



Jefferson Elementary School SRTS Action Plan

Merrill Area Public School District
Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program

2020

School Demographics:

Enrollment: 222

Grades: K-5th grade

Start Time: 7:55 a.m.

End Time: 3:00 p.m.

Principal: Heather Skutak

1914 W. Jackson St.
Merrill, WI

SRTS Background Information 1

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Safe Routes to School Background Information

The purpose of the SRTS program is to provide safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities that encourage healthier lifestyles. Programs can be established to educate students, parents, and the community on the benefits of walking and bicycling to school and provide tips to do so safely. Major SRTS goals are:

- To enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bike to school.
- To make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age.
- To 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 of schools.

SRTS Planning efforts assess the facilities and conditions near school, examine how students are currently traveling to /from school, and identify safety concerns/issues raised by parents and the community. Infrastructure and non-infrastructure recommendations are then created and implemented, sometimes with grant funding assistance, by the SRTS Task Force and other community members. SRTS Plans focus on projects within two miles of an elementary or middle school (Kindergarten-8th grade) and address the 5 E's:

- ⇒ **Engineering**
- ⇒ **Enforcement**
- ⇒ **Education**
- ⇒ **Encouragement**
- ⇒ **Evaluation**



The main goal of SRTS programs is to get children safely walking and biking to school.

Jefferson Elementary School Background Information

Jefferson Elementary serves the western portion of the School District. The school was built as an open concept school with no hallways.

The majority of students travel to and from school in the family vehicle (50 & 59%) or on the school bus (29 & 35%). In comparison, an average of 7% of students travel to and from

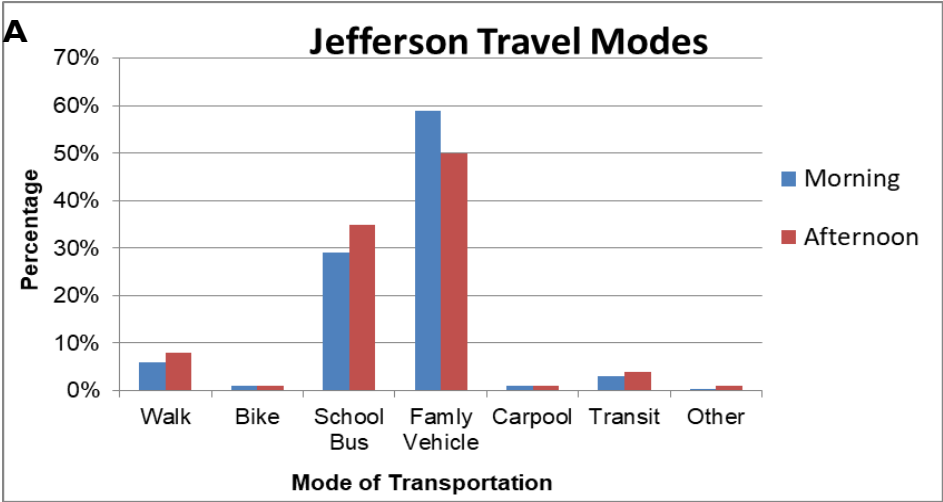
school on foot. The top three concerns of parents who do not allow their children to walk or bike to school are distance from school, the safety of intersections, and the weather.

Traffic counts near the school entrance on Jackson St. between Eugene St. and S. Foster St. were 240 AADT in 2019.



The vast majority of students arrive and depart in the family vehicle (59 & 50%, Fig. A), followed by the school bus (29 & 35%); compared with some walkers (6 & 8%), and very few bikers (0.9%).

