SCHOOL ZONES SAFETY PROGRAM

Regional Report



September 2026

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

The School Zones Safety Program (SZSP) is a regionwide initiative focused on improving safety, accessibility, and awareness within school zones across the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). The SZSP used analysis of data gathered through visits to schools and traffic data software to provide local public school districts with infrastructure recommendations and traffic safety analyses tailored to their school facilities and the surrounding area. Program activities focused on assessing pedestrian and bicyclist safety and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. This detailed data will help school districts easily identify projects to improve student safety, and it can support applications for funding to implement these projects. In addition, the program developed educational resources designed for classroom use, family outreach materials, and a bike bus start-up guide.

This thorough, standardized look at school zones across the entire MPA provides a unique opportunity for regional action. By understanding the biggest barriers to safe pedestrian and bicycle travel within each school zone and across the region as a whole, as well as specific actions that can be taken to address these barriers, school districts and other actors within the Rockford MPA can take steps that will have a tangible, positive impact on the safety of the region's students and the many others who travel through school zones every day.

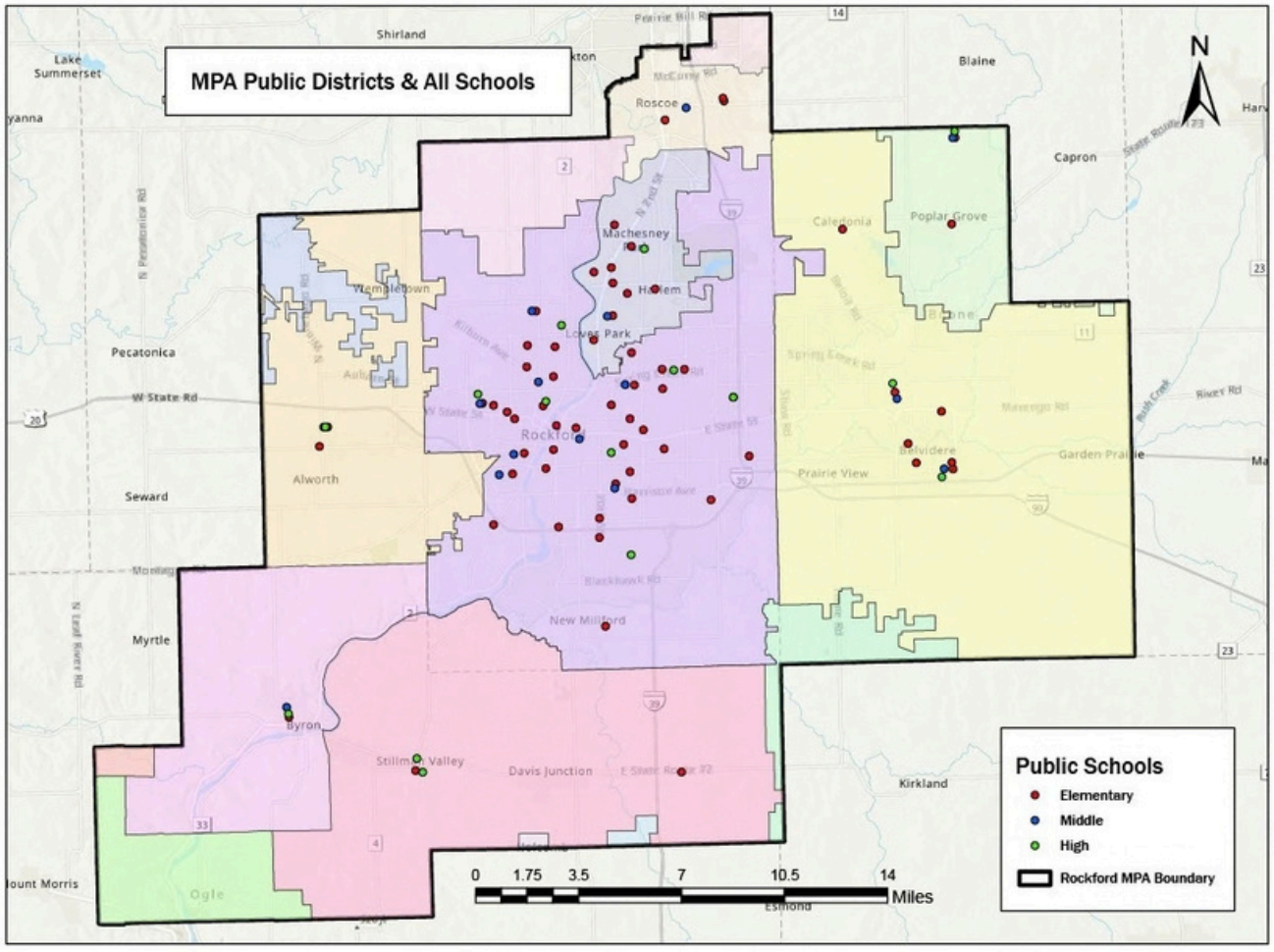
This program was conducted by Region 1 Planning Council (R1) from February 2026 through September 2026 with funding awarded through the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Local Agency Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant Program.

Region 1 Planning Council (R1) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Rockford MPA. An MPO is a regional organization that oversees transportation planning for urban areas. R1 has created several plans focused on bicyclists, pedestrians, and safety in the Rockford MPA, such as the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, State of the Trails Report, Greenways Plan, and Regional Traffic Safety Action Plan.

Study Area

Twelve unified public school districts and four elementary school districts fall in whole or in part within the Rockford MPA. Eight of these districts have school facilities within the MPA.

Figure 1-1: Rockford MPA School Districts & Facilities



R1 prepared reports for districts with school facilities located within the MPA. While it was not feasible to conduct in-person field audits at every school within the MPA during the program period, R1 wanted to ensure every district received personalized data and resources to inform safety improvements.

