an option we would consider it. I do worry about the intersections on 40th Ave. As a driving parent, I see how fast the traffic moves on Columbia. Perhaps a bike path under the road? A crossing guard on 40th and the drive into Discovery in the morning/ afterschool hours might be good too. I've waited for kids to pass only to have other cars drive around me. Overall parents are very careful, it's the other traffic in the area. This will increase over time as the area develops.
1360239	Biggest reason for not allowing to walk to school is distance, which some of the others are secondary ex. weather, safety, busy intersections, not as many students coming from our distance.
1360462	I would love for our kids to be able to walk or ride bike to school, but we live too far away for me to ever consider that.
1360050	Allow my first grader to walk/bike because of older sibling and cousin in 4th grade accompany him.
1360062	We live directly across the street from the school. One of the reasons we chose this house was so our kids could walk to school.
1360230	One other major contributing factor is whether or not my child is able to walk/bike with a group of other children. I would not feel comfortable letting him go by himself at his current age (5th grade), primarily due to safety concerns while alone.
1360278	My children 2nd and 4th grade rode their bikes in the fall before it got too cold, and will ride them again in the spring. Through the winter they will be dropped off by me.
1360447	Columbia road is not a safe road to cross for students of elementary age, large amount of traffic and high speeds. ND weather is also not conducive to walking or biking most months of the school year.
1360499	For these very reasons, (distance, traffic, busy intersections to cross) the school district should never have moved my neighborhood to Discovery. It is now too far and dangerous for him to ride his bike.
1360543	The bus system is awful here. It is not consistent and my child is on the bus for 2 hours a day. Biking is too far to bike especially in the snow. Plus no public bus service is ridiculous. I have never had to pay for school buses.
1360864	I'm concerned about the planned interstate exit ramp planned for 47th Ave!!! I don't believe this street is a good plan for Discovery or South. Too much traffic at high speeds will be dumped into residential neighborhoods with many children and schools. I think this is a dangerous plan for this area. The exit belongs further south. The schools and families should be made more aware of this plan and speak out against it. An exit wasn't approved at 17th ave because of Century. A bridge crossing at 32nd Ave wasn't approved because of Kelly and Schroeder.
1360591	We live too far away, outside of city limits. Weather. Would be on bus too long to be an option. The parking at school/traffic during pickup is pretty bad, backed up daily.
1360079	Take the grass and trees out of the south side of the school and make another parking lot like they should have done in the first place.
1360267	The school location is not convenient from our home. The roads that my children would need to utilize are way too busy and would not be safe for them to bike alone.

10.3 Agendas & Minutes Steering Committee



Grand Forks - East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization

Earl Haugen, Executive Director

DISCOVERY SCHOOL

Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

DATE/TIME: Monday, July 13, 2015 9:30 AM

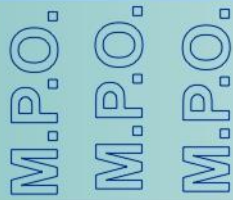
LOC ATION: Conference Room, City of Grand Forks Planning Department
City Hall 255 N 4th Street

STUDY: Discovery School Safe Route to School

PURPOSE: The purpose is to guide the efforts of the MPO staff and Consulting Team during the preparation of a draft report detailing the existing bicycle and pedestrian conditions which might be curtailing safe mobility, accessibility and connectivity for all users in the Discovery School Catchment Area.

AGENDA BY: Jairo Viafara, MPO staff. Phone (701) 746-2656

- 1) Meeting Overview
- 2) Introductions & Role in related children safety and mobility activities
- 3) Safe Routes to schools:
 - Study's Overview (Jairo Viafara)
 - School site and surrounding area's characteristics (Ryan Brooks, Planning Department)
- 4) Proposed Schedule
- 5) Stakeholders Vision for the Discovery School Safe Route to School
- 6) Other Discussion
- 7) Next Meeting – To be announced



Grand Forks - East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization

Earl Haugen, Executive Director

DISCOVERY SCHOOL Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

DATE/TIME: Monday, July 13, 2015 9:30 AM

LOC ATION: Conference Room, City of Grand Forks Planning Department
City Hall 255 N 4th Street

STUDY: Discovery School Safe Route to School

PURPOSE: The purpose is to guide the efforts of the MPO staff and Consulting Team during the preparation of a draft report detailing the existing bicycle and pedestrian conditions which might be curtailing safe mobility, accessibility and connectivity for all users in the Discovery School Catchment Area.

AGENDA BY: Jairo Viafara, MPO staff. Phone (701) 746-2656 - (218) 399-3372

1) Meeting Overview

MPO's staff provided an overview of the project and its relationship to other Safe Route to School projects advanced by the Organization.

2) Introductions & Role in related children safety and mobility activities

The following attended and actively participated at the meeting:

Ms. Carma	Hanson	Coordinator	Safe Kids Grand Forks
Ms. Patty	Olsen	Community Resource	Altru Health System
Mr. Kshitij	Sharma	Associate Research Fellow	North Dakota State U.
Mr. Rich	Rommes	Assistant City Engineer	City of Grand Forks, Eng.
Mr. Corey	Birkholtz	ADA Accessibility Specialist	at Options
Lt. Jeff	Burgess	Community Resource Bureau	Grand Forks Police Dept.
Ms. Teri	Kouba	Planner	GF-EGF MPO
Mr. Ryan	Brook	Deputy City Planner	Grand Forks Planning
Ms. Ali	Parkinson	Principal	Discovery School

Regrets:

Ms. Stephanie Erickson, Grand Forks Planning Department
Mr. Jody Thompson, Assistant Superintendent, Grand Forks School District
Ms. Kim Greendahl, Greenway Specialist, City of Grand Forks.

Participants introduced themselves and provided a brief overview of their activities and relationship with the Discovery SRTS Program. For instance:

Mr. Rich Rommes, Assistant City Engineer, City of Grand Forks, Eng. Dept. outlined current infrastructure works that will improve safety, mobility and accessibility in proximity to school. Some of these projects will be outlined later in the report.

