

Ripon Area School District

Safe Routes to School Action Plan

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Abstract

TITLE: Ripon Safe Routes to School
Action Plan

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SUBJECT: Safe Routes to School Action Plan

DATE: October 25th., 2022

PLANNING AGENCY: East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
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This Safe Routes to School Action Plan describes the existing conditions at and around schools within the Ripon School District. The three (3) schools included within this Action Plan include Barlow Elementary School, Murray Elementary School and Ripon Middle School. This Action Plan also includes future community improvements based on these conditions and information gathered by parents of students. Recommendations included in this plan are based on the 6 E's of the SRTS Program. To learn more information on the 6 E's, see page two of this plan. Local SRTS Action Plans are updated on a five-year rotating schedule.

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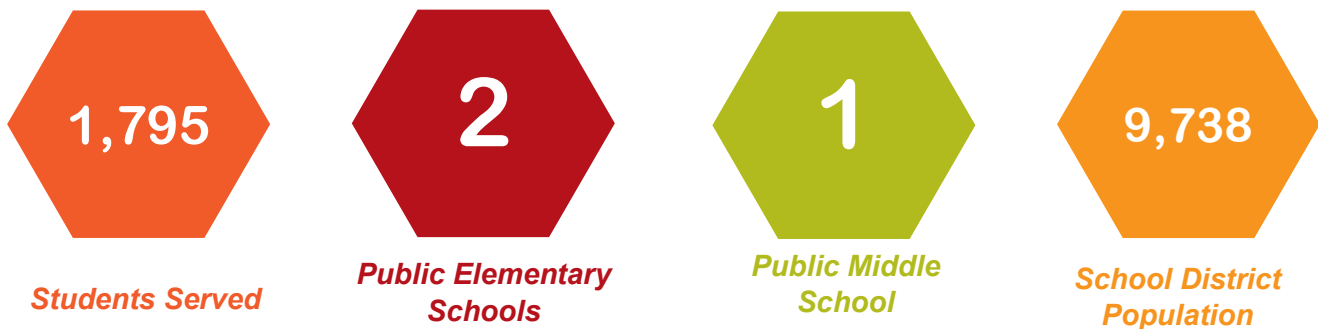
Safe Routes to School Background Information

The East Central Wisconsin Regional Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program focuses on engaging and empowering schools and communities to foster healthy lifestyles through environmental changes and safe walking and bicycling. By working to make it safer and more appealing for students in grades K-8 to walk and bike to school, the Regional SRTS Program is continually making strides to improve childhood health, reduce traffic congestion and pollution, and create more livable communities.

Ripon Area School District Background Information

This Action Plan identifies current transportation behaviors within the Ripon School District. It lists known walking, bicycling, and driving barriers, and it identifies potential engineering and programmatic strategies to address those barriers. This Action Plan is available for use by the City of Ripon, the Town of Ripon, the Town of Berlin, the Town of Brooklyn, the Town of Nepeuskun, the Town of Utica, the Town of Rosendale, the Town of Green Lake, the Town of Metomen, the Town of Springvale, parents, students, and community members to guide the communities work on Safe Routes to School.

The School District of Ripon is located in East Central Wisconsin in Fond du Lac, Green Lake, and Winnebago counties. It covers 117 square miles in the three counties, with an approximate population of 9,700 and 220 full and part time employees.

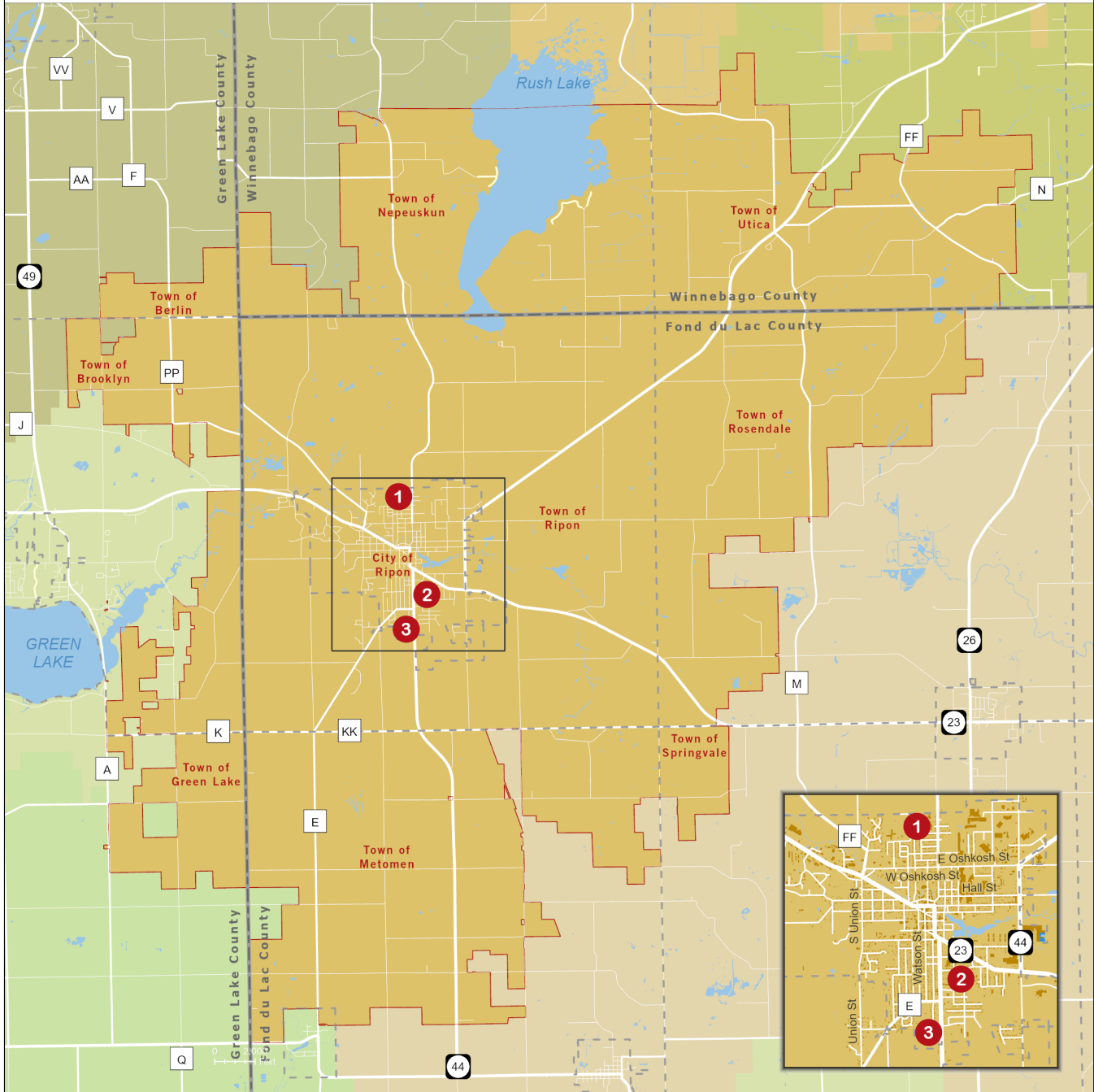


Ripon Area School District Transportation Policies

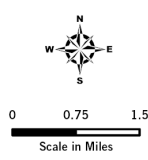
Busing is provided to students which live beyond the City of Ripon boundary. District transportation is also provided to students which live within the City limits if it is determined that they walk along areas considered unusually hazardous under provisions of the state statutes. Accommodations are made for students requiring transportation as part of an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Additionally, shuttle buses board at Ceresco Park, Barlow Park Elementary, corner of Hall Street and Spaulding Avenue, and Murray Park Elementary.