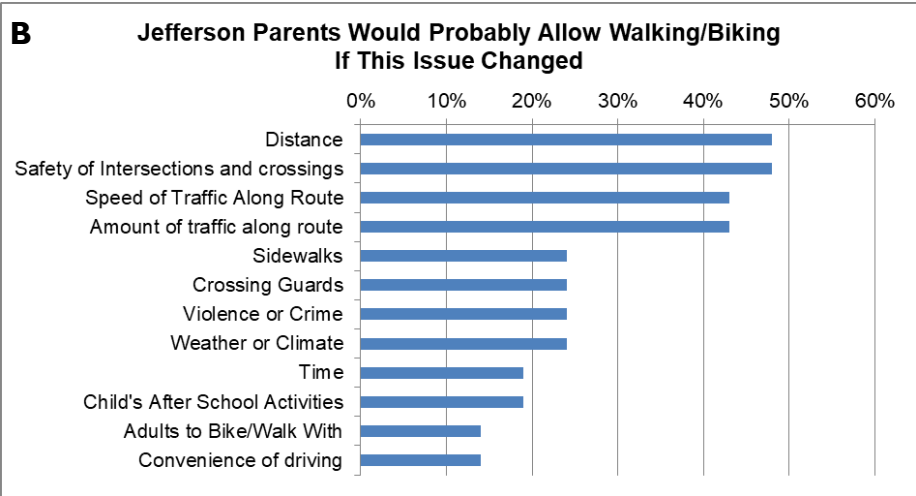
Fig. A



Student Tallies, October 2019

“Jefferson Travel Modes” bar chart (Fig. A) shows that 9% more parents are driving their kids to school in the morning, but those kids get home by school bus (6%), walking (2%), and Merrill-Go-Round (1%).

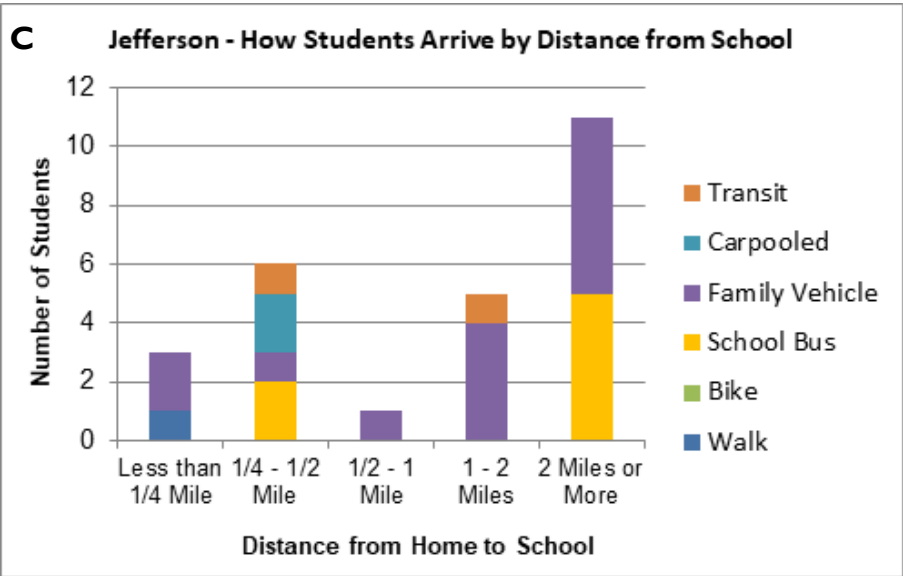
Fig. B



Parent Surveys, October 2019

“Distance” is the most commonly cited barrier by parents (Fig. B). Fig. C shows 33% living within a half mile of school and only one (3.7%) walker; therefore the potential to increase walking & biking is 29.6%.

Fig. C



Parent Surveys, October 2019

Community/Task Force

BACKGROUND

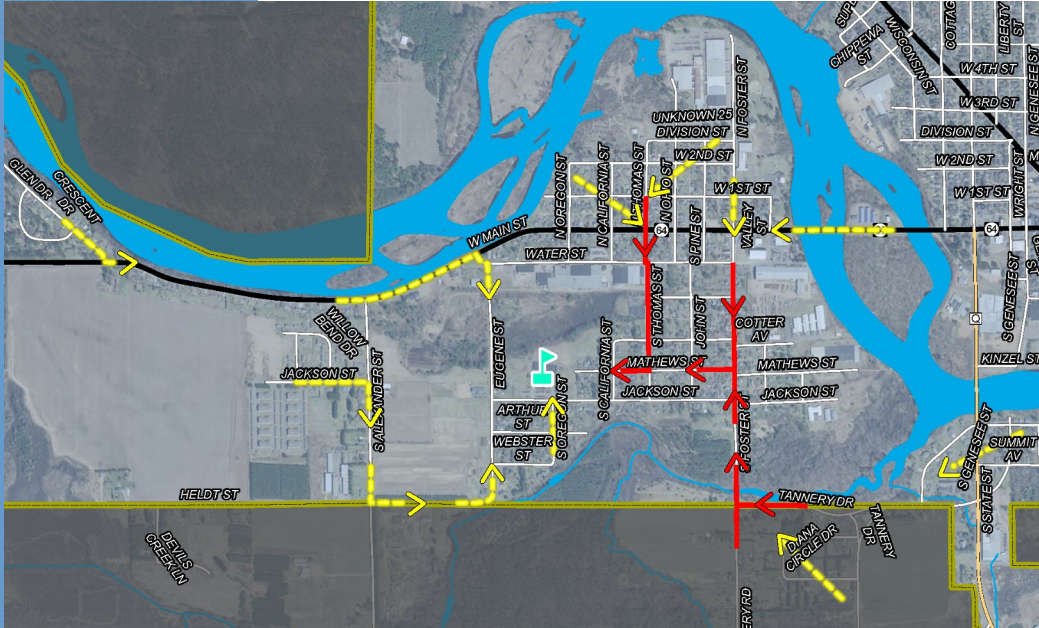
Many positive attributes make Merrill a great place to walk or bike for daily trips and for recreation. Historic downtown buildings and houses in some neighborhoods, surrounded by rivers and towering white pines provide scenic beauty to travel through. Distances are short to walk or bike. Many destinations are within a 3.5-mile, 20-minute, bicycling distance of most residents. Topography in Merrill is generally flat with gradual hills that are convenient to climb on a bike or to walk. All of these reasons make Merrill a good place to walk and bike.

