

# Safe Routes to School Plan



Village of West Salem  
La Crosse County, Wisconsin  
5-7 year Guide

July 2010



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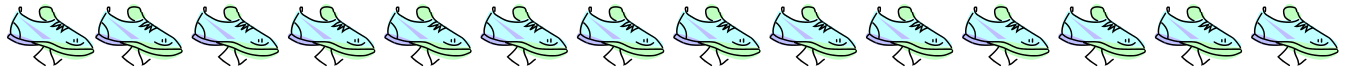
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This Plan was created by the Village of West Salem Bicycle and Pedestrian Ad Hoc Committee.



## Chapter 1: Introduction



### 1.1 Safe Routes to School Information

#### History

Safe Routes to School, or SRTS, is an international initiative to increase the number of children who safely walk and bike to school. Safe Routes to School programs began in Denmark in the 1970's. At the time, communities were reporting a high number of injuries and fatalities among children while walking and biking to school and developed the concept of SRTS to reverse this trend. The Bronx, New York, implemented the first Safe Routes to School program in the United States in 1997 for the same reasons. In 1998, two Safe Routes to School pilot programs were funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Since then, Safe Routes to School programs have sprung up all across the United States, including here in the Coulee Region.

#### Why Safe Routes to School is Needed

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, over the last thirty years the number of children actively commuting to and from school has drastically decreased from 42% in 1969 to just 14% in 2001. Communities all over the county have witnessed the negative consequences of fewer children walking and biking to school. Schools are reporting morning and afternoon traffic congestion that poses a threat to bicyclist and pedestrians. Childhood obesity rates are on the rise due to physical inactivity and more sedentary lifestyles. Due to the overwhelming number of automobiles idling during after-school hours, air pollution has become a problem around schools. All of these factors combined, show the need for a Safe Routes to School program to make walking and biking to school a safe, appealing, and attractive choice for children to get to and from school.

Safe Routes to School programs and activities can have profound effects on schools, neighborhoods, individuals, and communities as a whole. One benefit of Safe Routes to School is that it gets children active and moving. Engaging children in morning and afternoon walking or riding is a great way to increase their physical activity level. Physical activity, or lack of, is a key factor in the development of childhood obesity and overweight children. Children and adults who are overweight or obese are at risk for a variety of other chronic health related issues including heart disease, high blood pressure, joint problems, diabetes, and self-esteem issues. Actively commuting via foot power is one way to curb this rising problem in children.

In communities where a high number of children walk and bike to school, there are fewer cars dropping off and picking up, which eases the traffic congestion around schools and on roads near schools. Fewer cars results in less pollution being emitted into the air, which benefits people of all ages within the community. Reducing traffic congestion also promotes



safer walking or bicycling conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians throughout the community, not just near schools.

Children who walk and bike to school have the opportunity to learn independence and responsibility. They can enjoy time outdoors with their parents and friends, and at the same time get to know their community and neighborhood. Safe Routes to School helps build partnerships to make the community a safe, inviting place for children and adults to walk and bike not only to school, but to many other destinations. In today's culture where most trips are taken by vehicle, the Safe Routes to School program is a first step we can take to shift our way of thinking from relying on four wheels as our main source of transportation to relying on our own two feet.

In 2005, Congress passed legislation making Safe Routes to School a federally-funded program. Funds were distributed to all fifty states, based on population, to be used to implement Safe Routes to School programs at the local level. Safe Routes to School funding focuses on elementary and middle schools, and projects have to take place within 2-miles of a K-8 school. In Wisconsin the SRTS funding is distributed to communities through a competitive grant process. The Village of West Salem Bicycle and Pedestrian Ad Hoc Committee chose to complete this Safe Routes to School Plan independently so the Village and School District of West Salem can be eligible for infrastructure and non-infrastructure funding in 2010.

## 1.2 Components of Safe Routes to School

There are five key areas of SRTS that focus on walking and biking to school as a safe and appealing choice for students and families. Before implementing activities, it is important for schools and communities to develop a Safe Routes to School Plan. To do this, a community looks at the bicycle and pedestrian facilities surrounding a school and identifies any concerns and issues related to walking and biking to school. Once a community has an idea of what the issues are affecting the safety of students walking and biking to school, they can make recommendations for improvements.