School Locations & District Boundaries

Ripon Area School District



- 1** Murray Park Elementary
- 2** Ripon Middle
- 3** Barlow Park Elementary
- Municipal Boundary
- Ripon Area School District
- County Boundary



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The 6 E's of Safe Routes to School

Comprehensive Safe Routes to School initiatives have been shown to be more effective at increasing physical activity and reducing injuries. The Regional Safe Routes to School program is based on these principles of the 6 E's.



Education— Providing students and the community with the skills to walk and bicycle safely, educating them about the benefits of walking and bicycling, and teaching them about the broad range of transportation choices.



Encouragement— Generating enthusiasm and increased walking and bicycling for students through events, activities, and programs.



Engineering— Creating physical improvements to streets and neighborhoods that make walking and bicycling safer, more comfortable, and more convenient.



Engagement— All Safe Routes to School initiatives should begin by listening to and working with students, families, teachers, school leaders, and existing community organizations, to build intentional and ongoing engagement opportunities into the program structure.



Evaluation— Assessing which approaches are more or less successful, ensuring that programs and initiatives are supporting equitable outcomes, and identifying unintended consequences or opportunities to improve the effectiveness of each approach. Events and programs will be evaluated on a regular basis.



Equity— Ensuring that Safe Routes to School initiatives are benefiting all demographic groups, with particular attention to ensuring safe, healthy, and fair outcomes for low-income students, students of color, students of all genders, students with disabilities, and others.

Event and Program Overview



Walk to School Day— A global event that involves communities from more than 40 countries walking and bicycling to school on the same day. This event occurs annually on the first Wednesday in October.



Bike to School Day— Focuses on increasing bicycle safety and encourages students to bicycle to school. Bike to School Day typically falls on the second Wednesday in May.



Winter Walk to School Month— Is held in February and promotes walking to school year-round, even during the cold Wisconsin Winters.



Walking School Bus Program— Is a group of children who walk to school together under the supervision of a trained route leader.



Frequent Walker Program— Is a walking at school program and it encourages students to walk before, during, and after school by making it fun and rewarding.



Youth Engagement— Empowers elementary and middle school students, leaders, teachers, and adult facilitators by providing knowledge and resources to help lead activities and events that support active transportation.



Project RADAR— Creates awareness about safe driving habits around school zones by developing educational materials utilizing radar velocity speed guns.



Ripon School District

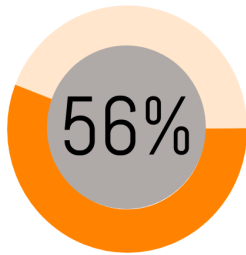


Parent Survey Results

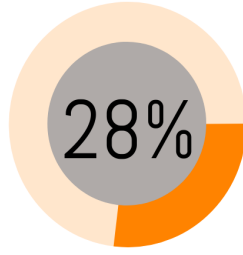


Number of Surveys: 148

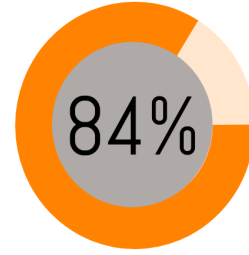
Student Transportation



Driven to School



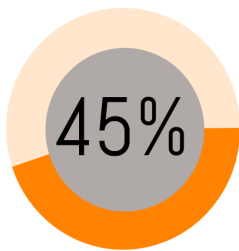
Use School Bus



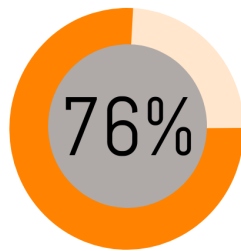
Total Vehicular



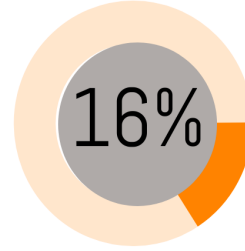
Student Transportation Alternatives



Students allowed to walk & bike to school



Believe their child needs walking or bicycling safety education



Students walking & biking to school

Top 5 Reasons Parents ALLOW Their Child to Walk or Bike to School

- 1) Distance
- 2) Weather or Climate
- 3) Convenience of walking or biking
- 4) Sidewalks or pathways
- 5) Safety of intersections or crossings

Top 5 Reasons Parents DO NOT ALLOW Their Child to Walk or Bike to School

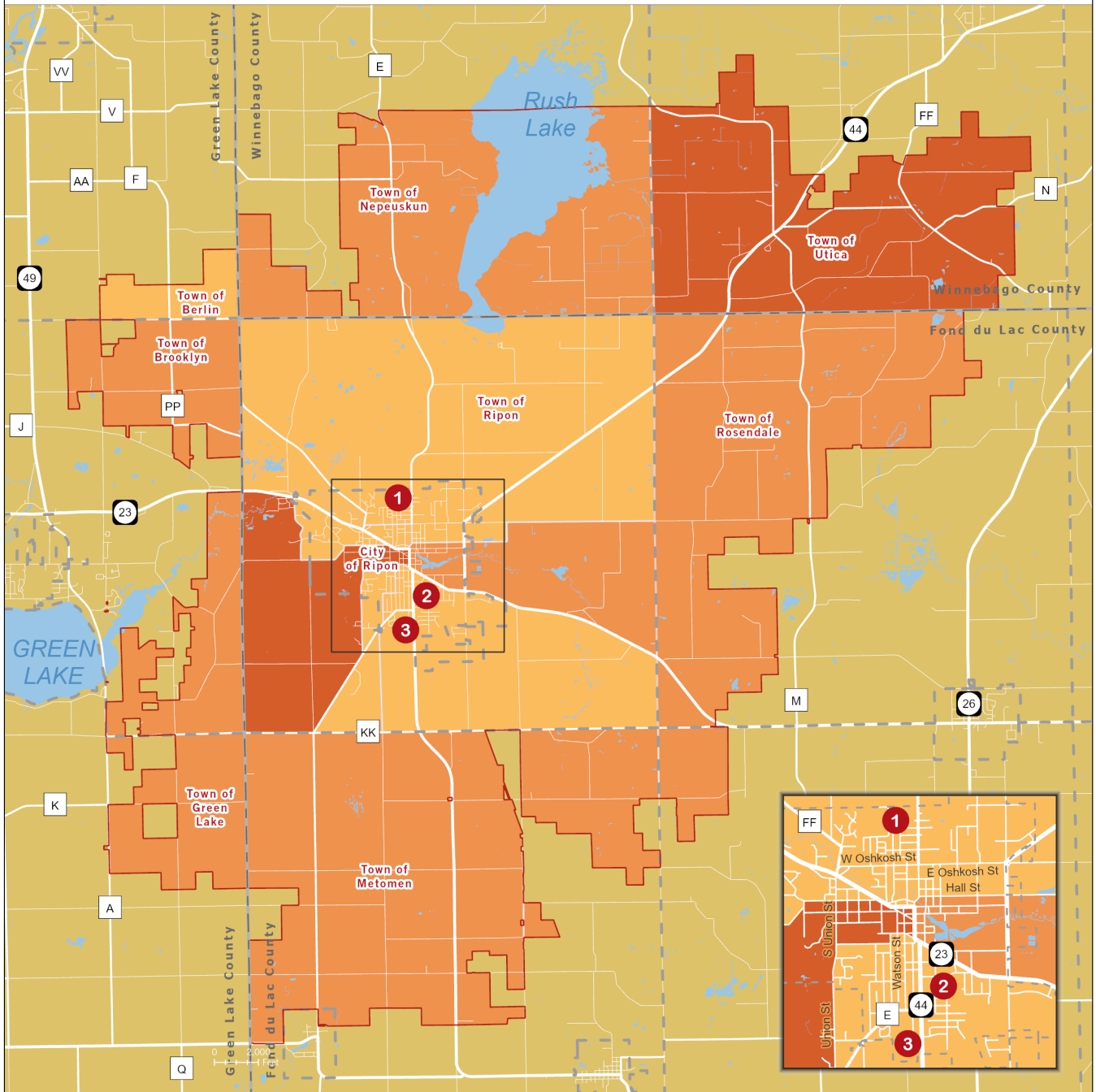
- 1) Distance
- 2) Amount of traffic
- 3) Safety concerns at intersections and crossings
- 4) Traffic speeds
- 5) Lack of adults to walk or bike with