The following districts participated in field audits and received a detailed report for the following schools:

Table 1-1: Participating Districts – Field Audits

District	Schools
Belvidere 100	Caledonia Elementary School
	Seth Whitman Elementary School
	Belvidere Central Middle School
	Belvidere North High School
Byron 226	Mary Morgan Elementary School
	Byron Middle School
	Byron High School
Harlem 122	Rock Cut Elementary School
	Windsor Elementary School
	Harlem Middle School
	Harlem High School
Kinnikinnick 131	Ledgewood Elementary School
	Stone Creek Elementary School
North Boone 200	Manchester Elementary School
	North Boone Elementary School
	North Boone Middle School
	North Boone High School

The following districts did not participate in field audits but still received some data for the following schools:

Table 1-2: Participating Districts – No Field Audits

District	Schools
Meridian 223	Monroe Center Grade School
	Meridian Junior High School
	Highland Elementary School
	Stillman Valley High School
Winnebago 323	McNair Elementary School
	Simon Elementary School
	Winnebago Middle School
	Winnebago High School
Rockford 205	Cherry Valley Elementary School
	Auburn High School
	Bloom Elementary School
	Brookview Elementary School
	Carlson Elementary School
	Constance Lane Elementary School
	East High School
	Eisenhower Middle School
	Ellis Elementary School
	Flinn Middle School

Table 1-2: Participating Districts – No Field Audits

District	Schools
Rockford 205	Froberg Elementary School
	Gregory Elementary School
	Guilford High School
	Hillman Elementary School
	Jefferson High School
	Johnson Elementary School
	Kennedy Middle School
	Lathrop Elementary School
	Lewis Lemon Elementary School
	Lincoln Middle School
	Mcintosh Elementary School
	Riverdahl Elementary School
	RESA Middle School
	Rolling Green Elementary School
	Roosevelt Center
	Spring Creek Elementary School
	Washington Elementary School
	Welsh Elementary School
	West Middle School
	West View Elementary School
	Whitehead Elementary School

Report Outline

This document summarizes key findings from the School Zones Safety Program on a regional level.

Chapter 1. Introduction	Chapter 1 introduces the purpose of the School Zones Safety Program and the participating schools.
Chapter 2. Methods	Chapter 2 explains the activities undertaken during the program, the type of data gathered from each activity, and how that data contributes to safety improvement recommendations.
Chapter 3. Overall Findings	Chapter 3 highlights significant trends observed across the MPA from field audits at schools, analysis of traffic pattern data, and a survey sent to district parents.
Chapter 4. Recommendations	Chapter 4 summarizes common recommendations provided to schools to improve school zone safety, as well as actions parents and the public can take.

Chapter 2: Methods

For the School Zones Safety Program (SZSP), Region 1 Planning Council (R1) carried out a wide variety of activities intended to assess and promote safety and accessibility, including engagement with schools and families, creation of educational materials, use of traffic pattern analysis software, in-person visits to schools both in and out of session to assess existing conditions, and development of specific recommendations to improve infrastructure. This chapter explains the process for each of these activities.

Engagement

Family Survey

R1 developed a survey intended for families of students in the region in order to understand how they feel about student safety in school zones and transportation patterns around school drop-off and pick-up. R1 developed questions that would guide the direction of the SZSP as well as provide data that school district administration can use to guide future actions around school zone safety. Districts were provided the link to the survey and asked to distribute it to families through their communication channels, such as newsletters or social media. The survey was open from May 7 to June 17, 2026.

School Profile Survey

Districts were sent an online School Profile Survey to distribute to appropriate school representatives in order to gather direct school input on barriers to safe active transportation, historical context influencing transportation patterns, and current challenges surrounding safety and travel within the school zone. This information informed the infrastructure recommendations provided to districts in order to ensure the recommendations addressed school safety concerns. The survey was open from June 22 to July 31, 2026.

Educational Materials

To develop educational materials for elementary students around bike and pedestrian safety, R1 reviewed examples from bike advocacy groups across the country and met with local bike advocacy group I Bike Rockford for suggested topics of focus. Teachers from participating districts reviewed materials to ensure suitability for elementary students and classroom use. While R1 focused initially on materials to be used in the classroom, staff later decided it would be valuable to extend education outside of the classroom and compiled a family take-home guide that contains activities for students and information for parents or guardians.

Field Audits

For 17 schools across five districts within the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA), R1 staff visited schools to perform on-site field audits. Each school received two rounds of audits:

- **Round 1 audits** took place in the spring and fall when schools were in session to observe regular transportation patterns.
- **Round 2 audits** took place over the summer when schools were not in session in order to take detailed measurements and notes about the condition of school infrastructure.

Districts received all notes and measurements from both rounds of field audits, as well as recommendations for infrastructure improvements intended to improve safety based on these observations.

School Selection

To ensure fairness when selecting schools to receive audit reports, schools from the five participating districts were assessed using a Physical Risk Assessment and a Social Vulnerability Assessment. Schools were graded on factors focusing on local transportation conditions and equity-based criteria. One high school, one middle school, and up to two elementary schools were selected from each district (where applicable) using this process.

The Physical Risk Assessment evaluated physical infrastructure of the road that provides access to the school based on factors required for safe and equitable physical access. Criteria included:

- Street Classification
- Posted Speed Limit
- Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)
- Sidewalk Coverage
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance
- Signage

The Social Vulnerability Assessment evaluated demographic characteristics of the school to understand levels of social vulnerability. Criteria included:

- Total Students Enrolled
- Low Income (%)
- Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) (%) English Learners (%)
- Access to Vehicle (%)

Data was sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Department of Transportation, and Google Maps imagery.