Safe Routes to School is more than just planning—It is also about implementing programs and activities that will get children out of vehicles and walking and biking. The other key components of the Safe Routes to School program are:

**Engineering:** Engineering or infrastructure impediments may be the biggest factor affecting the ability of students to walk or bike to and from school. Without proper infrastructures such as sidewalks, pathways, or other safe places to walk, children and parents or guardians may not feel comfortable making the switch from driving to walking or biking. Infrastructure changes are physical modifications to the areas surrounding a school that increase safety. They can include increased signage, lighting, bike lanes, sidewalks, crosswalks, or curb ramps.



**Education:** Education efforts include students, parents, school staff, as well as the community. Education efforts and those involved are keys to making the area around a school safe and inviting for walkers and bikers. It is important to educate students on how to be safe bicyclists and pedestrians whether through the classroom or other educational opportunities. It is important to educate parents, drivers, and school staff on how they can contribute to a safe school environment as well. The community as a whole should be educated about the Safe Routes to School program which can be done through media and advertising.

**Encouragement:** Encouragement activities focus on the fun and exciting side of walking and biking to school. Through these activities students and families realize walking and biking to school can be a safe, fun, healthy, and EASY choice. Examples of encouragement activities include International Walk to School Day, Bike to School Day and Walking School Buses.

**Enforcement:** Partnering with local law enforcement is an additional way to promote a safe environment surrounding schools. Often the presence of law enforcement is enough to cause drivers to slow down and obey traffic laws. An additional component of enforcement is working with school safety patrol programs as well as crossing guard programs.

**Evaluation:** Evaluation measures are key to maintaining an effective Safe Routes to School program. Through parent surveys and classroom tallies, schools and communities can measure whether their Safe Routes to School activities are having an impact not only on the number of students actively commuting, but also on the concerns of parents and guardians.

Together, all of these components create a comprehensive approach to implementing a Safe Routes to School program and increase the number of students walking and biking to and from school.

### 1.3 The Planning Process

Since early 2008, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Ad Hoc Committee (BPAC) has focused their attention on establishing a Safe Routes to School program in the Village of West Salem and surrounding areas. This report is largely centered around the School District of West Salem which includes one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school, located on a single campus. At this time, the elementary school is the main focus, with hopes of expanding to include the middle school as well as the two private schools in the Village.

The process of developing this SRTS Plan started in early 2008 and was led by the work of the Safe Routes to School Task Force commonly called the Bicycle and Pedestrian Ad Hoc Committee. The task force is made up of citizens and bicycling enthusiast who want to make the Village of West Salem a safe place for children to walk and bike to school. The group wants to activate more families to choose walking and biking for trips, not only to school, but to places such as the Boys and Girls Club, grocery store, library, and parks. Safe Route to School is an important piece in involving children and schools in active commuting. Members of the



committee include community members, school district administrators, health department representative, parents, police representative, and business leaders.

The group collected information on the existing conditions of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the Village of West Salem during walking audits. An inventory was compiled and the group prioritized a list of what could be changed to increase safety for walkers and riders. This list will be used to set long and short term goals. The Safe Routes to School Plan currently focuses on West Salem Elementary School and will expand to include the two parochial schools in the future.

### 1.4 Task Force members

Members of the Bicycle Pedestrian Committee are as follows:

#### West Salem Bicycle Pedestrian Committee

Name	Position/Affiliation
Sharon Fuller	Chair, Citizen, Bicyclist
Joseph Belling	Citizen, Bicyclist
Rick Kline	School District Transportation
Helen Harold	Citizen, Bicyclist
Monte Wick	Citizen, Bicyclist
Tim Tiber	Citizen, parent, Class A Bicyclist
Lisa Gerke	Assistant Elementary Principal, Parent
Charles Ashbeck	Police Chief, parent
James Koelbl	Village Board representative
Carl Wallace	Friends of the La Crosse River State Trail
John Lautz	Citizen, Bicyclist
Ginny Loehr	La Crosse County Health Dept./SRTS Coordinator
Jackie Eastwood	La Crosse Area Planning Committee, Technical Advisor

### 1.5 Community Information

The Village of West Salem is located in La Crosse County, in west central Wisconsin along Interstate 90, about fifteen miles east of the City of La Crosse. The Village is surrounded by the entities of the Towns of Hamilton, Barre, Medary, the Village of Bangor, and the City of Onalaska. The population is 4,884 with the School District of West Salem serving the children in the area. The Village is also served by two private schools: Coulee Region Christian School and Christ St. Johns. The Village has over forty-five subdivisions and six commercial areas. The Village is located in a coulee of the La Crosse-Bad Axe River Basin, and includes Lake Neshonoc, a 600-acre lake adjacent to the northeast corporate limits. West Salem is largely a service



center for local farm communities and a place of residence for workers who commute to other locations.

