

# SafeRoutesMiddlebury



Fun ★ Free ★ Healthy ★ Green ★ Safe Routes to School

**Mary Hogan Elementary School Travel Plan  
Middlebury, Vermont  
January 2014**

This Travel Plan represents the work of the Mary Hogan School Safe Routes to School Team. Our school is striving for a Gold-Level Partnership with the Vermont Safe Routes to School Resource Center. We believe creating and maintaining this Travel Plan is a good way to ensure an on-going Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program at our school. Our SRTS team consists of parents, teachers, and other community stakeholders who have provided input, guidance, and oversight in writing our plan.

**1. Individuals and Organizations Involved in the local SR2S Team:**

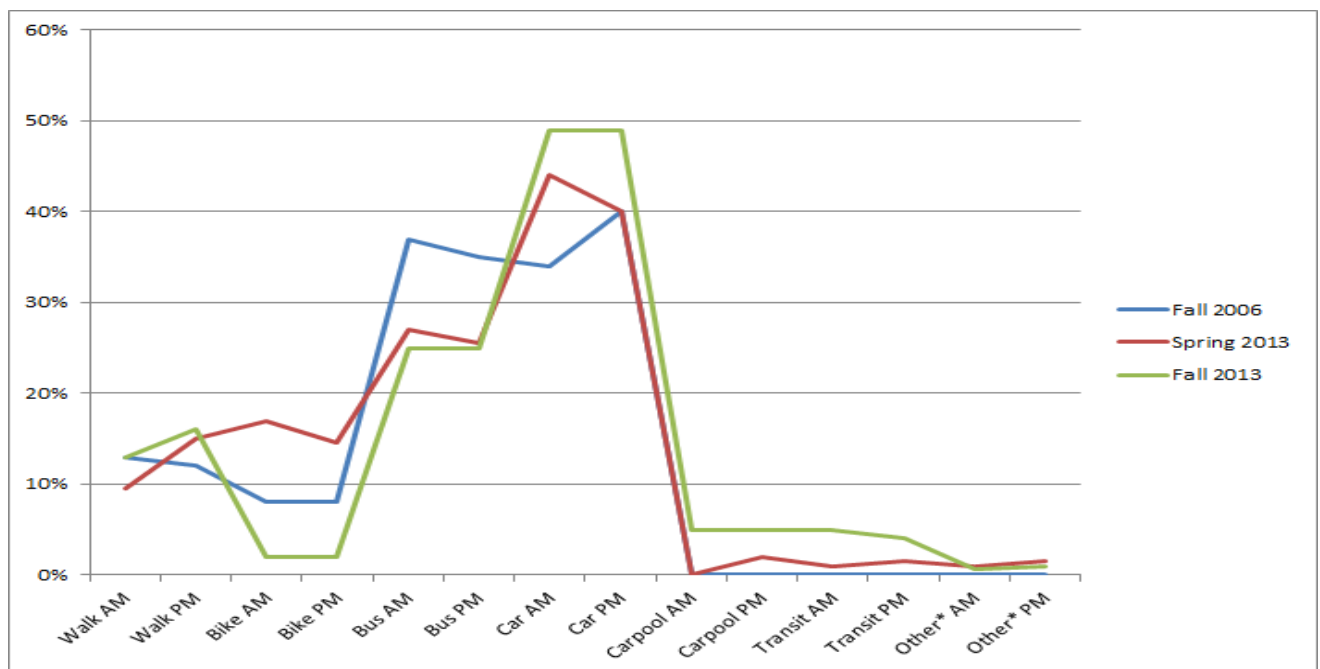
<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/Organization</b>
Steven Lindemann	Assistant Principal, Mary Hogan School
Mary Gill	School Health Coordinator/School Nurse
Terri Arnold	Director, Middlebury Parks & Recreation
Claire Tebbs	Land Use Planner, ACRPC
Nadine Canter Barnicle	Community Relations Manager, Addison County Transportation Resources, Inc (ACTR)
Laura Asermily	Middlebury Energy Committee, SR2S Chair
Chris Mason	Middlebury Police School Resource Officer
Dan Werner	Director of Public Works, Town of Middlebury
Ruth Hardy	Parent and School Board Chair
Carl Robinson	Parent
Megan Lausted	School Liaison, Vermont Department of Health
Chris Robbins	Middlebury Planning Commission
Abby Mattera	VT SRTS Resource Center

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## 2. Assessment of Students Walking and Biking to and from School