Round 1

The first round of SZSP audits was conducted while schools were in session and covered morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up periods. These audits focused on recording drop- off/pick-up operations, traffic flow patterns, and active transportation methods to gain an understanding of student travel patterns, barriers to active transportation, and driver behavior within the school zone.

Round 1 audit observations included:

- **Active transportation behaviors** (e.g., walking/biking rates, group vs solo travel, helmet usage, common routes).
- **Barriers to active transportation** (e.g., missing sidewalks, poor crossings, accessibility barriers, traffic speed, distance).
- **Traffic flow** (e.g., congestion locations, queue lengths, choke points).
- **Driver behavior (**e.g., speeding, illegal U-turns, blocked crosswalks, failure to yield, adherence to school drop-off/pick-up protocol).
- **Traffic control effectiveness** (e.g., signal timing, crossing guard presence, signage type and visibility, staffing at pick-up and drop-off points).

Round 1 audits were typically conducted over a period of two days per school by three to four R1 staff members, which allowed simultaneous observation from different vantage points (e.g., one auditor would observe the main entrance and another would observe the neighborhood entry points).

R1 staff used printed maps to note conditions such as drop-off/pick-up points, direction of traffic flow for drop-off/pick-up queues, common travel routes, locations of frequent unsafe or illegal traffic maneuvers, and positions of crossing guards. Staff also took photos of general conditions and signage. Some informal conversations with principals, school resource officers, or police helped to add context and identify known areas of concern or planned infrastructure improvements.

Round 2

SZSP Round 2 audits were conducted while schools were not in session. Data collected during Round 2 audits were used to determine any ADA compliance issues and to identify potential improvements to connectivity or safety within the school zone.

Measurements and/or notes were taken of the following seven categories of infrastructure:

- **Sidewalks:** Paved linear pathways where pedestrians and bicycles can travel.
- **Crosswalks:** Striped intersections on a roadway where pedestrians and bicycles can travel.
- **Curb Ramps:** Also called curb cuts; sloped connection between a sidewalk and a roadway.
- **Stairs:** More than one elevated step in succession on school property.
- **School Entrances:** Entrances to the school building.
- **Parking Lots & Parking Stalls:** Parking areas used by school students, staff, and visitors.
- School Facilities: Facilities used by students, staff, and community members that are not considered part of the school building, such as a sports field.

The audit process was adapted after initial visits to more fully capture the experience of a student or community member with disabilities traveling within a school zone. Due to the increased level of detail, more time (increasing from one to two days) or staff members (increasing from three to four) were allotted per school, with a preference for additional staff members.

Printed aerial images of each school were marked with locations of the infrastructure facilities listed above. Each marked location was given a unique abbreviation that corresponded to notes of exact measurements, characteristics, and conditions, as well as to an image taken on-site for reference.

Measurements were taken with consistent methods: for example, all crosswalk and parking space width measurements were taken from the center of the outer parallel lines, and all slope measurements were taken in degrees with a Digital Angle Measurement tool. When possible, the same staff member was responsible for a given task across each school, decreasing variability and increasing efficiency.

All maps and notes for a school were compiled into a single digital copy with both Round 1 and Round 2 data.

Infrastructure Recommendations

The infrastructure recommendation reports translate findings from Round 1 and Round 2 field audits, school profile survey results, and aerial maps into a standardized and actionable set of recommendations for each school, with the goal of guiding future infrastructure improvements surrounding ADA accessibility and bicycle/pedestrian safety.

A consistent framework was developed to use across all schools for clarity, concision, and uniformity. The framework evaluates pedestrian facilities within each school (such as sidewalks, curb ramps, and crosswalks) against the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design and traffic safety best practices. Each report provides background on the school, its location, and a brief summary of its current infrastructural conditions, followed by a detailed map of the school zone and tables outlining the recommendations. The tables cover the physical condition, ADA compliance, recommended improvements, and priority level for sidewalks, curb ramps, crosswalks, signage, ADA compliant parking, and traffic operations. In the tables, each facility is designated by a unique abbreviation corresponding to its field audit notes, photograph, and location on maps.

Round 1 field audit observations of drop-off/pick-up conditions, traffic flow, and driver behaviors informed the traffic/operations recommendations, while Round 2 ADA compliance measurements informed the infrastructure-specific recommendations for sidewalks, curb ramps, and crosswalks. Priority levels are assigned based on the severity of the issue and its potential impact on student safety. Table 2-1 outlines the criteria for priority level assessments.

Table 2-1: Recommendation Priority Levels

Level	Definition
HIGH	Missing facility or immediate safety concern due to severe conditions.
MEDIUM	Existing facility requires repair, replacement, or improvement.
LOW	Existing facility in acceptable condition, requires routine maintenance.

Traffic Safety Analysis

R1 performed traffic safety analyses for each school zone using StreetLight, a transportation data and analytics platform that helps planners better understand how people and vehicles move through a community. StreetLight uses large sets of anonymized transportation and location-based data to estimate travel patterns across a roadway network, such as how much traffic is traveling through an area, where trips are coming from and going to, and what times of day experience highest travel activity. These analyses allow examination of travel patterns across longer periods of time than field observations permit.

For each school, R1 evaluated roadway segments, intersections, traffic conditions, and school-related crashes within a 0.3-mile radius of the school from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm on school days from 2019 to 2024. These parameters ensured data was relevant to active school zones.

Historical Crash Data

Historical crash data was reviewed to identify where crashes have occurred within and surrounding each school zone. R1 evaluated crashes within the study area and considered their location, frequency, and relationship to nearby roadway segments and intersections. From this, roadway segments and intersections were assigned a high, medium, or low safety risk to indicate which roadway segments and intersections required further evaluation.