Major highways within the Village are Interstate 90 and State Highway 16. STH 16 runs east to west through the northwest portion of the Village and connects with Onalaska and La Crosse. The Canadian Pacific Railway is within the Village, and there is freight siding in the Lakeview Business Park and the downtown area. County roads M, B, and C are also within the Village limits: M traverses north and south, B east and west, C east and west with major arterials of Neshonoc, Garland, and Leonard Streets. The Village of West Salem has one designated Rustic Road.

Pedestrian facilities are not mapped by the Village of West Salem. The West Salem Comprehensive Plan notes the following: “For the most part, the roadways in suburban and urban fringe areas of the planning are constructed with curb and gutter, yet these roads generally lack sidewalks, and have a narrow, 3-ft gutter pan, and or a wide curb lane within which a pedestrian might travel (not recommended). The lack of sidewalks forces pedestrians to walk in roadways, increasing the likelihood of pedestrian/motor vehicle crashes. The Village has gaps in the sidewalks system or lacks sidewalks entirely in the fringe areas. This is mainly due to the incorporated areas annexing unincorporated areas that were not under development requirements to provide sidewalks”. The Village has formally adopted a sidewalk policy and requires sidewalks one year after occupancy for new construction and is enforced in all zoning districts, residential and commercial. All new sidewalks must be four feet wide and must be of concrete.

The Village of West Salem has access to many on-road bicycle routes. A list of the off-road bicycle routes as found in the 2030 Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan are:

**La Crosse River State Trail:** Developed on an abandoned rail line, this 21.5-mile trail heads east from its connection with the Great River State Trail in La Crosse to West Salem and beyond to Sparta where it connects with the 33-mile Elroy-Sparta State Trail. While most bicyclists and hikers use this crushed limestone facility for recreational purposes, some bicyclists use the facility to commute the seven miles between West Salem and La Crosse.

**West Salem Veteran’s Park Trail:** This trail is an 8-foot wide asphalt trail that connects Veteran’s Park on the west side of the Village to the street network at Heritage Lane. From here, an on-road bicycle route connects bicyclists to the sidewalk on the south side of State Highway 16.

**Planned Trail Improvements:** La Crosse County now has a multipurpose trail system proposed as part of a traditional neighborhood development on La Crosse County Farm and abutting lands. The trail will extend from the La Crosse River State Trail, north to the Neshonoc Park south around Lake Neshonoc, north to the Swarthout park, and beyond to Neshonoc Beach. The primary function of the trail is recreational; however, it will





provide essential commuter links between residential areas and the Lakeview Business Park as well as fringe areas of new housing developments. This includes the Neshonoc Lake Addition and annexed La Crosse County farmland for residential development.

**Pathways:** The Village of West Salem Economic Development Advisory Committee applied for Wisconsin DOT Enhancement funding. “Pathways” encompasses seven blocks in downtown West Salem with improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists. From the La Crosse River State Trail, Pathways would advance economic development and improve tourism. It provides safe connections to the Village parks, bike shelters, residential neighborhoods, and traffic calming, while creating an esthetically inviting streetscape. Improvements will provide multimodal pathways, decorative lighting, pavers, benches, green space, and easily readable signs. A logical link to and around the downtown area is created, with dedicated options for pedestrians and bicyclist, promoting walking and bicycling to work and for recreation. Providing safe routes for children is an important aspect of the Pathways project.