Mr. Corey Birkholz, stated Option's mission to assist individuals with disabilities to live independently in the communities of their choice. Options strives to eliminate barriers or attitudes still present in the fields of architecture and communications which may impinge and affect mobility for vulnerable users

Ms. Patty Olsen and Carma Hanson, Coordinator Safe Kids program commented on the children safety, educational and health related programs advanced by their program in coordination with School District.

Lt. Jeff Burgess, described the educational and enforcement activities advanced by the Community Resource Bureau of the Grand Forks Police Department –in cooperation with community groups and School District- to ensure children are safe in the community.

Ms. Ali Parkinson, Discovery School Principal gave a brief overview of the construction activity at the school; parking accommodations for pick up and drop off locations for children, and parking accommodation for special needs students.

Ms. Jane Williams shared with the group her efforts on locating –according to established Engineering Standards- the traffic signals around the development area. She has also contributed to drafting the preliminary Safe Route to School.

Mr. Ryan Brook provided a short and long range description of the development site, location of prospective land uses and their relationship with the school future enrolments.

3) Safe Routes to schools:

• Study's Overview (Jairo Viafara)

Mr. Viafara provided a summary of the Safe Routes to School Program. The purpose of the study is to address safety, access, and mobility for pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-motorized vehicles around the walking radius of the Discovery School site. Mr. Viafara discussed the components of a successful pedestrian safety program, including the role played by the 6E's programs implemented to keep kids safe on their routes to school. While discussing the role of the 6E's, some in attendance, were in agreement with the vital role played by "engineering," however, they also indicated how important is the role played by education, enforcement, encouragement, evaluation, and equity. The spirit of these 6E's is currently being advanced by some members of the Stakeholders Committee through their corresponding Agencies. Their activities also contribute to the mobility and safety of other vulnerable users at the community level.

- **Site Overview**

Mr. Ryan Brooks gave a thorough report on the development taking place on the site. He outlined land use issues prevailing on the site. Mr. Brooks provided an update on the planned residential and commercial construction expected for this site. As things are progressing, the number of school-age children resulting from planned development has the potential to increase school enrolments, generate pressure on parking areas, and increase vehicular traffic.

4) Proposed Preliminary Discovery Safe Route to School Map for Review: For consideration:

The preliminary SRTS Map (developed in cooperation with GF Department of Engineering) was distributed for analysis. Two questions were posed to those in attendance concerning the proposed questions:

a) Whether there are any gaps/missing connections on the map

No response was given to this question.

b) Whether there could be “shortcuts” to improve route’s travel time and to facilitate mobility

- A gravel path is being added from the west end of Star Ave S to the sidewalk on the south side of 40th Ave S. This is to provide an outlet for that subdivision and a clear path around the storm water collection pond.
- Sidewalk and Bike path along S. Columbia Rd. (36th to 40th Ave S). This project consists of constructing sidewalks and bike paths along S. Columbia Rd. between 36th and 40th Ave S. A 10 foot wide multi-use walk will be installed along the west side and a 5 foot wide sidewalk along the east side.
- Traffic signals will be added on S Columbia Rd at the intersections of 36th and 40th Ave S
- A caution beacon has been added at the intersection of Ruemmele Rd and 40th Ave S.

c) Consideration of proposed improvements to the map to make better/safer routes.

The current proposed map is still under review. Its latest version will be distributed at the Discovery School on August 25, 2015

5) MPO would like to see a schedule of additional road improvements/connections:

- a) When MPO thinks 47th Ave may be connected to 34th St: Pending Response from Engineering
- b) Or any other connection from east of Columbia other than 40th Ave: Pending Response from Engineering

6) Proposed Schedule

A proposed project schedule (June-December, 2015) was distributed to stakeholders. The schedule indicates the responsible parties for each task, timing, and expected resulting products.

Discovery is a brand new school; thus, time must be allocated to successfully advance scheduled Student/parent travel patterns data collection and analysis, and observation assessments to identify barriers to mobility and safety.

7) Stakeholders Vision for the Discovery School Safe Route to School

A written questionnaire was sent to all stakeholders asking –among others- the following questions:

- a. Your Agency or Department's Role in related children safety and mobility activities
- b. Stakeholders Vision for the Discovery School Safe Route to School.
- c. Proposed Preliminary Discovery Safe Route to School Map for Review.

Thus far, these are the responses offered by some members:

- a) Discovery School is working collaboratively with Safe Kids of Grand Forks to host a "Walk to School Day" in October. We also plan to have a crossing guard/parking lot monitor program for 5th grade students at Discovery. This program will include training for students so they are empowered to share safety rules with other students/parents as they arrive and dismiss to school.
- b) That Discovery students and families have safe options when driving to and from Discovery School as well as safe options to walk, bike and/or ride the bus. The hope is that families will be informed and educated from the opening days of school so that safe habits can be established. Having police enforcement and Safe Kids personnel present during the first weeks of the school year would be appreciated.
- c) We plan to email the finalized map to Discovery families in August and post it on our school website. We plan to also take pictures of specific signs; crosswalks etc. in the neighborhood and identify these areas in our parent newsletters. Whether there could be “shortcuts” to improve routes and to facilitate mobility: I hope that the city continues to pursue the short cut option from Star Avenue. Many parents from this neighborhood have shared their concerns of the lack of access from this area to the school intersection. This shortcut would be an effort to accommodate these concerns.

Ali Parkinson

Discovery Elementary School Principal



- a) Your Agency or Department's Role in related children safety and mobility activities
Safe Kids Grand Forks has been involved with pedestrian and wheeled sports activities at the Grand Forks schools for over 15 years. This has included activities focused education, engineering, environment, encouragement and enforcement. We were recipient of 6 Safe Kids Walk This Way Environmental Task Force grants from 2004-2009 which funded parking lot improvements, speed radar sign purchase and placement, as well as educational and encouragement activities. We were also the recipient of ND non-infrastructure SRTS funds from 2008 - 2011.

In addition, we work with the Optimist Club of Grand Forks to provide the Safety on Wheels program to third grade students in Grand Forks each fall. Safe Kids speaks to students regarding helmet usage and provides all students the opportunity to purchase and be fitted for helmets. The Optimist Club runs a bike rodeo for the third grade students.