Network Performance

Network Performance analysis was used to evaluate traffic conditions across the roadway network surrounding the school. This analysis provided information on measures such as vehicle volumes and travel speeds, allowing individual roadway segments to be compared and areas of greater traffic activity to be identified. These results provided context for the conditions experienced by students, families, and other road users traveling within the school zone.

Corridor Studies

Corridor Study analysis was used to evaluate vehicle activity along key roadways within and surrounding each school zone. These corridors generally represented the primary roads used to access the school or roads that carry a significant amount of traffic through the surrounding area. This analysis provided information on roadway volume distribution and vehicle speeds, divided into hourly segments. The data was used to identify when traffic activity is highest and whether vehicle speeds change during arrival, dismissal, or other periods of the day.

Top Routes for Zones

Top Routes for Zones analysis was used to understand the most common routes taken by vehicles traveling to or from the defined school zone. While other analyses primarily focused on conditions within the immediate school zone, Top Routes for Zones provided a broader view of how vehicles reach the school zone through the surrounding roadway network. This helped to identify the major roads that feed traffic into the area and provided additional context for understanding traffic patterns that may originate beyond the immediate school boundary.

Chapter 3: Overall Findings

Each district received detailed findings specific to their schools, many of which apply only to the specific location, layout, or student population of the school facilities. However, each School Zones Safety Program (SZSP) activity identified certain patterns that arose across schools, providing a comprehensive view of the issues surrounding pedestrian and bicycle safety and accessibility within the Rockford Metropolitan Area's (MPA) public school zones.

Field Audits

During the field audits, common patterns affecting safety and accessibility across schools included both infrastructure issues, like sidewalk and crosswalk condition, and behavioral issues, like speeding and helmet use.

Sidewalk Connectivity

When present, sidewalks were often uneven, narrow, or degraded; had Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) non-compliant slopes; or lacked connectivity to other sidewalks, neighborhoods, school entrances, and other school facilities. Lack of connectivity can include gaps between stretches of sidewalk, sidewalks that abruptly end, highly degraded sidewalks, or the absence of a crosswalk or curb ramp. In some cases, asphalt sidewalks were not perceived clearly as formal, dedicated pedestrian infrastructure, which caused these segments to be used informally by vehicles during drop-off and pick-up. Even where an asphalt sidewalk is physically present and contributes on paper to connectivity of the sidewalk network, this informal use undermines its function as part of a safe, uninterrupted pedestrian path.

At schools that lacked sidewalks or sidewalk connectivity, students were observed walking through grass or parking lots or along roads without pedestrian protections, putting them at higher risk of conflicts with motor vehicles. Additionally, sidewalks without connectivity could discourage some students from walking to school because part of their route is not protected.

Some schools lacked accessible routes leading to playgrounds due to poor ramp maintenance or sidewalks that led to mulched areas instead of clear connection to the playground. Sidewalk connections to sports facilities were often limited, connecting to only part of the facilities, lacking curb ramps, or missing entirely.

Driving Behavior

Speeding was a very common observation across schools; drivers would often ignore or fail to notice the posted speed limit. Speeding reduces a driver's ability to react to sudden disturbances, like a student stepping into the road or a car making an illegal turn, and increases the severity of crash outcomes. However, auditors noted that speeding seemed to decrease in severity when live speed readers were present alongside the posted limits.

Illegal U-turns were observed at several schools, especially those with on-street parking or single entrance/exit sites. Parents and guardians were also observed to enter through "exit only" or "do not enter" points and ignore or fail to notice "right/left turn only" signs. Failure to follow rules and road signage causes unpredictability and raises the likelihood of conflict between vehicles and pedestrians, cyclists, or other vehicles (including buses).

Congestion and vehicle overflow from the school onto adjacent roads was a common pattern during peak drop-off/pick-up times. Buses often had to cross opposing traffic or navigate blind spots when turning out of school property, sometimes creating near-miss scenarios with other vehicles and jeopardizing the safety of students and drivers.

Crosswalk Visibility

Crosswalk striping visibility was often poor, especially of crosswalks that connected parking lots to entrances or surrounding facilities. Striping was frequently missing, faded, and/or difficult to distinguish from surrounding pavement. Signage was not always present or consistent throughout the school area; stop, yield, and pedestrian crossing signage was often missing, especially outside of parking lots. Very few schools had signalized crosswalks, and crossing guard presence was often inconsistent (with crossing guards present on some days but not others) or absent entirely. Visible crosswalks and appropriate signage signal to drivers that pedestrians may be present and provide a clear route for pedestrians to follow. Crossing guards provide additional protection during high-traffic periods by ensuring drivers stop at crosswalks and allowing students to cross safely.

Drainage

Drainage-related soil erosion was frequently noted near walkways. Drainage infrastructure located near major walkways and entrances can cause and/or worsen pavement damage and potential walkway obstruction both during and after rain events. Frequently observed drainage concerns included poor placement of drains, pipes, and outflow points relative to walkways; lack of adequate water and snow collection areas adjacent to sidewalks; and preexisting pavement cracks susceptible to further damage.

Noncompliant sidewalk slope and level differences between sidewalk panels were also identified as contributing factors to drainage issues, directing water flow towards pavement rather than away, or causing water to pool.

Asphalt sidewalks that had gone without regular maintenance were especially prone to water-related surface breakdown, while concrete aggregate sidewalks more commonly showed expansion cracking as the associated drainage and erosion issue.

Because audits were conducted during periods of little rainfall, drainage conditions were assessed indirectly through evidence such as crack formation patterns, standing water, and drainage infrastructure placement, thus speaking to drainage siting rather than whether the system functions correctly during a rainfall event.