## **1.6 School Information**

### **School District of West Salem**

The School District of West Salem contains one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school located on a single campus on the east edge of town. The approximate enrollment is 1700 students Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, but is growing every year as more residential developments are built. The school is located in an area of the Village with fairly complete sidewalks networks leading to school. Many students attending West Salem schools live in rural areas outside the Village, and, therefore, must rely on school transportation or family vehicle in order to get to school. Approximately 1,350 students (80%) are eligible to receive busing services both due to distance and hazardous conditions. At this time, the middle school and private schools are not involved in creating this Plan.

#### **Christ-St. John’s Lutheran School**

Christ –St. John’s Lutheran School is located off Highway 16 on the east end of town. The approximate enrollment is 115 students in Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Most students attending the school live outside of town (75%) with just 25% of students living in town, or within walking distance.

#### **Coulee Region Christian School**

Coulee Region Christian School is located on Garland Street just blocks from the School District of West Salem campus. There are approximately 127 students Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Students that attend Coulee Region Christian School reside throughout the regional area, not just within West Salem.



## **Chapter 2: Community Vision and Goals for Safe Routes to School**



### **2.1 Village of West Salem Safe Routes to School Vision**

The community of West Salem, represented by the Village Board, the School District, parents, students, law enforcement, and local neighborhoods, is committed to enabling and encouraging children to safely walk and bicycle to school. Through education, encouragement, engineering, enforcement, and continual evaluation strategies, we will implement and maintain programs and guidelines for identifying hazards and needs which will promote Safe Routes to School. Safe routes for today, healthier futures for tomorrow.

### **2.2 Village of West Salem Safe Routes to School Goals**

#### **Safe Routes to School Goals for the Village of West Salem**

- Increase the number of people walking and bicycling
- Educate and promote awareness with motorists about bicycle/pedestrian laws
- Identify and remedy infrastructure impediments to walking and bicycling
- Work with the local police department to enforce bicycle/pedestrian traffic laws along designated safe routes
- Educate students on bicycle and pedestrian safety and regulations
- Promote bicycle/pedestrian safety and use in the Village's long range planning
- Educate parents, students, faculty and the community on the health and environmental benefits of walking and bicycling
- Work with the Village's Bicycle and Pedestrian Ad Hoc Committee to facilitate, develop, and implement projects and to promote awareness on current and future Village needs
- Annually evaluate the Safe Routes to School program through parent surveys and classroom tallies



## Chapter 3: Current Conditions



### 3.1 School Enrollment boundaries

The School District of West Salem attracts students from eleven different municipalities. They include: the Village of West Salem and the Towns of Barre Mills, Burns, Farmington, Greenfield, Hamilton, Medary, Shelby, Washington, and Bangor, and the City of La Crosse. The District has a growing enrollment of over 1,700 (PreK-12). It is comprised of one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school, located in a campus setting in the Village of West Salem.

See **Appendix A** for a map of the School District of West Salem enrollment boundaries.

### 3.2 School walking and bicycling policies

#### 3.2.1 School Transportation Policy # 751

The School District of West Salem's Student Transportation Policy states that all students living two or more miles from the school they attend shall be transported. Students living less than two miles from school shall be transported if they live in an area designated by the State as subject to "unusual hazard while walking to school". Students in grades 7-12 however, may be required to walk in "unusual hazard" areas if it is less than ½ mile. See **Appendix B** for the complete transportation policy.

#### 3.2.2 School Wellness Policy

The West Salem School District is committed to preparing children and young adults for a successful and fulfilling life. Through classroom instruction and extracurricular activities, they are positively contributing to the general well-being, mental and physical capacity, and learning ability of each student. As childhood obesity rates continue to rise along with other health conditions related to it, the School District recognizes its role in halting this alarming trend. It is the policy of the West Salem School District to provide healthy school environments that promote nutritious food choices and physical activity. In 2006, the School District implemented their wellness policy, # 452, to encourage optimal health and well-being of students attending their schools. The policy focuses on practices relating to access to nutritious food as well as physical activity recommendations. Currently, students at the elementary level are offered two recesses lasting for approximately 25 minutes each. They also participate in physical education class three times per week. A third area the policy addresses is practices for staff to follow when rewarding incentives to students and when organizing birthday snacks in the classroom. See **Appendix C** for the complete wellness policy.