Top 4 Modes of Transportation Students Use to Get to School

- 1) Parent Vehicle
- 2) School Bus
- 3) Walk
- 4) Bike

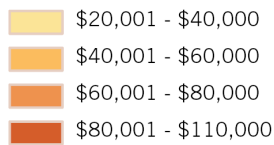
Median Household Income by Block Group

Ripon Area School District

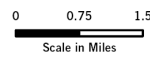


- 1 Murray Park Elementary
- 2 Ripon Middle
- 3 Barlow Park Elementary

2015-2019 Median Household Income



- - - Municipal Boundary
- ▭ Ripon Area School District
- ▭ County Boundary



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Source: Household Income data provided by ACS, 2015-2019. Base data provided by Regional Counties, 2021. SRTS data provided by ECWRPC, 2021.

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Ripon Area School District Equity Analysis

School Name	Percent of Students Receiving Free and Reduced Cost Lunch	Median Household Income	Percent Arterials (Minor and Principal)
Barlow Park Elementary School	44%	\$53,229	28.1%
Murray Park Elementary School	40%	\$42,104	16.2%
Ripon Middle School	39%	\$48,650	25.4%

The Safe Routes to School Equity Analysis identifies schools that would benefit from additional resources to promote safe walking and bicycling. Data shows that people walking and bicycling in under-privileged communities suffer from higher injury and fatality rates than the general population.¹ With this in mind, the percent of students receiving free and reduced cost lunch, the median household income, and the percent of arterials a half a mile around the school were collected and analyzed.

Median household income data is used to identify the block groups where more children may be walking and bicycling. A block group is a geographical unit used by the U.S. Census Bureau; it is a subdivision of a census tract that covers a contiguous area and is a cluster of census blocks.² This is evaluated because data shows children from low-income families are twice as likely to walk to school as children from higher-income families. SRTS initiatives can support low-income schools and communities.¹

A low-income family is generally defined as one in which the family income is no more than twice the federal poverty limit. The 2021 poverty limit in WI is \$26,500 for a family of four, which means a low-income family of four makes \$53,000 or less.³ The Median Household Income was collected by block groups for the Ripon School District and is displayed in the map on page 6. Family income is also used to qualify students for the Free and Reduced Cost Lunch Program under the National School Lunch Program.

In addition to income levels, arterial road proximity to schools were analyzed. Arterial roads can be classified as roads which move high volumes of traffic over a long distance at high speeds.⁵ Analyzing the percentage of arterials within a half mile radius of each school, assists in prioritizing schools while making bicycle and pedestrian recommendations.

Improvements to safe and equitable walking and bicycling experiences can be provided for students and community members through the implementation of SRTS 6 E's. Participating in events and programs helps to educate and engage the community. In addition, engineering upgrades and installation of proper bicycle and pedestrian facilities will improve access and safety.

Arterial Road Information: ACS 2015-2019 / Median Household Income 2020/ Free and reduced lunch rates are based off 2019 data.