School Entrance Accessibility

ADA standards for door width, height, handle style, and hardware are set so that entrances are accessible to the most people. In some cases, door handles at school facilities were positioned too high or low to meet ADA standards, making them difficult to operate for certain users. Certain doorbells, buzzers, and scanners were mounted too high or otherwise did not meet ADA compliance standards.

While automatic door switches were usually present on at least the main entrances to schools, some schools lacked them entirely. While not required by ADA standards, their absence creates difficulties for users with limited mobility to enter independently. Lack of consistency across entrances to a school or between schools within a district likewise creates uncertainty and accessibility barriers for students, staff, or visitors with disabilities.

Helmet Use

Use of helmets was consistently low at schools where use of bicycles or scooters was present, increasing the likelihood of severe injury in the case of a conflict with a motor vehicle or other hazard or accident. In school zones with congested or high-speed traffic conditions, this lack of personal safety protection is especially problematic.

Traffic Safety Analysis

Traffic safety data analyses performed using StreetLight software likewise uncovered common traffic patterns within school zones across the MPA.

Ineffective Speed Reduction

Measures to reduce vehicle speed in school zones are largely ineffective. On roads where school entrances are located, there is no real reduction in 85th percentile speed, which represents the average driver going at a comfortable speed on a given roadway. This is especially concerning for school corridors, whose peak traffic volumes occur at the start and end of a school day, when pedestrians and cyclists are most present. Driver speeds in these corridors only respected intersections (both controlled and uncontrolled), rather than the locations of schools, school zone speed limit signs, or crosswalks.

Crash Occurrence

Crashes are occurring on the edges of school zones. Crashes rarely occur directly in front of a school or at the corner of a school property and are more likely to occur at the edge of the 0.3- mile buffer around the school, just before school zone speed limits are active. While this could be related to the presence of higher-volume roads or higher speeds outside of school zones, it was a pattern observed at schools across the MPA and should be considered when assessing school zone safety. This may indicate that increased pedestrian signage should be placed closer to the edges of school zones.

Peak Traffic Hours

Peak traffic hours are consistent across all school zones and corridors. The 7:00 am to 8:00 am and 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm hours are the peak for every school corridor regardless of the road type. High-volume corridors in urban areas and low-volume corridors in rural areas have similar peak traffic charts. This demonstrates how, no matter the road volume, schools have a clear impact on traffic patterns and are among the most popular travel destinations for roughly three hours a day, five days a week. Combined with crash and speed data, this information can help target solutions even at a small scale to address safety at specific hours, regardless of school population.

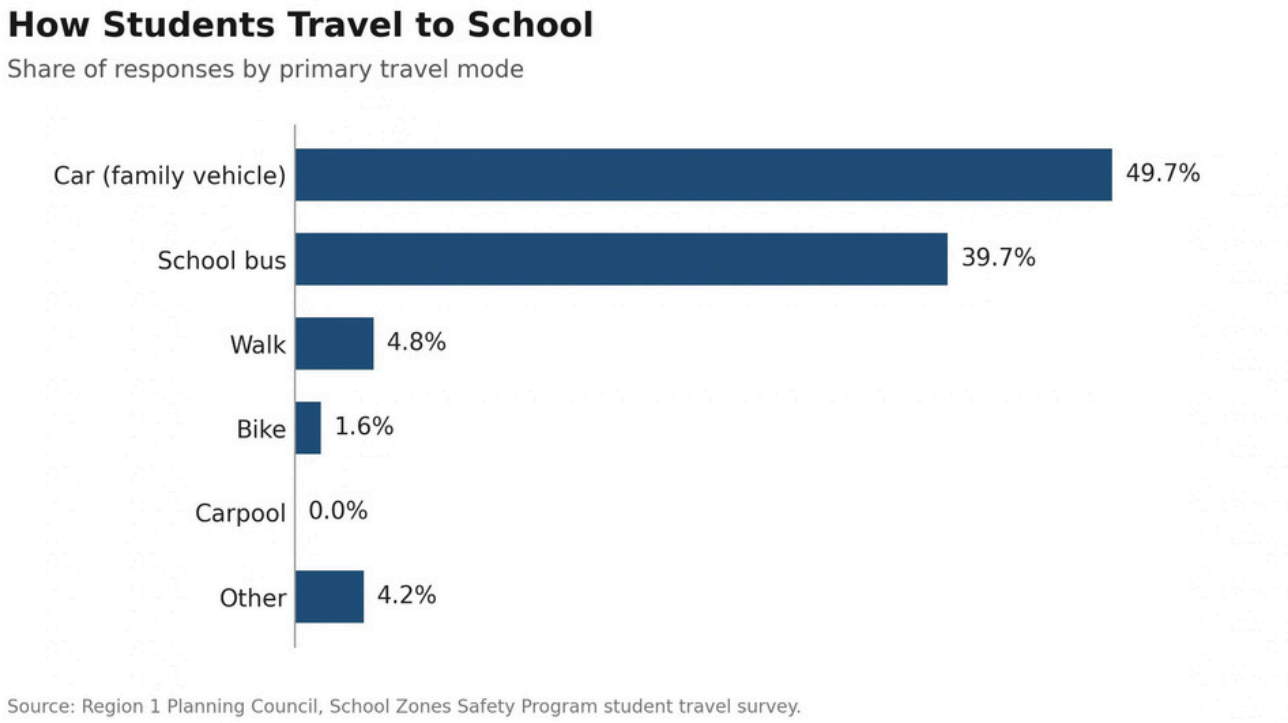
Family Survey

The SZSP family survey received 312 responses from parents or guardians of students attending public schools within the MPA. The survey asked questions about methods of travel to school, perceptions of safety within school zones, and bike bus programs.