- b) Stakeholders Vision for the Discovery School Safe Route to School
Our vision in that staff, parents and students will embrace a multi-modal model of transportation to and from school. While Discovery is currently sitting on the southern end of Grand Forks, there are several residential areas within a bikeable, walkable distance of the school. The number of residential building near the school will only increase in the next several years. We have an opportunity to "get it right" from the beginning by working with staff, parents, students and residents to develop safe practices that enable students to travel by foot, bicycle, family vehicle or school bus.

Patty Olsen

Community Resource
Safe Kids Grand Forks

ΩΩ

a) The Community Resource Bureau of the Grand Forks Police Dept. has 3 School Resource Officers (2-High School & 1-Middle School) and 2 School Resource Officer Liaison to all Grand Forks elementary schools. The Bureau works closely with other community groups to ensure children are safe in the community.

b) Children will have a safe experience getting to/from school and any traffic issues will be minimal.

d) I did not see any issues with the map but I think a site visit would be appropriate for the group.

Lt Jeff Burgess

Community Resource Bureau Commander
Grand Forks Police Dept.

ΩΩ

a) Agency's Role: Options mission is to assist individuals with disabilities to live independently in the communities of their choice and eliminate barriers or attitude, architecture and communication. One of our goals is to ensure equal access to all areas of community.

b) Stakeholders Vision: To ensure a safe and accessible route for the Discovery School.

c) Proposed Preliminary Safe Route: Request the proposed gravel shortcut/path be accessible for students and parents who may use a mobility device such as a walker, wheelchair or scooter. I was also wondering if the Grand Forks Bus Route will be running in this area and have any bus stops or shelters along the route.

Corey Bilkholz

ADA Accessibility Specialist at Options

ΩΩ

Grand Forks Planning Department wants to make Walking and Bicycling to school safe and appealing for children. The Planning Department will use the Safe Routes to School Maps to use in future evaluation of Site Plan reviews.

Stephanie Erickson

Planner

8) Other Discussion

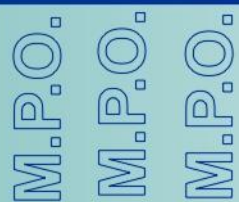
There were no more comments.

9) Next Meeting – To be announced

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 am. Next meeting to be announced.

10) Attachments:

Includes: a) Century School, proposed draft map; b) Proposed project schedule. Both materials were discussed at the meeting.



Grand Forks - East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization

Earl Haugen, Executive Director

DISCOVERY SCHOOL

Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

DATE/TIME: Monday, September 14, 2015 9:30 AM

LOC ATION: Conference Room, City of Grand Forks Planning Department
City Hall 255 N 4th Street

STUDY: Discovery School Safe Route to School

PURPOSE: The purpose is to guide the efforts of the MPO's staff and Consulting Team during the School Traffic Safety Review phase.

AGENDA BY: Jairo Viafara, MPO staff. Phone (701)746-2656 (MWF) (218) 399-3372 (TTh)

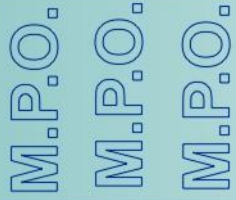
Activities to include:

- 1) Comments on access to Discovery during Open House & First Day of School
- 2) Area assessment and data collection; administration of student's & parent's surveys;
- 3) Analysis of school related community/demographics/economics/and
- 4) Transportation issues
- 5) School observation assessment of walk/bike route to school
- 6) Draft Study Report (Table of Contents) (for discussion, Feedback & Assignments)
- 7) Latest version of proposed Safe Route to Discovery School Map (For discussion & Feedback)
- 8) Other Discussion
- 9) Next Meeting – To be announced

Attachments:

- Student's Survey (For consideration) Written comments are highly appreciated!
- Parent's Survey (For consideration) Written comments are highly appreciated!
- **Draft Study Report (Table of Contents) Pending!!**
- Proposed Safe Route to Discovery School Map (For consideration) Written comments are highly appreciated!

Written comments are highly appreciated!



Grand Forks - East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization

Earl Haugen, Executive Director

DISCOVERY SCHOOL

Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

DATE/TIME: Monday, September 14, 2015 9:30 AM

LOCATION: Conference Room, City of Grand Forks Planning Department
City Hall 255 N 4th Street

STUDY: Discovery School Safe Route to School

PURPOSE: The purpose is to guide the efforts of the MPO's staff and Consulting Team during the School Traffic Safety Review phase.

MINUTES BY: Jairo Viafara, MPO staff. Phone (701)746-2656 (MWF) (218) 399-3372 (TTh)

I. Attendance

- Ms. Ali Parkinson, Principal, Discovery School
- Lieutenant, Jeff Burgess, Grand Forks Police Department, Community Resource Bureau
- Ms. Stephanie Erickson, Grand Forks Planning Department
- Ms. Carma Hanson, Safe Kids Grand Forks
- Ms. Patty Olsen, Safe Kids Grand Forks
- Ms. Teri Kouba, Planner, Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Mr. Kshitij Sharma, North Dakota State University, Upper Great Plains Transportation

II. Regrets

- Mr. Jody Thompson, Assistant Superintendent, Grand Forks, ND School Division

III. Absent

- Mr. Corey Birkholtz, ADA Specialist at Options
- Ms. Jane Williams, Engineering Department
- Ms. Ali Rood, Mobility Manager, Cities Area Transit (CAT)

IV. Comments on access to Discovery during Open House & First Day of School

Overall, comments on the circulation and mobility at the Discovery School in Opening School Day (First Day) were rated as positive. In addition, the following comments were submitted for consideration by members of the Steering Committee:

1. Height of the grass at the roundabout –
ACTION: Patty is going to connect with Mr. Mark Aubol. Mr. Aubol indicated his Street Department will address this concern.
2. Kids using the drainage ditch at Columbia and 40th for a crossing of the street-
ACTION: Ms. Patty Olsen, Safe Kids to check with Mr. Mark Aubol on signage. Request made to PD to make periodic site checks before and after school. In addition, please see comments by Lt. Burgess in additional comments section below.
3. Light at Rummel (?sp)-
ACTION: Ms. Patty Olsen, Safe Kids noted issue with light only flashing on direction from the north but both ways from the south.
4. Addition of a sidewalk along the east parking lot (south side) to facilitate people getting to the parking on the street and for more room for buses-
ACTION: Ms. Ali Parkinson, School Principal to check on this.
5. Move bike rack to north end of east lot so kids on bikes are not leaving right through all the K and 1st graders-
ACTION: Ms. Ali Parkinson, School Principal to lead on this request.
6. Ordering of permanent "No Right Turn" sign for the eastbound exit of the front visitor's lot-
ACTION: Ms. Ali Parkinson, School Principal has ordered this already.
7. Safe Kids has provided extensive volunteers and education on-site to parents, teachers and kids-
ACTION: We will continue to recruit safety patrols and use them before and after school. Education will also be provided to them in the very near future.

In advancing the tasks related to the Discovery School Safe Route to School Initiative, the MPO is supported by the consulting services provided by the Advanced Traffic Analysis Centre (ATAC), North Dakota State University, Upper Great Plains Transportation. Here are their comments, included suggested actions:

- Roundabout (Landscaping, lack of visibility for pedestrian, traffic conflicts)-
ACTION: *The issue of maintaining the center island can be brought up with the City.*
- Traffic issues on school premises-
ACTION: *The east parking lot should not be used for drop-off or pick-up by parents. It should be reserved for staff and school buses only. The south parking lot should be used exclusively for pick-up and drop-off.**
- Drainage ditch being used as an underpass by some bicyclists-
ACTION: *A grate must be installed to prevent this.*
- Pedestrian Crossing Markings (Longitudinal, traverse or diagonal lines?)-
ACTION: *The ones in south parking lot are ok*

- Gravel path-
ACTION: *It is working as planned. I do have some pictures of the same if you need some to forward to parents.*
- Operation of Accessible Pedestrian Signals (Push Button)-
ACTION: *The City should look into this. I did not try to replicate this issue.*
- *Proposed construction on Columbia Road Proposed underpass is a great idea and will keep pedestrian traffic (including students) out of the stream of traffic*
- Suggested sidewalk construction on north side of school premises I think you mean south side of the east parking lot. This can be looked into. However, if pick-up/drop-off is kept exclusively in the south lot then the school would not need it-
- ACTION: *Additional parking needs and potential locations must also be discussed

V. Additional Comments:

Lt. Jeff Burgess, Grand Forks Police Department Community Resource Bureau Commander:

My only suggestion to below is not to sign the drainage ditch (most people ignore signs) but to put up a grate that allows water to flow but keeps people out. I've seen them on other culverts.

Mr. Jody Thompson, Assistant School Superintendent, submitted the following comment for consideration:

"Jairo - since I may not be able to attend the meeting I have a suggestion concerning the parent survey. I believe we should be asking Discovery parents who live on the east side of Columbia Rd. if they would use a pedestrian underpass located between 41st Street and 47th Avenue South. It seems to me we have many families in that area that would have their children walk or ride bikes to school if they didn't have to cross Columbia to get to school. I realize there is a stoplight at 40th and Columbia, but the most direct route in the future will be going across Columbia. I can only assume more residential development will occur along that corridor. I also realize that if it isn't part of the widening of Columbia Road construction project it won't get done later due to expense."

"Thank you for your assistance in working on this project. It's important to the larger development and certainly important for our students." JT

Ms. Jane Williams, Department of Engineering (via email):

"Jody, I have also had parents ask me this question, there will be a traffic signal at Columbia and 40th Ave S with fully actuated pedestrian facilities. I don't think it is possible to put an under crossing at this intersection because of the pipeline that runs through this area, it is on the east side of Columbia and crosses 40th Ave S from the southeast corner to the northwest and then runs up behind Development Homes."

The comments were passed along to the Engineering Department to assess their feasibility. In reply, the Engineering Department issued the following response. Please see attachment.

VI. Area assessment and data collection; administration of student's & parent's surveys;

SRTS Parent Survey – Ms. Patty Olsen, Safe Kids will register Discovery as a site. Ms. Ali Parkinson, School Principal, will send home the link to this for parents to fill out.

VII. Analysis of school related community/demographics/economics/and

Written comments are being accepted for inclusion in report.

VIII. Transportation issues

See submitted comments.

IX. School observation assessment of walk/bike route to school

Will be determined by Consultant in agreement with Project Manager for the Safe Route to School Initiative.

X. Draft Study Report (Table of Contents) (for discussion, Feedback & Assignments)

The following changes were suggested by the Consultant:

Modify the table to include/reflect the following:

- School site zonal characteristics
- School access/driveway characteristic
- Traffic control on site and in the vicinity of the school
- Parking characteristics
- Arrival dismissal activities
- Safety characteristics
- Operational characteristics
- Short-term improvement strategies
- Long-term improvement strategies

These changes will be discussed with Consultant in the coming days.

XI. Latest version of proposed Safe Route to Discovery School Map (For discussion & Feedback)

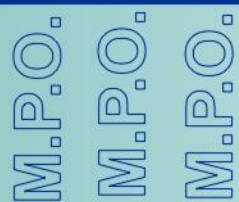
Approved.

XII. Other Discussion

None.