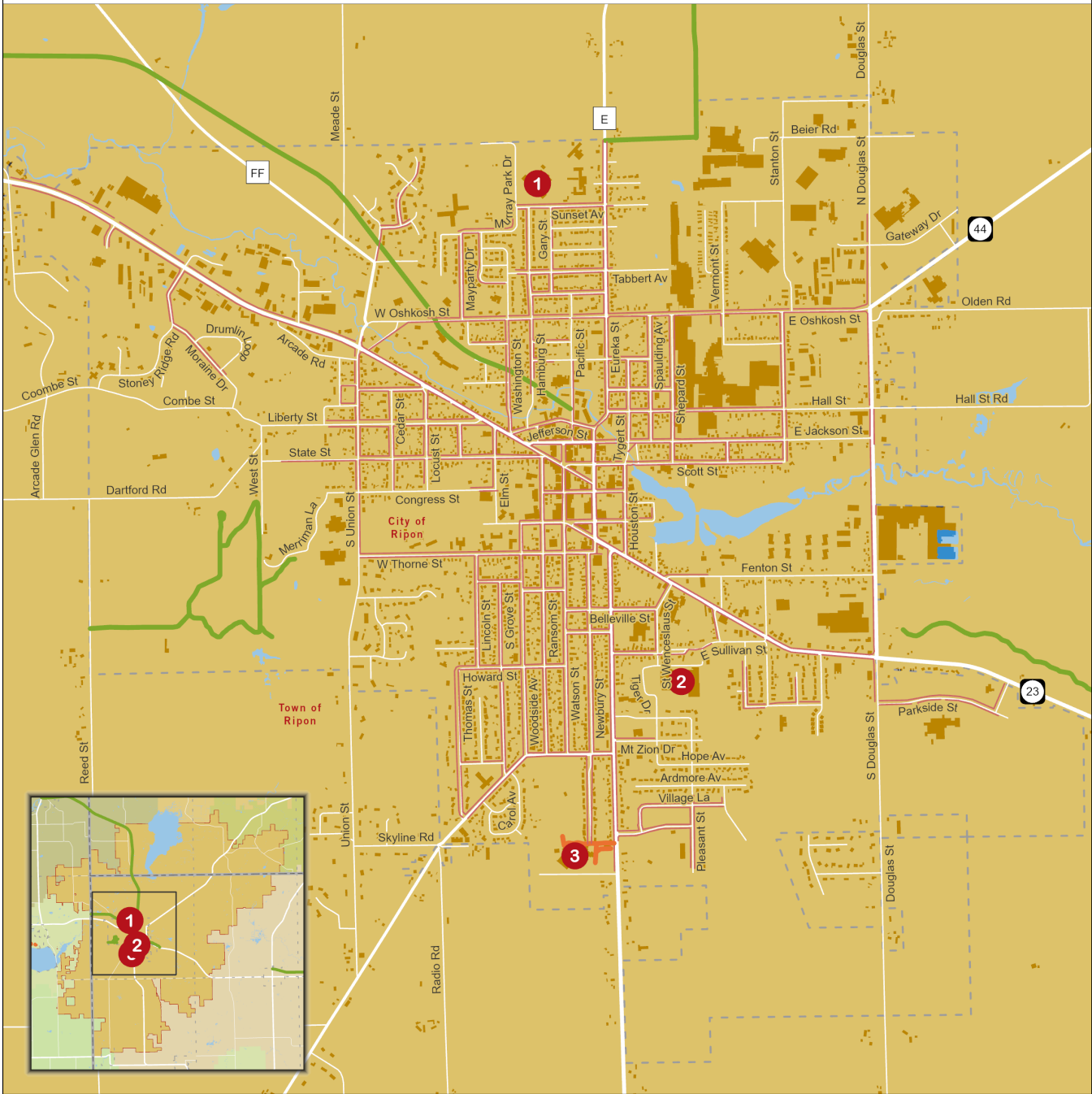
Equity Analysis Recommendations

With typically higher rates of walking, biking, and skating to school, students at under-privileged schools are particularly vulnerable to unsafe routes that lack bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, and where drivers speed. The equity analysis assessment can be used to identify schools that could benefit from additional resources as well as locations that lack physical infrastructure to promote safe walking and biking.

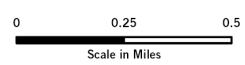
Ripon School District				
School Name	Current Participation	Recommended Events and Programs	Arterials Located 2 Miles From School	Bicycle/ Pedestrian Recommended Infrastructure
Barlow Park Elementary School	Not Participating	Walk to School Day, Winter Walk to School Month, Bike to School Day, Frequent Walker Program, Walking School Bus, Project RADAR	Fond du Lac St. Jackson St. Douglas St. Oshkosh St. Metomen St. Griswold St. Thorne St. Eureka St. Union St. Watson St.	Consider crosswalks at Sandmar Drive as development of housing units continues in this area.
Murray Elementary School	Not Participating	Walk to School Day, Winter Walk to School Month, Bike to School Day, Frequent Walker Program	*Same as above	There are no Bicycle/Pedestrian Recommendations at this time.
Ripon Middle School	Not Participating	Walk to School Day, Winter Walk to School Month, Bike to School Day, Frequent Walker Program,	*Same as above	Sidewalk extensions east on E. Sullivan Street would connect single-residential and multi-residential homes to the bicycle and pedestrian network.

Existing Bike & Pedestrian Network

Ripon Area School District



- 1 Murray Park Elementary
- 2 Ripon Middle
- 3 Barlow Park Elementary
- Bike Lane
- Paved Trail
- Unpaved Trail
- Sidewalk
- Municipal Boundary
- Ripon Area School District
- County Boundary



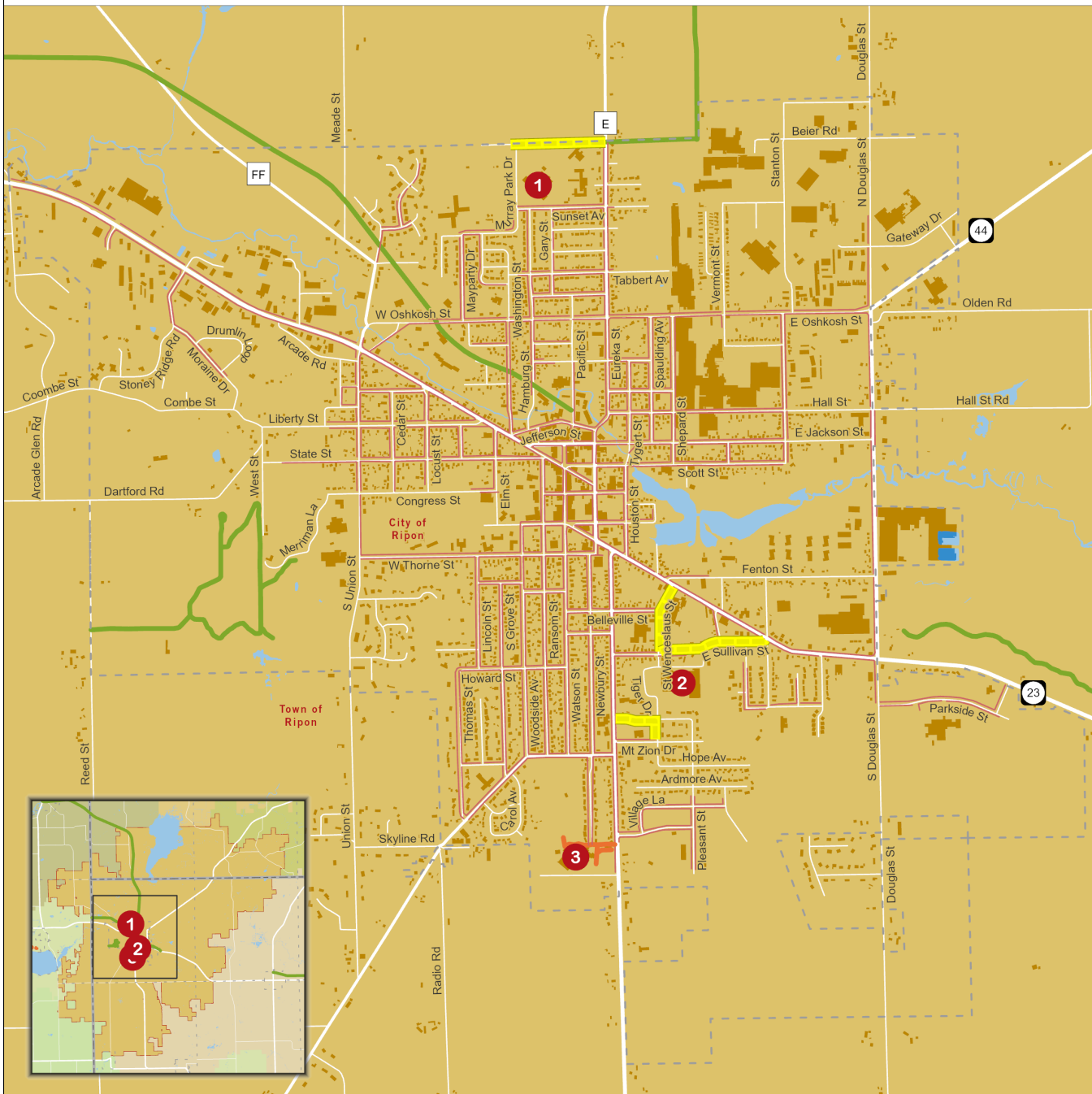
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Source:
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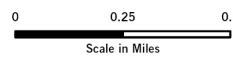
Recommended Bike & Pedestrian Improvements

Ripon Area School District



- 1** Murray Park Elementary
- 2** Ripon Middle
- 3** Barlow Park Elementary

- █ Recommended Network Improvement
- █ Bike Lane
- █ Paved Trail
- █ Unpaved Trail
- █ Sidewalk
- Municipal Boundary
- Ripon Area School District
- County Boundary