Only 6.4 percent of parents indicated that their child usually walks or bikes to/from school. 39.7 percent indicated that their child takes the school bus, while 49.7 percent said their child gets to school by car (family vehicle). The most frequent reasons for choosing this travel method are convenience (60.8 percent), time/schedule (56.6 percent), and distance (37.9 percent).

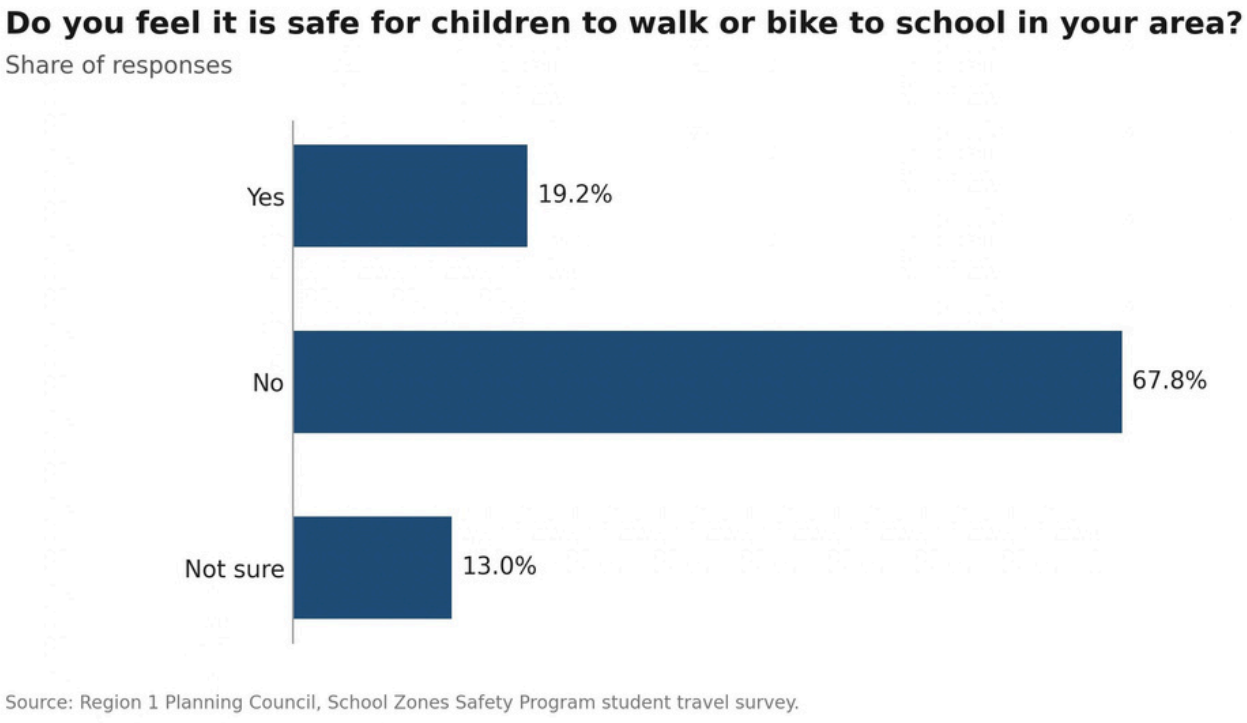
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Figure 3-1: How does your child usually get to/from school?



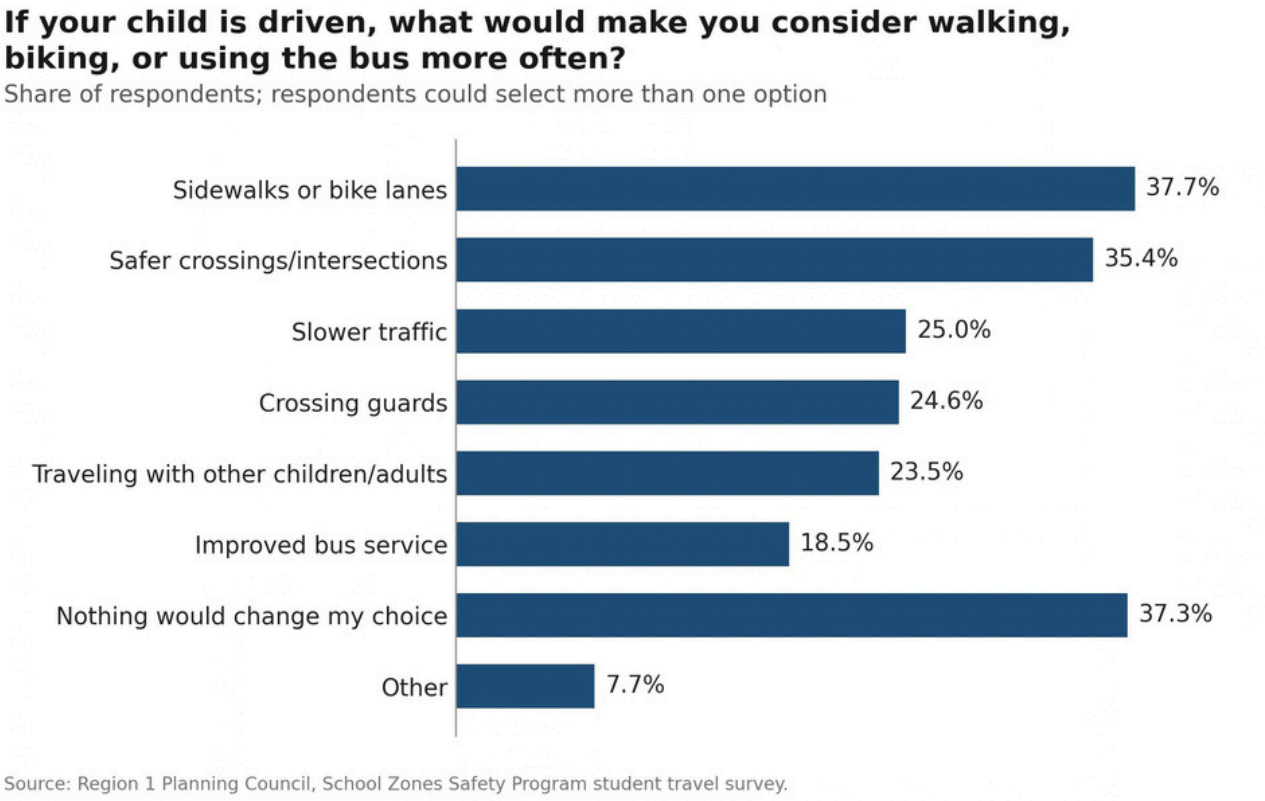
67.8 percent of parents said they do not feel it is safe for children to walk or bike to school in their area. While 37.9 percent of parents indicated that they would not allow their child to walk or bike to school if conditions improved, 33.7 percent indicated that they would, and the remaining 24.5 percent indicated that they might.