### **3.3 Village pedestrian and bicycling-related ordinances**

**3.3.1 (A) Duty to Build.** The owner or owners of any lot or parcel of land within the corporate limits of the Village of West Salem shall lay, remove, replace, or repair the sidewalks or cause the same to be done, within or upon a public street or avenue adjacent to and abutting upon said lot or parcel of land if and when the Board shall determine it to be necessary for the benefit and use of the public, and no sidewalk which shall be constructed contrary to the provisions of this Code shall be considered a legal sidewalk and the same may be ordered to be replaced with a legal sidewalk in conformity with this Code, the same as if no sidewalk whatever had been built or constructed in the place where any such sidewalk is located.

**3.3.2 (F) Notice to Build or Repair.** When it is the opinion of the Village Board (pursuant to Subsection A of this section) that a sidewalk ought to be constructed or that any sidewalk requires repairing, rebuilding, or should be replaced, the said Village Board shall without petition or request direct the Village Administrator to notify the owner of the lot or tract of land abutting on said sidewalk or said proposed sidewalk to repair the same within sixty (60) days from the date of the service of the notice, to build a new sidewalk or rebuild the sidewalk within ninety (90) days from the date of the service of the notice, as the case may be, provided however, that if the notice is given between August 1st and May 1st (of the following year) the time period commences to run from May 1st.

**3.3.3 (J) Removal of Snow and Ice.** The owner, agent, occupant, or person in charge of each and every building fronting upon or adjoining any street and the owner or agent of unoccupied buildings or parcels of land fronting as aforesaid shall clean the sidewalk in front of or adjoining such building or unoccupied lot or building as the case may be, of snow or ice to the width of such sidewalk. This must be accomplished within twenty-four (24) hours after snow has ceased to fall or within twenty-four (24) hours of the formation of ice, and cause the same to be kept clear from snow and ice, provided that in case snow shall continue to fall for some time, it shall be removed as soon as practicable after it shall cease to fall, and provided that when ice has formed upon any sidewalk so that it cannot be immediately removed, the person herein referred to shall keep the ice sprinkled with ashes, salt, or sand. No person in the course of removing snow or ice from any private property shall cause or permit the snow or ice to be placed or left on any public way. (Updated: 10/18/05)

**3.3.4 (K) Obstructions.** No landowner or occupant of land shall allow branches of trees to grow over the sidewalk at a height of less than ten (10) feet, and no landowner or occupant of land shall allow any shrubbery or bush to encroach upon the sidewalk.

**3.3.5 (N) Sidewalk Repair or Construction.** Adjacent property owners building, repairing, constructing and perpetually maintaining sidewalks along or upon any street, alley or



highway in the Village of West Salem shall pay the cost thereof pursuant to this section. A sidewalk map as recommended by the Planning Commission and adopted by the Village Board shall be the basis of selecting proposed sidewalk locations throughout the Village. All new plats shall require sidewalks in accordance with this Ordinance.

### **3.4 Related Data**

#### **3.4.1 Crash Data**

Since 2003 there have been only two reported crashes involving pedestrians and four reported crashes involving bicyclists in the Village of West Salem. All locations where these incidents occurred would not be part of a route where children would be walking or biking to schools in West Salem.

#### **3.4.2 Annual Average Daily Traffic**

Traffic counts are reported by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation as the number of vehicles expected to pass a given location on an average day of the year. Many locations in West Salem are studied; however the location of greatest concern in the Village is Highway 16. In 2008 the AADT for Highway 16 was 7,700.

The BPAC communicated with the Wisconsin DOT and was approved for early installation of countdown timers at two locations on Highway 16 (West Avenue and Brickl Road). The timers were installed in May of 2010.



### 3.4.3 Bicycle/Pedestrian Counts

In the fall of 2009, the La Crosse Area Planning Commission counted bicyclists and pedestrians at major intersections throughout La Crosse County. The chart below details the counts taken in the West Salem area.