XIII. Next Meeting – To be announced

#



Grand Forks - East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization

Earl Haugen, Executive Director

DISCOVERY SCHOOL SAFE ROUTE TO SCHOOL INITIATIVE

Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

DATE/TIME: Monday, December 7, 2015 9:30 AM

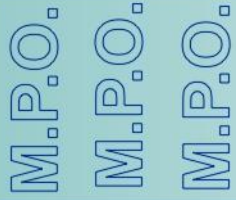
LOC ATION: Conference Room, City of Grand Forks Planning Department
City Hall 255 N 4th Street

STUDY: Discovery School Safe Route to School

PURPOSE: As part of the development of the Discovery Safe Route to School Initiative, it is vital to meet to discuss the following items pertaining to Phase 2 in the Project Schedule:

- a) School Observation Assessment (Engineering). Mr. Kshitij Sharma
- b) Student's Tallies (As reported in National SRTS). Ms. Patty Olsen
- c) Parent's Surveys (if available): Suggested: Staff Discovery School

AGENDA BY: Jairo Viafara, MPO staff.
Phone (701) 746-2656 or (218) 399-3272



Grand Forks - East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization

Earl Haugen, Executive Director

DISCOVERY SCHOOL SAFE ROUTE TO SCHOOL INITIATIVE

Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

DATE/TIME: Monday, December 7, 2015 9:30 AM

LOCATION: Conference Room, City of Grand Forks Planning Department
City Hall 255 N 4th Street

STUDY: Discovery School Safe Route to School

PURPOSE: As part of the development of the Discovery Safe Route to School Initiative, it is vital to meet to discuss the following items pertaining to Phase 2 in the Project Schedule:

1. Student's Tallies (As reported in National SRTS). Ms. Patty Olsen
2. Parent's Surveys (if available): Suggested: Staff Discovery School
3. School Observation Assessment (Engineering). Mr. Kshitij Sharma

MINUTES/PROCEEDINGS: Jairo Viafara, MPO staff.
Phone (701) 746-2656 (MWF) or (218) 399-3272 (TTH)

I. ATTENDANCE:

Ms. Ali Parkinson, Principal, Discovery School
Lieutenant, Jeff Burgess, Grand Forks Police Department, Community Resource Bureau
Ms. Stephanie Erickson, City of Grand Forks, Planning Department
Ms. Patty Olsen, Safe Kids Grand Forks
Ms. Jane Williams, City of Grand Forks, Engineering Department
Mr. Kshitij Sharma, North Dakota State University, Upper Great Plains Transportation

II. REGRETS

Ms. Carma Hanson, Safe Kids Grand Forks

III. ABSENTS

Mr. Corey Birkholtz, ADA Specialist at Options
Ms. Ali Rood, Mobility Manager, Cities Area Transit (CAT)

IV. DATA COLLECTION

The results of data analysis presented in this initiative correspond to data collected using the following tools:

1. Student's Tallies
2. Parent's Surveys
3. School Observation Assessment

1. Student's Tallies

This activity was advanced by Ms. Patty Olsen and Ms. Carma Hanson from Safe Kids North Dakota in cooperation with the Discovery School. The tabulation of the complete results was shared with the members of the Steering Committee in attendance. The Tallies Report is attached. The Highlights of the Student's Tallies include:

- Discovery Elementary School
- Data Collected on : October, 2015
- % Students reached by SRTS Activities: 76-100
- Participating Classrooms: 19
- Report Generated on: November 16, 2015
- School Enrollment: 350 Students

The Tallies include information on the following variables:

a) Comparison Morning and Afternoon Travel by Mode

Based on the number of trips, kids primarily arrived at, and departed from school by family vehicle. 80% in the morning, and 72% in the afternoon. About 4% (bike) and 3% (pedestrian) arrived at, or departed from school in the morning or afternoon time. About 8% of the students arrived to or departed from the school by using School Buses.

b) Comparison Morning and Afternoon Travel by Day

Whether morning or afternoon trips by day (Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday), remained slightly the same. On Wednesday morning, there was an increase on total number of trips. However, those either arriving at or departing from school by bicycle and pedestrian trips remained the same.

c) Comparison Morning and Afternoon Travel by Weather

Number of trips changed significantly by weather condition. Trips were higher for overcast conditions (1898) comparing to Sunny (363), Rainy (0), or Snow (0). During the overcast day, Trips were higher by family vehicle (77%). On the same overcast weather conditions, bicycles (6%) and walking (3%) trips remained the same.

2. Parents' Surveys

The Parent's Survey¹ was administered by school staff under the direction of Ms. Ali Parkinson. The survey serves to collect information about student travel patterns; and strives to capture important information on parental attitudes on whether kid's bike and walk trips are appropriate.

For instance, important written comments made by parents are included in the report. Among others, these include: roadway safety; pedestrian/bicyclist crossing safety at the Columbia Road at 40th Street intersection level; location of school site; school parking lot, and children's drop-off or pick-up.

¹ The questionnaire was in English. Although versions of the same questionnaire are available in Arabic, Chinese, and other languages.

Those comments will be analyzed and addressed through the recommendations and proposed initiatives – if appropriate.-

The survey results will help determine how to improve opportunities for children to walk or bike to school, and measure parental attitude changes as local SRTS programs occur. Safe Routes to School programs are required to administer the survey in order to become eligible for federal Safe Routes to School funding.

- Discovery Elementary School
- Data Collected on : November, 2015
- % Students reached by SRTS Activities: 76-100
- #Questionnaires Analyzed:113
- Participating Classrooms: 19
- Report Generated on: December, 2015
November 16, 2015
- # Questionnaires Distributed: 375
- Response Rate: 30%

A summary of the survey's results shows:

Participating children were 40% female and 60% male as indicated by their parents. Kindergarten (22) represented the larger group (22%) followed by 4th graders (21) (19%). The estimated distance from school was more than 2 miles for (31%); 1 mile up to 2 miles for (24%); and ½ mile up to 1 mile for (23%) of the students.

The typical mode of arrival (75%) and departure (61%) from school is the family vehicle. Considering the arrival and departure by distance child lives from the school, the prevalent mode, was the family vehicle. The longer the distance the greater the percent of those using family vehicle.

The percent of children who have asked for permission to walk or bike to/from school by distance they live from school declines according to the distance. When asked for permission, Yes corresponds to 83% of children living less than ¼ mile. No corresponds to 75% of children living ¼ mile up to ½; 81% corresponds to children living more than 2 miles away.

The decision to not to allow a child to walk or bike to/from school by parents of children who do not walk or bike to/from school is affected by a number of factors. These include a) Safety of intersections and crossings (68%); b) Speed of traffic along route (68%); c) Amount of traffic along route (65%); d) Distance (63%); and e) Weather or climate (61%).

The decision to allow a child to walk or bike to/from school by parents of children who already walk or bike to/from school is affected by a) Safety of intersections and crossings (73%); b) Sidewalks or pathways (73%); Distance (64%).