Figure 3-2: Do you feel it is safe for children to walk or bike to school in your area?



The most common improvements that would cause a parent whose child is driven to consider allowing their child to walk, bike, or bus more frequently are sidewalks or bike lanes (37.7 percent) and safer crossings/intersections (35.4 percent), followed by slower traffic, crossing guards, and traveling with other children/adults. 69.1 percent of parents said they would or may use a school-provided map showing recommended safe routes for walking or biking.

Figure 3-3: If your child is driven, what would make you consider walking, biking, or using the bus more often?



These responses can give districts a sense of what families at their schools feel the biggest problems around safety are and potentially provide a starting point for safety improvement efforts, especially where responses aligned with field audit findings and infrastructure recommendations provided by SZSP school reports (e.g., improving sidewalks and crosswalks).

Chapter 4: Recommendations

The School Zones Safety Program (SZSP) is intended to provide detailed background data on the state of pedestrian and bicycle safety within public school zones in the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). Districts can use findings from the SZSP process to make physical infrastructure improvements to school facilities and can share educational activities within classrooms to improve safe biking and walking practices.

School Actions

Region 1 Planning Council (R1) provided participating districts with school-specific infrastructure improvement actions to take to improve school safety and accessibility based on field audit observations and measurements. These recommendations are ranked by priority and accompanied by the detailed field audit findings that informed them and a list of potential funding sources to use to implement them. Districts are encouraged to use the resources provided through the SZSP to identify specific projects and to support applications for grant funding to improve school zone safety.

Common infrastructure recommendations made across schools include the following:

Table 4-1: Common Infrastructure Recommendations

Sidewalks	***Recommendations***
	• Repair or replace cracked, gapped, or uneven panels. • Repave sections that have ADA non-compliant running or cross slopes. • Remove vegetation, debris, and grass encroachment. • Schedule monthly vegetation maintenance and annual condition inspections.
	How does this help?
	Fixing sidewalk hazards allows pedestrians to travel more smoothly with less danger of injury and provides access to those using mobility aids such as a wheelchair. Scheduling regular maintenance and inspections allows schools to catch and correct minor issues before they become more severe and more costly.
Curb Ramps	***Recommendations***
	• Install or replace missing/degraded detectable warning surfaces. • Regrade ramps to correct ADA non-compliant running or cross slopes. • Repave cracked or mud-accumulated ramp sections. • Conduct annual condition assessments.

Table 4-1: Common Infrastructure Recommendations

Curb Ramps	***How does this help?***
	Ramps with compliant detectable warning surfaces and graded to appropriate slopes allow visually impaired pedestrians and wheelchair users to safely access sidewalks and other facilities. Scheduling regular maintenance and inspections allows schools to catch and correct minor issues before they become more severe and more costly.
Crosswalks	***Recommendations***
	• Repaint faded markings. • Widen crosswalks to the 72" standard. • Upgrade striping to high-visibility continental/ladder-style markings. • Schedule periodic repainting and inspections.
	How does this help?
	High-visibility crosswalks alert drivers to the presence or potential presence of pedestrians and increase likelihood of yielding. Wider crosswalks reduce the likelihood of pedestrians stepping outside of crosswalk boundaries and closer to traffic, which is especially important in congested areas such as school zones during peak drop-off/pick-up hours. Scheduling painting and condition inspections allows schools to maintain high-quality safety infrastructure.
Signage	***Recommendations***
	• Install or enlarge "Do Not Enter/Exit Only" signage angled towards traffic. • Add "Slow Down, School Ahead" and pedestrian crossing signage. • Trim vegetation blocking existing signs. • Install "School Bus Turn Around" warnings.
	How does this help?
	Adding clear signage that addresses the most common driver errors or non-compliance behavior reduces confusion and allows traffic to flow more smoothly. This reduces potential conflict between vehicles and pedestrians, cyclists, and other vehicles (including buses).
Parking Lots	***Recommendations***
	• Designate additional ADA-accessible parking spaces to meet required count based on total lot size.
	How does this help?
	Providing adequate ADA-accessible parking spaces promotes accessibility for students, staff, or other individuals with disabilities.