Intersection / Roadway segments	Date	Time	Pedestrians	Street riders	Sidewalk riders	Total riders	Ave riders/hr	Bicycle Crashes '03-'08 <sup>1</sup>
<i>Hamlin St / Brickl Rd / Commerce St / STH 16 Intersection</i>	Mon, Sept 21, 2009	2:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	12	2	10	12	4.8	1
STH 16 – West segment			1	0	3	3	1.2	1
STH 16 – East segment			2	0	3	3	1.2	0
Brickl Rd – North segment			9	1	8	9	3.6	0
Commerce St – West segment			0	2	1	3	1.2	0
Hamlin St – South segment			12	0	6	6	2.4	0

### 3.5 Current Bicycle and Pedestrian Advocacy Activities

Brenengen Auto Group of West Salem, Sparta, and Tomah partners with the West Salem Police Department, the West Salem Park and Recreation Department, a local bicycle shop, Hansen's IGA, the West Salem First Responders, and the Village Bicycle and Pedestrian Ad Hoc Committee to host a bicycle safety fair for students in kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The fair provides educational, physical, and social activities with the goal of children gaining practical experience and knowledge of bicycle safety and respect for riding. Stations at the event include: registration/check-in, bicycle safety inspection, bicycle licensing, bicycle safety DVD, skills and riding games, and adult-lead road courses. The fair ends with a snack and a beverage and each child receives bicycle safety information. The fair is held every other year.

The Coulee Region Childhood Obesity Coalition hosts a Walk to School Challenge on an annual basis. Schools are encouraged to promote walking and biking to school during the week-long event. Schools that have a large percentage of children living outside the walking and biking distance are able to organize walking events at school. Schools with the greatest percentage of participation receive the Golden Shoe award, which is a traveling trophy.



The La Crosse County Health Department currently employs a Safe Routes to School Coordinator to assist communities within La Crosse County in developing and sustaining a Safe Routes to School program. A second health educator was recently hired to work with expanding Safe Routes to School to include up to twelve La Crosse County schools. The County will provide assistance with planning, creating materials, and setting up SRTS activities and programs.

Bike to Work/School Week is held annually in May to encourage more adults and kids to bicycle rather than drive when taking trips of two miles or less. Schools and businesses are encouraged to participate and plan community-wide events to engage more participants. While the week focuses on bicycling it also encourages walking, public transportation, and carpooling.

The Boys and Girls Club offers a walking school bus from West Salem Elementary to the Boys and Girls Club. Staff members pick students up after school and walk to the Club. The group walks rain, shine, or snow, throughout the school year.

There are many area rides that take place throughout the Coulee Region. In West Salem, the June Dairy Days Classique consists of a 58-mile ride and a 34-mile ride through West Salem and into areas outside the Village. The June Dairy Days Fun Run/Walk & Roller Blade is another event that engages local residents and walking activities.

The La Crosse area YMCA Triathlon is a ¼ mile swim in Lake Neshonoc paired with a 17-mile bike ride and a 3.1-mile run all within the Village of West Salem and surrounding areas.

### **3.6 Local and Regional Plans**

#### **Village of West Salem Comprehensive Plan**

The Village of West Salem Comprehensive Plan has been developed to provide background as well as direction for a host of different land use decisions. The Plan is used to make decisions about development and growth over the next twenty years. See Chapter 1, Community Information, for walking and biking accommodations highlighted in the Village's Comprehensive Plan.

#### **La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan**

The La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan outlines and identifies areas of potential growth and development within the region. Through cooperation with local governments, the plan enhances public space, preserves natural and agricultural resources, and ensures compatibly uses of land. Included in this plan are recommendations to improve the network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout La Crosse County.

#### **The 2035 Coulee Region Bicycle Plan**

The 2035 Coulee Region Bicycle Plan identifies regional bicycling corridors and provides recommendations for roadway treatments for experienced and casual riders.



The Plan promotes bicycling as an alternative sustainable transportation not only to commuting, but also as a form of recreation sure to promote and encourage tourism and economic development. The Plan includes regional commuter routes for the municipalities in La Crosse County as well as nearby La Crescent, Minnesota.





## Chapter 4: Issue Identification

### 4.1 Walking and bicycling audit

Walking and biking audits were completed throughout the Village of West Salem during the summer of 2008. They were conducted by members of the Bicycle Pedestrian Ad Hoc Committee as well as other volunteers. The group divided the Village into sections and each individual completed their own section, and the results were compiled. The main goal of the audit was for the group to identify infrastructure changes that were necessary to improve the safety of children walking and bicycling in the community. See **Appendix D** for photographs documenting some of the identified hazards. The list below summarizes the main issues that were identified in the Village of West Salem. These issues are not listed in any particular order.