Parents' opinions about how much their child's school encourages or discourages walking and biking to/from school indicated that 57% remained neutral (neither encouraged nor discouraged). Parent opinions about how much fun walking and biking to/from school is for their child was neutral for 34%; fun for 30% and very fun for 21%. Parents' opinions about how healthy walking and biking to/from school is for their child were very healthy for (57%) and healthy for (25%).

A number of comments were provided by parents. Issues dealing with distance to/from school, intersection safety, school's location, road safety were considered as some of the factors preventing children from walking and biking to/from school. Complete survey results are in the attachments.

3. School Observation Assessment

The following comments are the result of the School Observations conducted on August 31st (First Day of School); and on October 14, 2015 (Typical Day at School/Pick-up observations). These comments were shared with members of the Steering Committee at the Meeting held on December 7th, 2015, and go along with the attached PowerPoint presentation.

a) School Observations: Aug 31st – First Day of School

- First day of school was chaotic (traffic wise), as expected. A lot of parents wanted to take pictures in front of the south entrance to the school.
- Most vehicles came from the northeast of the school site.
- Queues extended east of S 32nd St on 40th Ave S to the north of the school site with vehicles parked on both sides of S 32nd St. Although, not allowed, vehicles were parked on 43rd Ave S and S 34th St as well in addition to residential streets in the vicinity of the school (e.g. Crystal Dr).
- The school bus, due to vehicles parked on both sides of S 32nd St and uncourteous drivers, could not turn into the school driveway during drop-off.
- In the east parking lot, the parents walked their kids to and from their cars as instructed by the school staff. There was no double parking in the south driveway.
- Safe Kids helped a lot along with volunteers

b) Oct 14th – Typical Day at School (Pick-up observations)

- Approx. 15 minutes prior to dismissal, buses are seen staged in the east parking lot and cars are seen lined up in the south driveway.
- The temporary crosswalk sign was observed in the east parking lot. Note that there is a ramp on the school side of it but it leads to a parking spot on the other end of it.
- A lot of bikes were observed in the bike racks. Safe Kids, the school staff, and the parents seem to have done an excellent job encouraging kids to bike to/from school.
- During dismissal, the school staff was observed actively assisting kids. The staff was observed coordinating with school bus drivers and parents to ensure student safety. The kids seemed obedient and stayed behind the yellow lines marked on the perimeter around the school
- Parents were seen walking their kids to and from their cars in the east parking lot.
- A few incidents were observed where students were picked up in the No Parking Zone in the east parking lot making it tricky for buses to maneuver around them.
- Approx. 12 minutes prior to dismissal, spillback from the queue in the south driveway was observed. The queue then grew and was observed extending onto S 32nd St north of 43rd Ave S. The south parking lot filled up just a couple of minutes into dismissal.
- As a result some kids were picked up on 43rd Ave S east of the school driveway.
- A few unauthorized vehicles, probably belonging to construction crews working nearby, were seen parked on S 32nd St.
- The school crosswalk on S 32nd St south of Crystal Drive is missing ramps.
- Voluntary Crossing Guards helped students safely cross the raised crosswalk leading into the south parking lot.
- The duration of dismissal was approx. 12 minutes.
- A gravel path was installed by the City. Several tire markings were observed on the path. Also, according to statement from Safe Kids, the path is safe for biking and walking. The school and Safe Kids brought up safety issues due to lack of a grate on the box culvert under Columbia Rd at 40th Ave S. Notice that in the past, a stakeholder advocating for the mobility of disable people and others, has questioned the compliance of the gravel pathway with the American with Disability Act.

V. Comments by Stakeholders

1. School Safety Patrols:

There was a suggestion to establish school guards at Discovery. These are some considerations to the program:

- a) It appears there is a lack funding available to cover expenditures by the city or school district;
- b) A lack of volunteer personnel to take care of the crossings;
- ⇒ It appears the school is located too far away from intersection of 40th at Columbia Road to put crossing guards. It is apparent, the staff crossing guards cannot leave school early enough to get to 40th and Columbia due to their responsibilities in the school.

2. Safety at Intersections:

School District is still interested in the construction of an underpass at 40th at Columbia Road. Kids have continued using the culvert as a passage way. Kids are still going through the culvert; this situation is potentially dangerous. Parents have expressed concern about this intersection to the school administration. The school district has voiced this traffic concern throughout the past Safe Routes planning meetings.

When considering the concerns voiced by the School District, the stakeholder representing the Engineering Department brought the following issues to those in attendance:

- a) Need to advance a due diligence study;
- b) Need to develop the main concept design;
- c) Existing physical constraints (at site location);
- d) Need to request warrants to consider the underpass including the need for mitigation;
- e) Required right of way could be more than existing right of way available.
- f) Consider whether the project is or could be eligible for federal funding; and
- g) Gas main remains a concern. Its presence could impact the design of required underpass.

According to the School District, perceived roadway's area speed continues being a factor preventing children from safely walking/biking to/from school. It is proposed that in the event it 43rd becomes an intersection, that a flashing crossing walk system be added. (I think it was called a Hawk system)?

However, according to the stakeholder representing the City of Grand Forks, Engineering Department; the traffic control signal at 43rd and Columbia has not been determined, it depends on how the east side of Columbia develops, it could possibly be a traffic signal (most likely; but must be studied to ensure warrants have been met). Per the current MUTCD HAWK signal cannot be used at intersections. (A HAWK is not an option for Columbia and 43rd, as with anything in the MUTCD this is subject to change.)

3. On Proximity to School:

School District plans to set sidewalk on east side of bus pick-up leading up to 32nd by spring. Raised crosswalk on East side of parent's drop of by June or spring 2016. Other needs include adding parking availability for school events; and parking on Northside.

Conflicting movements on parking lot (parents, buses, staff)

Crystal Drive missing ramp: The accessible ramps at Crystal and S 32nd St are being installed next summer.

Is Gravel Path ADA's Compliant?