Bicycling education in Merrill is multifaceted. The police department has been providing bicycle education in 3rd and 4th grades. The Merrill Optimist Club along with Merrill Park and Recreation Department and the Merrill Police Department provides bicycle safety training at the annual Children’s Festival, which targets toddlers up to 5th grade.

TASK FORCE

The Merrill SRTS Tasks Force began meeting in the fall of 2019. An overarching issue was identified as the limiting factor to getting more walkers and bikers – parental convenience. Additional issues were reviewed at each school as basic air photo audits were conducted of each school.

School Route Maps: The City of Merrill and NCWRPC created school route maps (Maps 5A-5E) to show the major and minor feeder routes that children use to get to school. As part of the school route map development, recommendations were created.



Map 5B
School Routes
Jefferson Elementary School

Legend

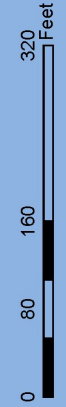
- Jefferson Elementary
- Feeder Route
- Main Route
- Minor Civil Division
- State Highway
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- Water

Map 3B Site Assessment Jefferson Elementary School

Merrill Safe Routes To School

Legend

- Jefferson Elementary
- Bike Rack
- Crossing Guard
- School Entrance
- Stop Sign
- 15 MPH School Speed Limit (Includes Higher Fine Zone)
- Sidewalks
- Painted Path on Road
- High Visibility Crosswalk
- Walking/Biking Direction
- Minor Civil Division
- Local Roads
- Water



Source: WIDNR, NCVRPC, City of Merrill
This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. The drawing is for reference purposes only. NCVRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



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Areawide Assessment

- * No sidewalks exist within a few blocks of the school.
- * Student walkers are sharing the collector roads of Jackson St. and Mathews St. with vehicles.