	<u>Fall 2006</u>	<u>Spring 2013</u>	<u>Fall 2013 (cold rain)</u>
<u>Walk AM</u>	13%	9.5%	13%
<u>Walk PM</u>	12%	15%	16%
<u>Bike AM</u>	8%	17%	2%
<u>Bike PM</u>	8%	14.5%	2%
<u>Bus AM</u>	37%	27%	25%
<u>Bus PM</u>	35%	25.5%	25%
<u>Car AM</u>	34%	44%	49%
<u>Car PM</u>	40%	40%	49%
<u>Carpool AM</u>	No data	0%	5%
<u>Carpool PM</u>	No data	2%	5%
<u>Transit AM</u>	No data	1%	5%
<u>Transit PM</u>	No data	1.5%	4%
<u>Other* AM</u>	No data	1%	0.6%
<u>Other* PM</u>	No data	1.5%	1%

\*Other includes skateboards, scooters, etc



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## Students proximity to school: 2013/2014 school year

# Students within 0.25 mile	9	2%
# Students within 0.5 mile	26	6%
# Students within 1.0 mile	136	34%
# Students within 1.5 miles	197	49%
# Students within 2.0 miles	213	53%
Total # students	403	100%

Based on mapping the student population for the 2013/2014 school year, 34% percent of students live within one mile and 53% of students live within two miles of school. According to the spring 2013 survey, a combined total of 31% are walking or biking to school with 28% walking or biking home. Based on the 2006 figures, the 2013 numbers represent a solid achievement, but are likely not occurring on a daily or year-round basis, so there is work to be done to ensure that these figures can be consistently sustainable, and even improved. Improved infrastructure and safety provisions, as well as ongoing education and encouragement will increase the likelihood of this occurring. The 2006 survey also found that 43% of children had asked to bike or walk to school, and the 2013 survey found that 58% of children asked to bike or walk to school. This reinforces the notion that the removal of some of the physical and cultural barriers parents perceive may further increase walking or biking to school.



It is clear a significant barrier to walking and biking to school is the distance from children's homes to school. Sixty-six percent of all students live over a mile from school, often beyond the reach of sidewalks and safely bikeable roads for young children. Improving both the infrastructure as well as bus access is important to reaching these students. Efforts such as collaborating with neighboring schools to enable additional bus routes could reach more students who currently live beyond safely walkable locations. Adding bike racks to school buses could encourage students to utilize active transportation part of the way, and reduce the traffic congestion close to our school.

Increasing access to quality affordable, in-town housing for families with young children should be emphasized, so a greater number of students can live within walking distance of school. Further, infrastructure improvements such as prioritizing sidewalk construction in areas of town where children live, enhancing existing and increasing the number of crosswalks throughout the town, retiming traffic lights to favor pedestrian crossing, creating designated bike paths and lanes, and improving pedestrian passageways through parking lots near school would all improve the safety of children walking or biking to school.

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Additionally, recruiting and training more crossing guards, either as volunteers or as town/school employees could enhance the safety of children and the comfort-level of parents. During winter months, ensuring that sidewalks and roadways are cleared appropriately to allow for safe walking and clear sight-lines is crucial, and may be enhanced by enlisting the support of citizens to assist with timely sidewalk and driveway shoveling. Ask Shaw's to remove curb obstacle.

Better partnerships with the Middlebury Union Middle and High Schools (MUMS & MUHS) is important to coordinate pedestrian, bike and bus access to our in-town schools. As more students and families feel comfortable with busing, walking and biking to school in elementary school, these routines will continue as children advance to MUMS and MUHS. Older students could also act as neighborhood chaperones for younger children on their way to Mary Hogan School. Our schools working together would create a greater focus on the barriers in our town to safe access to our schools. Staff and faculty at our schools could also increase efforts to act as role models who themselves travel to school on foot, bike, bus or carpool. Propose "reserved car pool parking."

Finally, with a number of proposals for major construction projects within the Town of Middlebury, including the Town Office and Recreation Facility Project, and the in-town Railroad Bridge Replacement Project, it seems an ideal time for the Town to improve the level of pedestrian, bike and bus access throughout our town. Especially given that the proposed recreation facility would be built on school property, it is essential that such access be improved, rather than hindered. Bike and walking paths, as well as improved entrances to our school should be included in plans before any approval is provided.

As indicated in the chart above, there is an increased number of students walking and bicycling to/from Mary Hogan School as compared to the previous study and plan. We intend to reduce barriers and educate our community to improve these numbers even more. We will use safety and travel mode data collected annually each fall and spring to track this change.