Location	Concern
Highway 16 and Brickl Road	Difficult to cross due to short timing of signal and traffic speeds and volume
Highway 16 and Brickl Road	Signal button is difficult to access while on a bike
Highway 16 and West Avenue	Difficult to cross due to short timing of signal and traffic speeds and volume
½ mile radius of School District campus	Lack of complete signage alerting drivers they are entering a school zone and children are present
½ mile radius of School District campus	Lack of handicap accessible curb ramps
Various areas throughout Village	Poor lighting
Various areas throughout Village	Overgrown trees, brush, and gravel driveways impeding bicyclists and pedestrians
Various areas throughout Village	Intersections lacking marked crosswalks
Village-wide	Raised water valves pose a threat to bicyclists
Neshonoc Road and library property	Lack of sidewalks connecting to the library
Railroad tracks on Mill Street	Lack of sidewalk near tracks and lack of a safe way to get across tracks
East side of Mill Street	Lack of sidewalks along the park

### 4.2 Surveys of students, parents, teachers, etc.

In the fall of 2009, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Ad Hoc Committee distributed the parent survey about walking and bicycling to parents at the elementary school. Four hundred surveys were distributed and one hundred thirty-nine were returned. The top safety concerns are identified in the table below. See **Appendix E** for a complete report of the survey results. Approximately 14% of elementary school-aged children currently walk to school and approximately 2% bike to school.



Top safety concerns for children already walking/biking to school	Top safety concerns for children NOT walking/biking to school
1. Safety of intersections and crossings	1. Distance
2. Violence or crime	2. Traffic speed and volume along route
3. Traffic speed and volume along route	3. Safety of intersections and crossings
4. Weather or climate	4. Weather or climate

### 4.3 Assessment of school facilities

#### West Salem Elementary School

A walking audit of the West Salem Elementary School grounds was conducted and the following assets and concerns were identified.

Assets	Concerns
Two crossing guards/assistants to help children cross heavily traveled areas	Large amount of vehicular traffic clogs up parking areas
Adequate amount of bicycle parking near school entry	Children running late are dropped off in front of school while vehicles are double parked, causing students to walk in between idling vehicles
Bus loading areas are separated from student loading areas	School area could use more signage around school promoting awareness of students walking and biking
Buses do not idle in front of school except during extreme cold	Parents dropping children off in the morning park in the fire lane directly in front of school
School has staggered dismissal time with Middle and High Schools to allow younger students time to get to vehicles or buses before older students are dismissed	
Access to bicycle racks is direct, and well lit	



## Chapter 5: Recommendations



### 5.1 Community-wide recommendations

Planning
Recommendations
1. Form a school specific Safe Routes to School Team to be the champions at each school
2. Continue to engage the local private schools in the Safe Routes to School initiative by gathering information on their concerns related to walking and biking to their facilities
3. Include West Salem Middle School in the SRTS Plan within 3 years

Engineering
Recommendations
1. Continue updating crosswalk markings on a yearly basis
2. Continue keeping an inventory of curb ramps that need updating
3. Increase the school zone signage around all middle and elementary schools to increase driver awareness of bicyclists and pedestrians
4. Consider placing Yield to Pedestrian pylons in highly-used crosswalks near all middle and elementary schools

Encouragement
Recommendations
1. Continue participating in the Walk to School Challenge held annually in October, hosted by the Coulee Region Childhood Obesity Coalition
2. Consider organizing an International Walk to School Day event
3. Participate in the Bike to Work/School Week promotion held annually in May
4. Distribute maps of safe walking/biking routes to families living within reasonable distances of school
5. Participate in other County-wide walk to school programs and activities
6. Consider establishing a “no idling” program run by student leaders
7. Offer school-based programs such as mileage clubs, frequent walker/rider awards, and other programming that encourages frequent active commuting
8. Organize Walking School Buses or Bicycle Trains with the help of parents and community volunteers
9. Identify several safe alternate drop-off sites for students who live too far to walk or bike the entire distance to school.
10. Work with the School District to find ways for students who must be bused to walk part of the way to school