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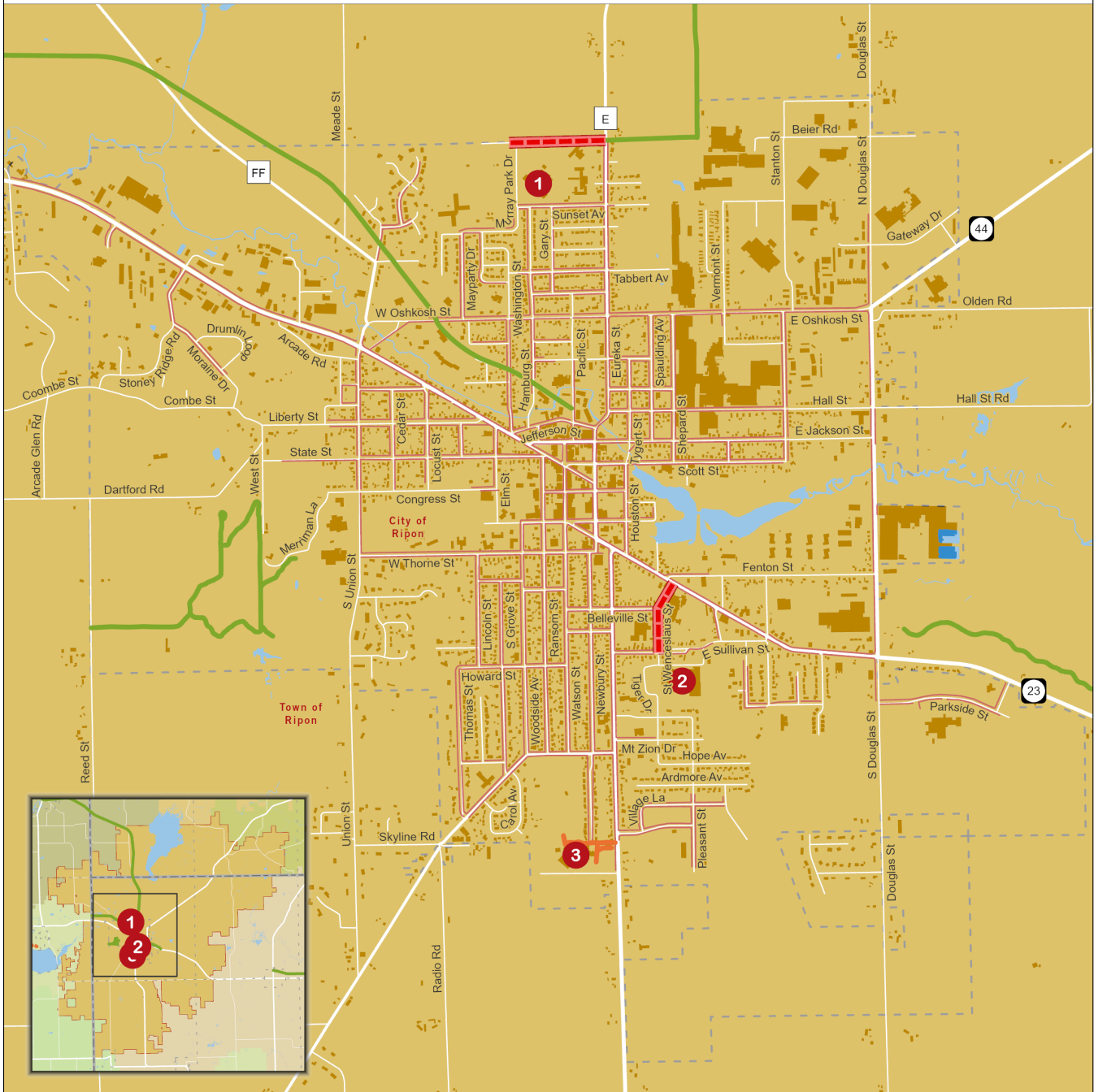


Source:
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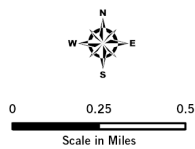
Planned Bike & Pedestrian Network

Ripon Area School District



- 1** Murray Park Elementary
- 2** Ripon Middle
- 3** Barlow Park Elementary

- Planned Projects
- Bike Lane
- Paved Trail
- Unpaved Trail
- Sidewalk
- Municipal Boundary
- Ripon Area School District
- County Boundary



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Source:
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Bicycle & Pedestrian Recommendations

The table below identifies bicycle and pedestrian connections that would support Ripon students walking and biking to school. These recommendations should be considered by the City of Ripon planning for future facilities.

Ripon Area School District					
Road Name	From	To	Recommended Facility	Responsible Organization	Schools Impacted
Joy Avenue	Metomen St	Faith St	Sidewalk	City of Ripon	Ripon Middle School Ripon High School
Faith Street	Joy Ave.	Mt Zion Dr.	Sidewalk	City of Ripon	Ripon Middle School Ripon High School
E Sullivan Street	St Wenceslaus St.	E Fond du Lac St.	Sidewalk	City of Ripon	Ripon Middle School Ripon High School
St Wenceslaus Street	Tiger Dr.	E Fond du Lac St.	Sidewalk, Bike Lanes	City of Ripon	Ripon Middle School Ripon High School
Metomen Street	Sandmar Drive		Sidewalk, Crosswalk	City of Ripon	Barlow Park Elementary

*It is our recommendation that for all future developments and street upgrades, sidewalks be installed.

Barlow Park Elementary School Action Plan

Education & Encouragement

1. Participate in one-day walking and bicycling events such as Walk to School Day, Winter Walk to School Month, and Bike to School Day to encourage students and parents to walk and bike to school.
2. Participate in the Walking School Bus Program to encourage students to walk to school. Students could meet at Barlow Park and walk together.
3. Participate in the Frequent Walker Program to provide all students, including those who cannot walk to school, the opportunity to be active during the school day.
4. Continue to educate parents to follow the proper pick up and drop off procedures to limit conflicts.

Engineering

1. Add curb cuts for the crosswalks in the parent pick up lot and the bus pick up zone. Curb cuts are required at crosswalks to be ADA compliant (Title II).⁸
2. Remove the old School Zone Sign on Ringstad Drive to follow MUTCD retroreflectivity standards (Section 2A.08).⁷ There is also a School Zone Sign already on Ringstad Drive.
3. Increase the height of the School Zone Speed Limit sign on Ringstad Drive, and Metomen Street south of Ringstad Drive to be MUTCD compliant (Section 2A.18).⁷
4. Develop ladder-style crosswalk to connect the trail North of the Administration building to the housing development on Sandmar Drive. This crosswalk occurs South of the intersection of Sandmar Drive, and would require additional safety measures such as crossing guard, or rapid flashing beacon (See MUTCD Section 3B.18).⁷

Engagement

1. Participate in SRTS Educational Campaigns to educate parents and community members about safe driving, walking, and biking at school and in the community.