Table 4-1: Common Infrastructure Recommendations

Traffic Operations	***Recommendations***
	• Extend turn lanes to prevent overflow onto the main road. • Redesign or clearly delineate entrances shared between multiple schools. • Add queue-line pavement markings and signage. • Mark "No Parking" zones with cross-hatching to preserve sightlines.
	How does this help?
	Reducing vehicle congestion improves traffic flow and predictability, separates school traffic and non-school traffic, and reduces potential conflict between pedestrians, cyclists, and other vehicles (including buses).
Staffing	***Recommendations***
	• Station crossing guards at high-conflict pedestrian crossings, particularly where no immediate infrastructure fix is needed but behavior enforcement is. • Provide staff guiding traffic operations with high-visibility vests.
	How does this help?
	Crossing guards can ensure drivers stop at crosswalks and allow pedestrians to cross safely. Proper high-visibility gear alerts drivers to the presence of crossing guards, managing staff, and pedestrians at crosswalks and in roadways.
Traffic Separation	***Recommendations***
	• Add barriers such as fencing between drop-off/pick-up areas and playgrounds or basketball courts. • Add paving to separate bus-only entrances/exits.
	How does this help?
	Separating locations with students from vehicular traffic reduces potential conflict between pedestrians and vehicles, and also helps to keep non-school traffic separate from school traffic. Separating buses from personal vehicle traffic reduces bus-car conflict.

The SZSP also provided districts with educational materials intended for elementary classroom use and distribution to families. By distributing these materials to classrooms and families, districts can encourage safe transportation behavior.

Personal Actions

While families cannot personally improve a sidewalk or a crosswalk, they can take action through practicing safe walking and biking at home, driving safely and responsibly in school zones, and raising concerns about safety with their schools and others in their community.

A family take-home packet is available on R1's Engage R1 website and includes activities for families and students to do together, such as a helmet fitting guide, worksheets to learn how to travel safely as a pedestrian or cyclist, and a word search with safety-related words. This packet and the Engage R1 page also provide additional safety resources that families can explore.

Figure 4-1: Road Crossing Worksheet

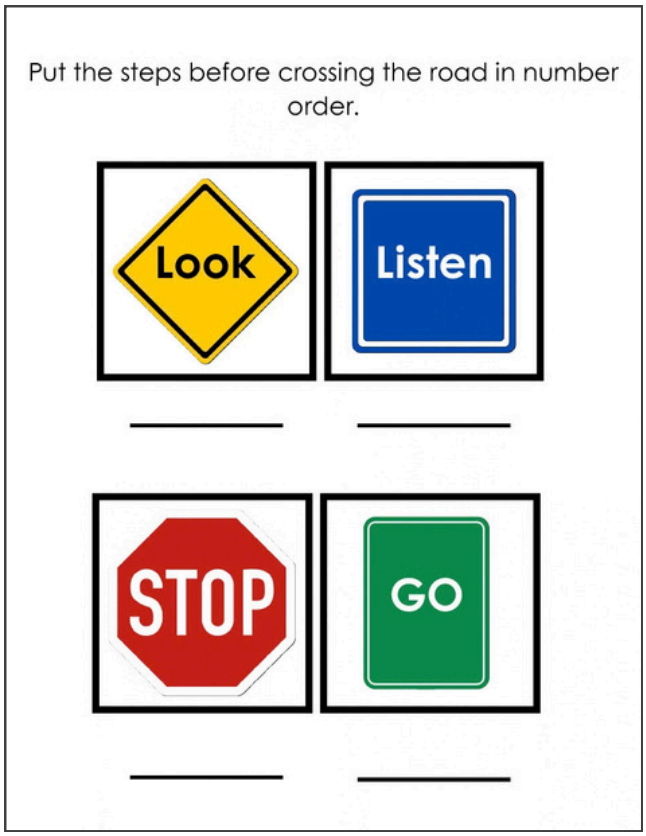
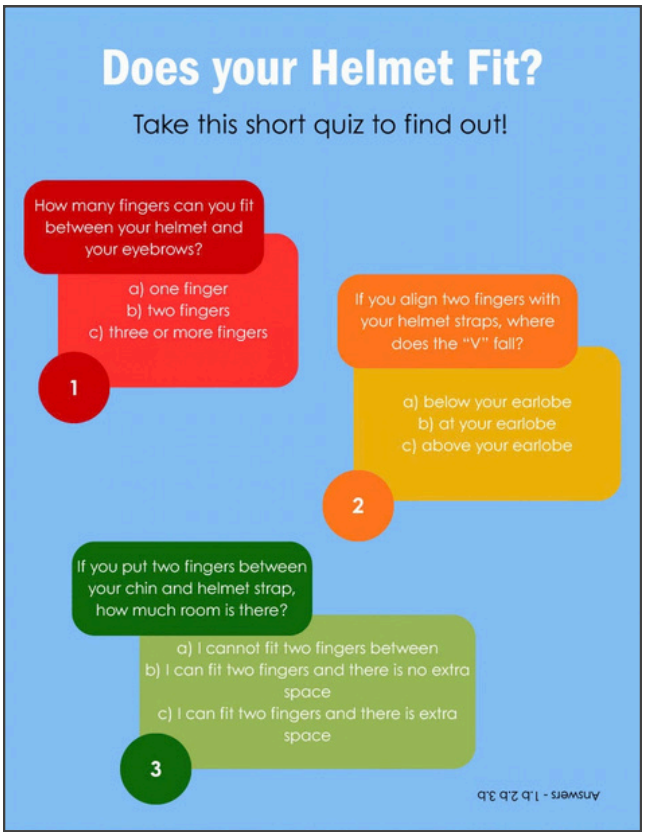


Figure 4-2: Helmet Fit Quiz



Families can also start a bike bus to help students bike safely to school. A bike bus is a group of students and adult volunteers who ride together to school along a planned route with designated stops. Bike buses have seen success in the Rockford Region: for example, parents and volunteers at Constance Lane Elementary School in Rockford have successfully organized a bike bus that has run for several years. A bike bus start-up guide for families is available on R1's Engage R1 website.

[Figure 4-3 on next page]

Figure 4-3: Bike Bus Benefits