Map 6B Recommendations

Jefferson Elementary School

Merrill Safe Routes To School

Legend

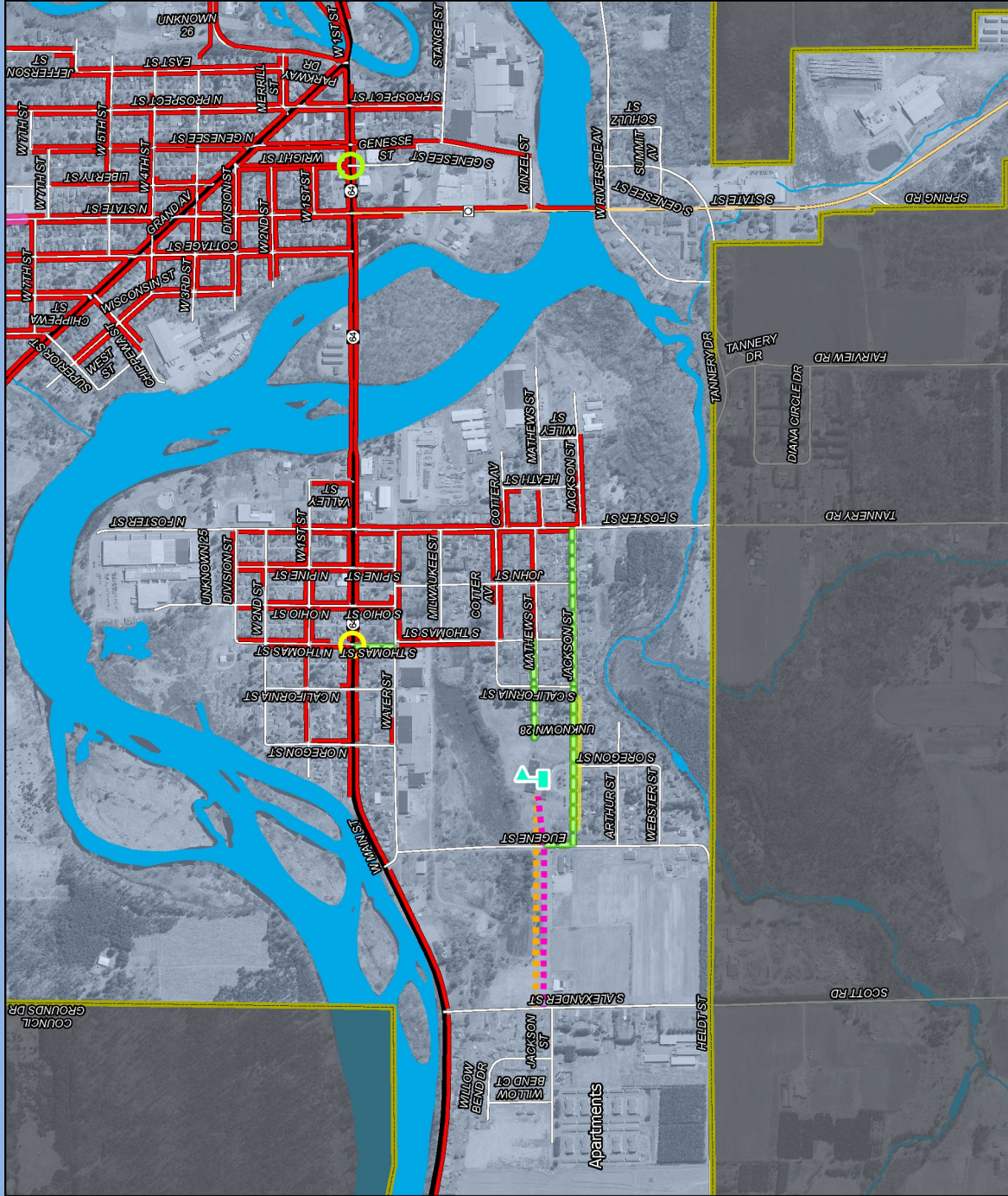
-  Jefferson Elementary
-  Existing Rapid Flash Crosswalk
-  Proposed Rapid Flash Crosswalk
-  Proposed Sidewalk
-  Proposed Lighting
-  Proposed 10-ft wide Path
-  15 MPH School Speed Limit (Includes Higher Fine Zone)
-  Higher Fine Zone
-  Sidewalks
-  Minor Civil Division
-  State Highway
-  County Highway
-  Local Roads
-  Water



Source: WIDAR, MDOIT, NCVPRPC, City of Merrill
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RECOMMENDATIONS for Jefferson Elementary

ACTIVITY	LOCATION	FUNDING	LEAD AGENCY (BOLD)	TIME FRAME
Engineering				
Create 10-ft wide path with lighting in public right-of-way.	Due west of Jefferson Elementary. See Map 6B.	WisDOT (Up to 80%), local taxes	City, School District	Medium term (TAP application every other year)
Add sidewalks on at least one side of several streets.	See Map 6B.	WisDOT (Up to 80%), local taxes	City	Medium term (TAP application every other year)
Add Rapid Flash Crosswalk	Main St & Thomas St.	Local taxes	City	Short term
Continue maintaining school zone signs, and painted crosswalks.	Existing locations.	Local taxes	City	Ongoing
Replace all bike racks. See Att. C guidance.	North side of school.	Local taxes	School Dist.	Short term
Education				
Provide materials to student's families about how to walk or bike with your kids.	School families	Local taxes	School Dist., Nat'l SRTS, NCWRPC, WI Bike Fed	Annually or as needed
Consider starting an additional bicycle training event.	Community	Local taxes	School Dist., City	Short term
Consider school field trips that integrate safe walking and biking practices into the curriculum.	Jefferson Elementary	Local taxes	School Dist.	Short term
Encouragement				
Create a "Walk to School Week" every fall.	Communitywide	Current staff	School Dist., Police, City	Annually in fall
Review creating a walking/biking club.	Jefferson Elementary	Current staff	School Dist., NCWRPC	Short term Ongoing
Enforcement				
Continue to provide crossing guards.	As needed around Jefferson Elementary.	Local taxes	City, School Dist.	Annually
Continue maintaining school speed limit zones.	See Site Assessment map.	Local taxes	City	Ongoing
Evaluation				
Conduct student tallies to see if walking and biking have increased.	Jefferson Elementary	Current staff	School Dist., NCWRPC	After initial changes and as new modifications are made
If walking or biking have not increased after all Engineering actions have occurred, then review various educational programming on "Resources" webpage and implement one or more of the resources.	Jefferson Elementary	Current staff	School Dist.	After student tally information has been collected