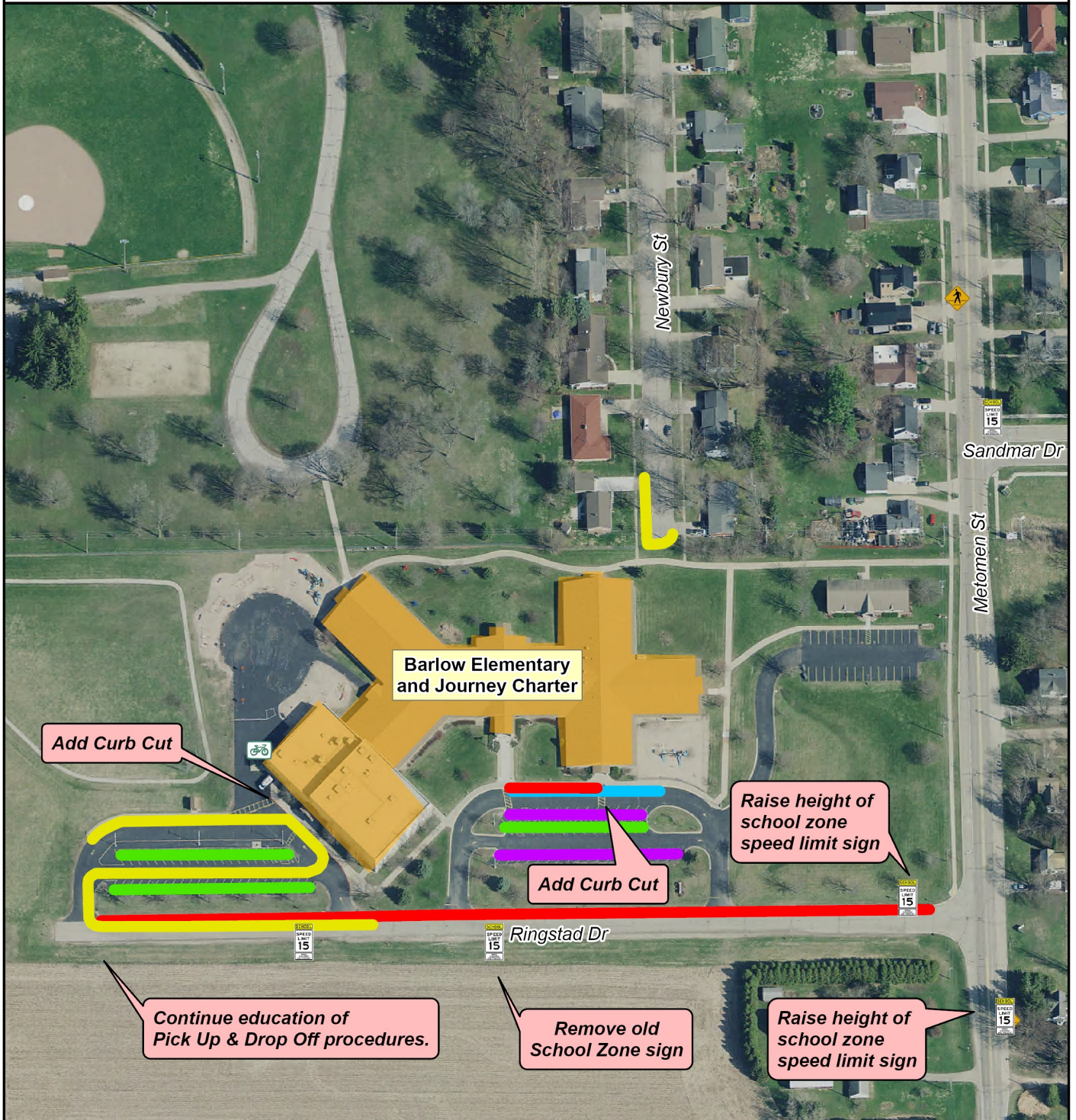
Evaluation

1. Continue to evaluate safety concerns through parent surveys regarding their children walking/ biking to school.
2. Evaluate the number of students walking/biking to school as participation increases in SRTS events and programs.

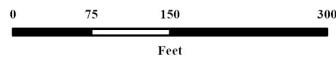
Equity

1. Please refer to the equity analysis discussion on page 7.

Bicycle & Walk Audit | Barlow Elementary School



-  School Zone Speed Limit Sign
-  Pedestrian Sign
-  Bus Loading Area
-  Parent Pickup/Drop Off
-  Parent/General Parking
-  Staff Parking
-  No Parking



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Base data provided by Fond du Lac County 2020.
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Murray Park Elementary School Action Plan

Education & Encouragement

1. Participate in one-day walking and bicycling events such as Walk to School Day, Winter Walk to School Month, and Bike to School Day to encourage students and parents to walk and bike to school.
2. Participate in the Frequent Walker Program to provide all students, including those who cannot walk to school, the opportunity to be active during the school day.
3. Remind students to walk their bicycles while on school grounds.

Engineering

1. Replace faded and cracked pedestrian signs on Eureka Street to follow MUTCD retroreflectivity standards (Section 2A.08).⁷
2. Repaint standard crosswalks at the intersection of Eureka Street and Sunset Avenue to be more visible.
3. Repaint crosswalks at the intersection of Sunset Avenue and Hamburg Street. Recommend painting a ladder-style crosswalk across Sunset Avenue at the crossing guard's location to greatly improve crosswalk visibility for the main crossing location.⁶
4. Replace the faded school zone sign on Murray Park Drive to follow MUTCD retroreflectivity standards (Section 2A.08).⁷

Engagement

1. Participate in SRTS Educational Campaigns to educate parents and community members about safe driving, walking, and biking at school and in the community.