School District is recommending fencing of the retention pond

It is suggested School District Architects could benefit from a review of the two sets of recommendations produced for the MPO by the Advanced Traffic Analysis Center Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute at North Dakota State University.

4. Comment Period (Columbia Road from S 40th to 47th Street)

Notices inviting residents to participate at the Public Comment process for the construction of Colombia Road from 40th to 47th Street were sent to all listed property owners in the area. However, there is some confusion concerning the letter addressed to the Discovery School. It appears the notice for Discovery School was sent to Building & Grounds. The School District questioned receiving this notice.

According to stakeholder representing the City of Grand Forks, Engineering Department, the public notice was mailed to the Grand Forks Public Schools (not Building and Grounds). In addition, a follow-up October 22, 2015 e-mail was sent to emergency services, schools and transit staff (Mike Ferguson, Gina Hardley, Dale Bergman, Bruce Hoeger, Ali Parkinson, Nancy Dutot) to make certain there was awareness of the project and of the detour routes.

Still, School District would like consideration to the given to an underpass at 40th at Columbia Rd. However, several steps must be considered:

5. Warrants for an underpass
6. Federal funding (If federal funding was not available then it would be local dollars and most likely would include an assessment district.)
7. Feasibility Studies
8. Gas main/other constraints



Earl Haugen, Executive Director

**DISCOVERY SCHOOL
SAFE ROUTE TO SCHOOL INITIATIVE**

Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

DATE/TIME: Monday, February 29, 2016 9:30 AM

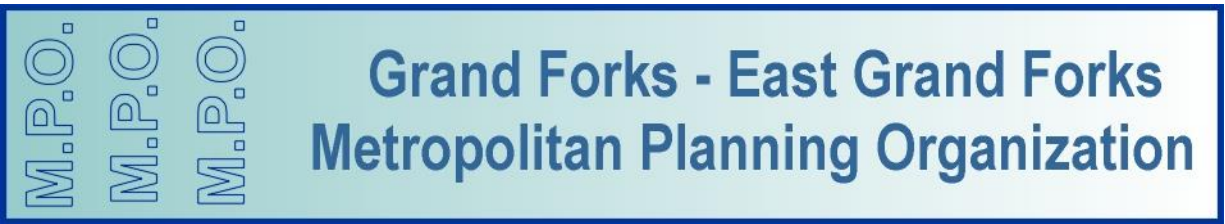
LOCATION: Conference Room, City of Grand Forks Planning Department
City Hall 255 N 4th Street

STUDY: Discovery School Safe Route to School

PURPOSE:

- Solicit other complementary initiatives in the context of the 6 “E”s (Stakeholders)
- Request authorization to use your organization’s logo on cover of the report (See proposed Cover and Disclaimer)
- Review proposed strategies and supporting rationale (Sharma)
- Discuss any other matter that may be curtailing safe mobility, accessibility and connectivity for all users in the Discovery School Catchment Area.

AGENDA BY: Jairo Viafara, MPO staff.
 Phone (701) 746-2656 or (218) 399-3272



Earl Haugen, Executive Director

**DISCOVERY SCHOOL
SAFE ROUTE TO SCHOOL INITIATIVE**

Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

DATE/TIME: Wednesday March 16, 2016 9:00 AM Rescheduled from February 29, 2016

LOCATION: Conference Room, City of Grand Forks Planning Department
City Hall 255 N 4th Street

STUDY: Discovery School Safe Route to School

PURPOSE:

- Review proposed recommendations and supporting rationale
- Solicit other complementary initiatives in the context of the 6 “E”s (Stakeholders)
- Request authorization to use your organization’s logo on cover of the report
- (See proposed Cover and Disclaimer)
- Discuss any other matter that may be curtailing safe mobility, accessibility and connectivity for all users in the Discovery School Catchment Area.

MINUTES/PROCEEDINGS BY:

Jairo Viafara, MPO staff.

Phone (701) 746-2656 (MWF) or (218) 399-3272 (TTH)

I. ATTENDANCE:

Ms. Ali Parkinson, Principal Discovery School

Mr. Jodi Thompson, Assistant Grand Forks School Superintendent

Ms. Stephanie Erickson, Planner, City of Grand Forks

Ms. Patty Olsen, Community Resource Safe Kids Grand Forks

Mr. Kshitij Sharma, Senior Researcher ATAC

Ms. Kim Greendahl - Greenway Specialist - City of Grand Forks (Observer)

II. REGRETS

Lt. Jeff Burgess, City of Grand Forks, Community Relations Bureau, Policy Department
Ms. Carma Hanson, Safe Kids Grand Forks
Ms. Ali Rood, Mobility Manager, City Area Transit.
Mr. Corey Birkholtz, ADA Specialist, Interstate Resource Centre for Independent Living Options

III. ABSENCES

Ms. Jane Williams, Department of Engineering

IV. DELIBERATIONS

The meeting started at 9:00 am. The first order of business was to request stakeholders to share their agency's comments on the report: a) Structure; b) Contents and; c) Organization (Table of Contents).

Those in attendance agreed with the structure of the draft report as it was presented. However, stakeholders were informed about a number of verbal comments received from the stakeholder representing the Department of Engineering. Those comments were received in lieu of the written comments promised. At the moment, MPO staff has not received any written statements. Hence, a brief review of those verbal comments –as far as it was possible to be recalled - took place.

The comments received from Engineering-albeit verbal- encompassed structure, contents, and organization of the draft document. It is the MPO's staff's opinion, that the comments received from Engineering are sound. In this regard, every effort will be made –to the best of our knowledge- to incorporate them into the Final version of the report.

The following stakeholders were unable to attend: City Area Transit, Options. Thus, they were asked to provide a response to the following questions:

- a) Your comments on the draft report submitted for your consideration
- b) Your Agency's authorization to use your logo on the cover of the report. There will be a disclaimer releasing your Agency of any responsibility concerning the authorship.
- c) A blurb describing your Agency and its activities
- d) In addition to the proposed recommendations; what would your Agency contribute to improving access and mobility in the area for school aged kids and other vulnerable populations.

Cities Area Transit provided a response. Options is reviewing the draft report for comment. Responses to the previous questions had been received a few days ago from the City of Grand Forks, Community Relations Bureau (Police Department); and from Safe Kids.