<b>Education</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>
1. Increase bicycle and pedestrian safety education offered during P.E. and other classroom instruction
2. Encourage cross curricular integration of bicycle and pedestrian safety and active transportation topics
3. Distribute information to the community about the benefits of walking and biking to school and other destinations
4. Continue holding the Bicycle Rodeo/Fair with Brenengen Chevrolet
5. Consider special assemblies to educate children on the importance of being safe bicyclists and pedestrians
6. Offer training and classes for teachers who are interested in including more bicycle and pedestrian education into their classroom
7. Organize an on-campus bike shop and bike club for students to learn about bike maintenance and bicycle safety

<b>Enforcement</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>
1. Partner with the local police department to have increased enforcement during morning arrival and afternoon departure hours
2. Utilize a mobile speed trailer to provide feedback to drivers near the community schools
3. Increase the number of officers patrolling on bicycles during weather permitting months

<b>Evaluation</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>
1. Distribute and collect parent surveys on an annual basis
2. Have classroom staff annually complete the Student Travel Tally Sheets

## 5.2 Specific Engineering Recommendations

### 5.2.1 West Salem Elementary School

<b>Engineering / Infrastructure</b>	
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Location</b>
1. Place Yield to Pedestrian stanchions in crosswalks located near schools	1. Garland and Lincoln 2. Garland and Mark
2. Install flashing STOP signs.	1. Leonard and Garland
3. Install timed flashing school crossing signs	1. Leonard and Hamlin 2. Garland and Lincoln 3. Garland and Mark
4. Install pedestrian countdown timers	1. Highway 16 and West Avenue 2. Highway 16 and Brickl Road
5. Install handicap accessible curb ramps	1. Leonard and Hamlin



	2. Mark Street 3. Garland and Leonard 4. Garland and Lincoln
6. Increase school zone signage near school	1. On Mark Street in front of school 2. On Garland Street approaching school zone
7. Create a walking path on campus to promote walking during recess for students who are bused or live too far to walk/bike	1. On campus
8. Provide additional parking or blacktop area for school buses to be completely segregated from foot traffic and away from student drop-off areas	1. North of the school
9. Re-evaluate bicycle and pedestrian needs as the School District and Village changes	Village-wide



## Chapter 6: Conclusion



### 6.1 Timeline and Next Steps

When the Wisconsin DOT makes available the Federal Safe Routes to School funding the Village of West Salem plans to apply for funds to complete some of the recommended infrastructure projects to benefit students in the community.

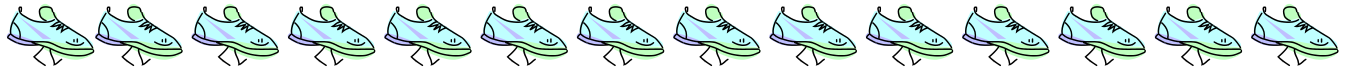
La Crosse County will apply for non-infrastructure funds to assist schools in the encouragement, education, enforcement, and evaluation components of Safe Routes to School. The County will also make available resources, trainings, and other tools for communities to kick-off and maintain Safe Routes to School programs. In June of 2010, La Crosse County invited all schools to participate in a Safe Routes to School expansion to provide interested schools with a stipend to hire an at-school SRTS Liaison. West Salem Elementary School has applied to be part of this opportunity.

June 2010	July 2010	October 2010	May 2011	July 2011	September 2012
West Salem Elementary completed application for La Crosse County ARRA SRTS Liaison funding	Village and County of West Salem will submit applications for WI SRTS Funding	Anticipated kick-off of one Walking School Bus route and other activities	Community Bike Rodeo and continue Walking School Bus	If infrastructure award is granted, plan to begin construction of requested projects	Continue Walking School Bus routes and consider expanding to include a second route.

The next steps for developing SRTS in the Village of West Salem are to:

- Continue reaching out to the community, the school, parents, and citizens in support of Safe Routes to School;
- Kick-off the fall with a Walk to School day event; and
- Include West Salem Middle School in annual events as a way to begin expanding to include others schools.

In conclusion, Safe Routes to School is a program that can have an impact on the entire Village of West Salem. If we are successful in getting our children walking and biking to school, the lasting impact of that decision will affect our air quality, traffic congestion, and safety for an entire community for generations to come. Safe Routes to School is the first project the Bicycle and Pedestrian Ad Hoc Committee has taken on. Once this program is off the ground, the



Committee focus will then be on making better connections for bicyclists to local trails as well as areas within the Village.