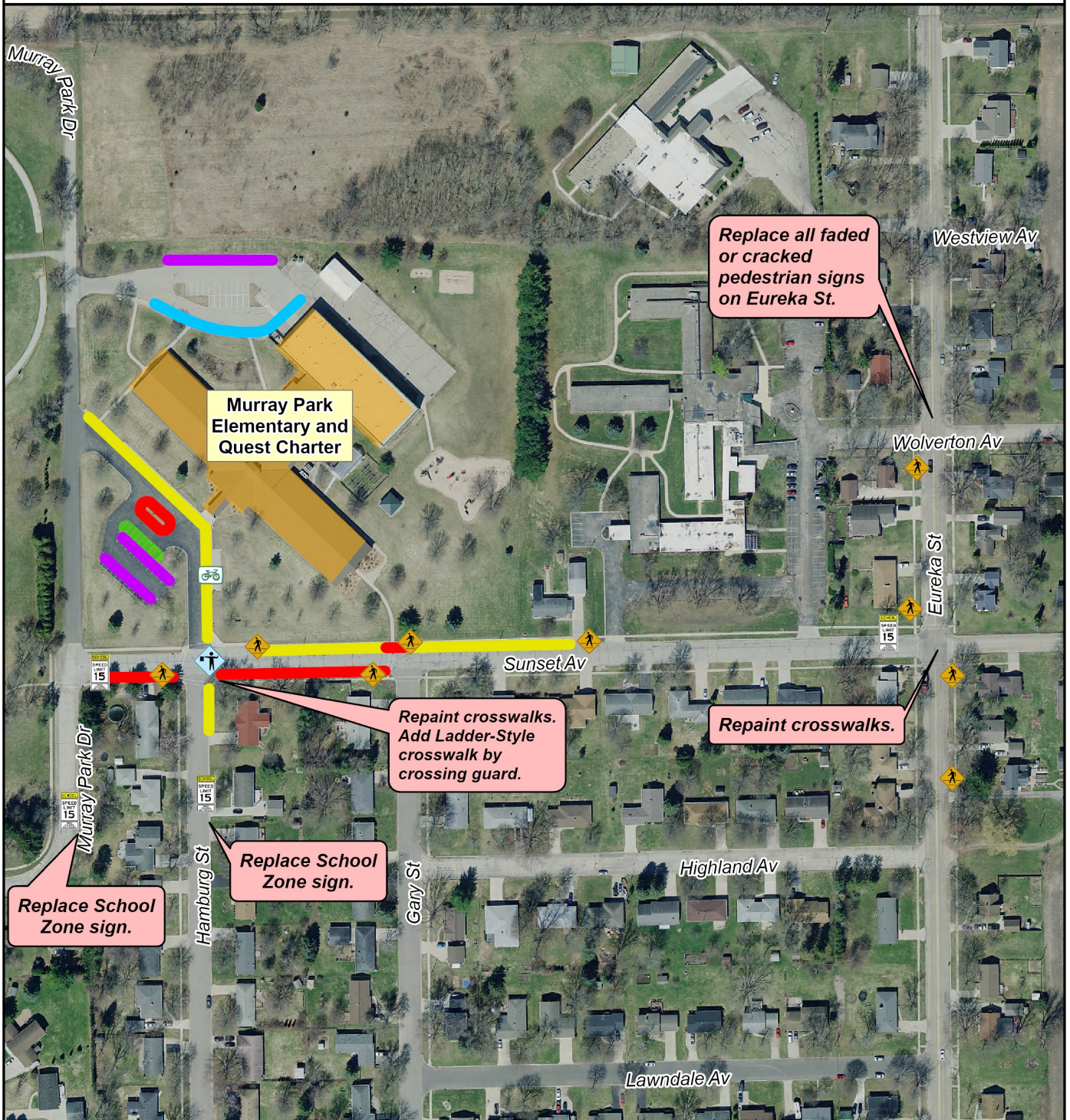
Evaluation

1. Continue to evaluate safety concerns through parent surveys regarding their children walking/ biking to school.
2. Evaluate the number of students walking/biking to school as participation increases in SRTS events and programs.
3. Evaluate how the addition of the new assisted living facility impacts pick up and drop off procedures and students walking and biking to school.

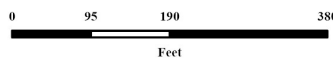
Equity

1. Please refer to the equity analysis discussion on page 7.

Bicycle & Walk Audit | Murray Park Elementary School



- | | | | |
|---|------------------|---|------------------|
|  | Crossing Guard |  | Loading Zone |
|  | Pedestrian Sign |  | Bus Loading Zone |
|  | School Zone Sign |  | General Parking |
| | |  | Staff Parking |
| | |  | No Parking |



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Ripon Middle School Action Plan

Education & Encouragement

1. Begin participating in one-day walking and bicycling events such as Walk to School Day, Winter Walk to School Month, and Bike to School Day to encourage students and parents to walk and bike to school.

Engineering

1. Convert St. Wenceslaus Street to a two-way street to ease congestion along E. Sullivan Street.
2. Paint a ladder-style crosswalk at the intersection of Metomen Street and E. Sullivan Street. Ladder-style crosswalks improve visibility compared to standard parallel lines.⁶ Consider relocating crossing guard to this intersection to bring students closer to the school.
3. Replace School Zone Speed Limit sign at intersection of Metomen Street and E. Sullivan Street as well as on E. Sullivan Street near Commercial Street to follow MUTCD retroreflectivity standards (Section 2A.08).⁷
4. Replace Pedestrian Sign on Metomen Street between E. Sullivan St. and Joy Ave to follow MUTCD retroreflectivity standards (Section 2A.08).⁷
5. Create a curb cut on Tiger Drive near the North East corner of the school building to be ADA compliant (Title II).⁸
6. Replace the School Zone Speed Limit signs on Joy Avenue and Faith Street to follow MUTCD retroreflectivity standards (Section 2A.08).⁷

Engagement

1. Participate in SRTS Educational Campaigns to educate parents and community members about safe driving, walking, and biking at school and in the community.

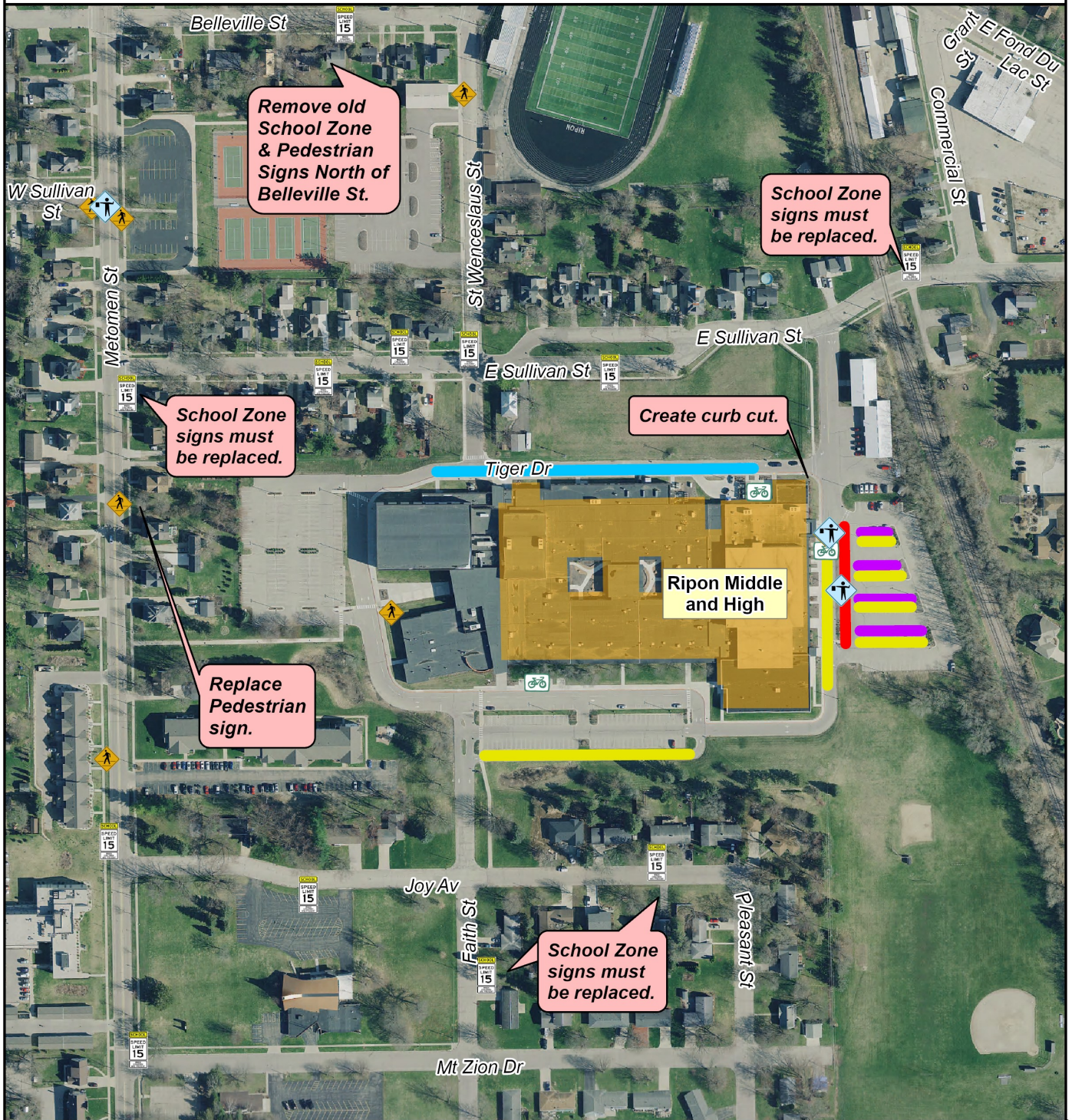
Evaluation

1. Continue to evaluate safety concerns through parent surveys regarding their children walking/biking to school.
2. Evaluate the number of students walking/biking to school as participation increases in SRTS events and programs.
3. Evaluate the possibility of a staggered release between the High School and the Middle School to further alleviate congestion in the afternoon.