1. REVIEW PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUPPORTING RATIONALE (SHARMA)

Mr. Kshitij Sharma, Senior Researcher ATAC presented the recommendations proposed to improve traffic access, reduce congestion, improve parking lot movements, and improve the safety of pedestrian and bicyclist at the Discovery School. The following Recommendations were made back in November, 2013. At the MPO request, ATAC put together the current status, implication of the current status, and school staff comments. The recommendations have been reviewed to determine whether the issues identified in the past still persist; another objective was to figure out the cause of such persistence. The recommendations were presented at the Steering Committee in hopes that stakeholders may come together to discuss best course of action for the future of each one of the items identified under Implications or Staff Comments section. In total, the 11 recommendations previously proposed and discussed aimed at addressing the following site related conditions:

- Length of spill over parking
- Diagonal Parking
- Short term parking location
- Short term parking spaces
- Exclusive left-turn lane to school at 43rd Avenue South
- Exclusive left-turn to school at South 34th Street
- Exclusive right-turn lane to school at South 34th Street
- Sidewalk on north side of parking lot
- Raised cross-walk connecting sidewalks on the north and west side of the east parking lot
- Driveway at South 34th Street
- East parking lot use by buses (recommended for exclusive use for staff and buses)
- East parking lot use by buses (bus staging)/Bid in progress

All the proposed recommendations, including initial traffic impact analysis studies performed before and after school construction and supporting engineering justifications were submitted for consideration of staff at Discovery School. Staff had ample lead time for review, comment and acceptance. Discovery School staff also had the opportunity to review them all and to address their applicability.

After a thorough review, staff at Discovery School has begun making plans for their implementation. Currently, a bid is in progress to put in north-east sidewalk on school premises tentatively for spring/summer, 2016.

The MPO is preparing a review of previous site-based proposed recommendations to improve access and mobility around a number of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks school premises. Thus, implementation and fulfillment of the proposed recommendations for Discovery School will be considered at that time.

In addition, School District's staff indicated their concerns for the safety and well-being of children walking and biking to and from the school site. In this regard, they argued that:

“The School District is still interested in the construction of an underpass at 40th at Columbia Road. Parents have expressed concern about this intersection to the school administration. The school district has voiced this traffic concern throughout the past Safe Routes planning meetings. Concerns

for safety include worries about children using the culvert as a passage way in coming months. The prospect of children once again through the culvert is worrisome. In their view, this situation is potentially dangerous.”

MPO staff will bring this matter of the attention of the Executive Director for further consideration.

Editor’s Note:

Comments on draft Report were received from Grand Forks Engineering Department, Options, and ATAC. MPO staff has devoted time to address concerns brought to our attention by the Engineering Department. A correction concerning the Proposed Recommendation was made. Accordingly, those recommendations were made back in November 2013. ATAC has put forward their current status and corresponding staff comments. Comments brought to our attention by Options will be included in the draft report.

May 30, 2016

SOLICIT OTHER COMPLEMENTARY INITIATIVES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 6 “E”S (STAKEHOLDERS)

Responses from City of Grand Forks, Community Relations Bureau, Policy Department and Safe Kids were received earlier; and were included in the draft report.

At the meeting, staff from Safe Kids North Dakota outlined the various programs the Agency has advanced in cooperation with Discovery School in the areas of safe route to school, child passenger safety, helmet use and other practices dedicated to improve children safety and mobility. Due to the close relationship between Discovery School and Safe Kids’ staff, the partnership will be consulting on scheduling new activities to be initiated for the benefits of the kids attending Discovery School.

The response from City Area Transit (CAT) reached us after the meeting of the Steering Committee. According to their response, thus far, no group-based transit training is being provided due to the lack of transit services in this area of the City. CAT will be looking forward to partnering with the Discovery School to provided either individualized or group based transit training

2. REQUEST AUTHORIZATION TO USE YOUR ORGANIZATION’S LOGO ON COVER OF THE REPORT

The use of Agency’ logos on the cover of the Final Report have been authorized by the respective Agencies:

- City of Grand Forks, Community Relations Bureau, Policy Department: Provided a new “patch.”
- Safe Kids Grand Forks
- City Area Transit
- Discovery School
- ATAC: Provided a new logo
- City of Grand Forks (Planning Department)

The following disclaimer will be included: The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Grand Forks –East Grand Forks MPO, cooperating Agencies, not any agency of the U.S. Government.

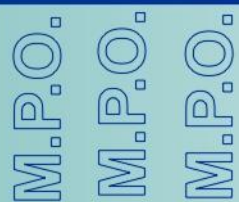
3. DISCUSS ANY OTHER MATTER THAT MAY BE CURTAILING SAFE MOBILITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY FOR ALL USERS IN THE DISCOVERY SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREA.

None. However, it was indicated the MPO is planning to undertake a review of the strategies included in the Grand Forks/East Grand Forks School Safety Study (2014).

The purpose of the study is to provide an answer to the following questions:

- a) Are the projects still needed?
- b) Are the projects still desired?
- c) What has been completed? And
- d) What new issues should be addressed?

The meeting concluded at 11:00 am. minutes fourth meeting stakeholders Tuesday, May 31, 2016



Grand Forks - East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization

Earl Haugen, Executive Director

DISCOVERY SCHOOL

Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

DATE/TIME: Monday, June 20th, 2016 9:00 A.M

LOC ATION: Conference Room, City of Grand Forks Planning Department
City Hall 255 N 4th Street

STUDY: Discovery School Safe Route to School

PURPOSE: The purpose is to provide final feedback and input on draft Safe Routes to School for Discovery Elementary School Report. Please see attachment. This version incorporates insights, comments and feedback from stakeholders. The report also incorporates reviewed recommendations to improve on children's safety on their way to and from school.

1. Introductions
2. Agenda
3. Study Overview
4. Comments
5. Approval of Draft Report

AGENDA BY: Jairo Viafara, MPO staff.
Phone (701) 746-2656 or (218) 399-3272

RSVP: June Friday 17, 2016