Equity

1. Please refer to the equity analysis discussion on page 7.

Bicycle & Walk Audit | Ripon Middle School



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Summary Highlights:

2013 Engineering Recommendations

Featured below is a table highlighting some of the top engineering recommendations provided in the 2013 Action Plan. The right hand column indicates what improvements were made following that Plan Adoption. A complete list of recommendations can be found in the 2013 Action Plan document, linked on the Regional SRTS website.

2013 Recommendations		Improvements Made?
Address congestion issues during pick-up and drop off at Barlow Park Elementary School. Drivers have left turn difficulties onto Metomen Street which causes cars to back up into the pick-up / drop-off area.	✓	Switched Parent and Bus pick-up and drop-off locations. Parent lot being further down Ringstad Dr. reduces the chances of congestion.
Because of the “bottleneck” near the front of the school, some parents use Barlow Park for drop-off / pick-up. Some vehicles travel at high speeds through the park.	✓	Barlow Park is no longer utilized for pick-up and drop off.

Summary checklist:

2022 Engineering Recommendations

2022 Recommendations	✓
Barlow Park Elementary School	
Add curb cuts for the crosswalks in the parent pick up lot and the bus pick up zone. Curb cuts are required at crosswalks to be ADA compliant (Title II). ⁸	
Remove the old School Zone Sign on Ringstad Drive to follow MUTCD retroreflectivity standards (Section 2A.08). ⁷ There is also a School Zone Sign already on Ringstad Drive.	
Increase the height of the School Zone Speed Limit sign on Ringstad Drive, and Metomen Street south of Ringstad Drive to be MUTCD compliant (Section 2A.18). ⁷	
Develop ladder-style crosswalk to connect the trail North of the School Administration building to the housing development on Sandmar Drive. This crosswalk occurs South of the intersection of Sandmar Drive, and would require additional safety measures such as crossing guard, or rapid flashing beacon (See MUTCD Section 3B.18). ⁷	
Murray Park Elementary School	
Replace faded and cracked pedestrian signs on Eureka Street to follow MUTCD retroreflectivity standards (Section 2A.08). ⁷	
Repaint standard crosswalks at the intersection of Eureka Street and Sunset Avenue.	
Repaint crosswalks at the intersection of Sunset Avenue and Hamburg Street. Recommend painting a ladder-style crosswalk across Sunset Avenue at the crossing guard's location to greatly improve crosswalk visibility for the main crossing location. ⁶	
Replace the faded school zone sign on Murray Park Drive to follow MUTCD retroreflectivity standards (Section 2A.08). ⁷	
Ripon Middle School	
Convert St. Wenceslaus Street to a two-way street to ease congestion along E. Sullivan.	
Paint a ladder-style crosswalk at the intersection of Metomen Street and E. Sullivan Street to improve crossing visibility in the school zone. ⁶	
Replace School Zone Speed Limit sign at intersection of Metomen Street and E. Sullivan Street as well as on E. Sullivan Street near Commercial Street to follow MUTCD retroreflectivity standards (Section 2A.08). ⁷	
Replace Pedestrian Sign on Metomen Street between E. Sullivan St. and Joy Ave to follow MUTCD retroreflectivity standards (Section 2A.08). ⁷	
Create a curb cut on Tiger Drive near the North East corner of the school building to be ADA compliant (Title II). ⁸	
Replace the School Zone Speed Limit signs on Joy Avenue and Faith Street to follow MUTCD retroreflectivity standards (Section 2A.08). ⁷	

Appendix: SRTS Coalition Meeting Summary

Safe Routes to School partners met in October of 2022 to discuss the local SRTS Action Plan Recommendations. The agenda items and discussion topics from the meeting are outlined below. This coalition meeting took place following individual meetings with each school principal to go over their action plan and discuss any feedback.

Coalition Partners included:

Casey Peters.....	ECWRPC
Katie Livernash.....	ECWRPC
Jennie Meyer.....	ECWRPC
Mary Whitrock.....	RASD Superintendent
Brian Appleman.....	RASD Director of Facilities
Adam Sonntag.....	Ripon City Administrator

Items on the Agenda included:

- Safe Routes to School Program Overview
- Safe Routes to School Action Plan Overview:
 - ⇒ Parent Survey
 - ⇒ Equity Analysis
 - ⇒ Walk and Bike Audits conducted at each school
 - ⇒ Action Plan developed for each school using survey, walk and bike audit data
 - ⇒ Bicycle and Pedestrian network and connections
- Review the Action Plan for each school
- Voice safety concerns around each school
- Review current bicycle and pedestrian network and discuss network improvements

Appendix: SRTS Coalition Meeting Summary

The following areas were discussed in detail as areas of safety concerns around the schools. Improvements to these locations would help walker and biker safety during parents pick-up and drop-off times, as well as other times when pedestrians are accessing the school campus. The locations, safety concerns, and discussions on possible improvements are outlined in the table below.

LOCATION	CONCERNS	DISCUSSION ON IMPROVEMENT
Barlow Park Elementary	Housing develop on Sandmar Drive is anticipated to increase. Currently, Sandmar Drive lacks a crosswalk connection to connect this development to the West side of Metomen Street.	Currently the sidewalk terminates south of Sandmar Drive. A suggested improvement would be to extend the sidewalk and develop a ladder-style crossing to paved trails near the School Administration building. This midblock crossing would require additional safety measures for kids, such as a crossing guard or a rapid flashing beacon.
Ripon Middle School	Traffic gets backed along E. Sullivan Street and into the parking lot for parents and students leaving in the afternoon.	The SRTS program affirms the City's belief that converting St. Wenceslaus Street into a two-way street would alleviate the congestion occurring in the afternoon during pick up. Providing an additional route to exit the school site would alleviate the number of cars on E. Sullivan. SRTS staff also recommend a staggered release between the Middle and High school to further reduce congestion. However, this would require modification to the bus schedule, as they currently take both schools at the same time. SRTS would recommend evaluating a staggered release for between 5-15 minutes.

Appendix: Equity & Engineering References

Equity Analysis

¹ <https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/sites/default/files/pdf/LowIncomeGuide.pdf>

² https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/about/glossary.html#par_textimage_4

³ <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/medicaid/fpl.htm>

⁴ Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction: Enrollment and Participation Reports for Food and Nutrition Programs Operation in WI Schools and Institutions. October 2019.

⁵ <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-10/WSDOT-Glossary.pdf>

Engineering Recommendations

⁶ <https://www.ecwrpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/STEP-Action-Plan.pdf>. September 2021.

⁷ <https://wisconsin.gov/dtsdManuals/traffic-ops/manuals-and-standards/wmutcd/wismutcd.pdf>. March 21, 2017.

⁸ <https://www.ada.gov/taman2.html#15%20curb%20ramps>