## *Additional Walking, Biking, and Healthy Lifestyle Activities at Mary Hogan School*

Mary Hogan School continues to be a leader in health and fitness initiatives. The School Action Plan establishes student participation in a variety of physical activities as a priority. The following efforts have been initiated by the administrators, embraced by the students and fully supported by the teachers, parents, community and the school board:

- Monthly 'Walk to School Days' were initiated in 2001. 75% of students participate.
- New Physical Education standards emphasize "lifestyle activities" which includes walking and biking. In addition, classroom teachers to include daily activities such as walking, outdoor play and discovery.
- Sponsored numerous after school programs aimed at increasing physical activity: Hiking Club, Biking Club, Skating Club, Girls on the RUN, Turkey Trot Running Club.
- Sponsored 'Build a Buddy' a Bone Building contest in which students earned points through good nutrition and physical activity. Walking was one of the preferred methods of earning points. (Entire school participated)

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- Utilize school newsletters to educate parents regarding benefits of physical activity with an emphasis on walking and biking to school.
- Make available “classroom walking kits” to promote walking and hiking field trips. Kits will contain facts about pedestrian safety, pedometers, reflector tags for backpacks or jackets, and “leader vests” for visibility.
- Assembled a Mary Hogan School Health Team which meets monthly and coordinates a variety of health and wellness initiatives.
- Physical education teachers review the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Education Curriculum and incorporate lessons into their teaching plans.
- Request Bike Trailer from Local Motion to complement Physical Education classes and Bike Safety Fair.
- Yearly Bike Safety Fair in collaboration with Town of Middlebury Recreation Department and Safe Routes to School Committee.
- Continuing education and emphasis on the benefits of walking: personal physical and mental benefits, reduced vehicle emissions, reduced traffic and congestion, financial benefits of using less gas.
- Institute "Bike Marshalls" for a month who can demonstrate how to successfully and safely navigate through town.



### **3. Physical and Cultural Barriers Students Face**

#### **Physical Barriers (see map)**

Gaps in the network:

- Creek Road - sidewalks needed to connect new South Village housing and Addison County Transit Resources (ACTR) proposed hub to Rt. 7 /Courts Street sidewalk system, and to provide walks along high school school playing fields.
  - 2013 Update: Creek Road –A new sidewalk is planned in conjunction with street improvements. A grant was awarded to the Town for pedestrian improvements. A new sidewalk will run on the west side of Creek Road from Court Street south to the Trail around Middlebury. Crosswalks will be installed at the ACTR facility and at LaCrosse Drive. This project involves new storm sewer, curbing and road reconstruction. Construction will be completed in 2016.



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- Add/sustain safety signs at Creek/Rt 7.
- Water Street - Sidewalks are also lacking on a portion of Water Street/Charles Avenue, in the area of Mary Johnson Children's Center and the High School. (This sidewalk gap to be fixed with new walk to be built in fall 2010).
  - 2013 Update: Water Street – This project will begin spring of 2014. Sidewalk will be installed on the west side of Water Street. A crosswalk will be installed across from the Mary Johnson Child Care Center. The project begins at Cross Street and ends at the lower curve of Water/Charles. This project includes new water main, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, curb, and road reconstruction.
- Washington Street Extension needs sidewalk/path from Peterson Terrace east to Painter Hills neighborhood.
- Seymour Street/Pulp Mill Bridge Road – Sidewalks are needed along Seymour Street Extension and short gap on Seymour Street near Pulp Mill Bridge.
  - 2013 Update: Seymour Street/Pulp Mill Bridge Road – A scoping study (grant funded) is underway for connection of the sidewalk from the endpoint on Seymour Street along Pulp Mill Bridge Road to Weybridge Street.
- Sidewalks are lacking along US Route 7 from Stonegate and Boardman Street neighborhood to the Court Street sidewalks network to the schools.
- Sidewalks are also lacking in places on more heavily travelled connector streets such as middle section of High Street, Valley View, and portions of Monroe Street /Rodgers Road

## Crossings:

- A number of crosswalks on Court Street have been improved and two added as a result of the Route 7 Signalization Project. However, these crosswalks do not provide pedestrian-friendly timing for crossing, and thus should be improved so pedestrians, especially children, can more safely use these crosswalks. Add 5 seconds of delayed timing at MHS. Schedule observation days to time crossings, volume and site crosswalk preferences.
- The non-signalized crosswalk at the north entrance/exit to the Mary Hogan School needs better signage and monitoring to ensure that traffic halts for pedestrians. Add crossing guard here or buckets with crossing safety flags like those on bikes.
- Crossing guards should be better trained and engaged with traffic and crossers.
- Charles St /Court St intersection crossing needs improvement.
- A new crosswalk should be considered on US 7 / North Pleasant Street at Seminary Street.
- Ask kids to map what route they take so that preferred and safer routes can be communicated to parents.
- Efforts used in many communities such as cross-walk flag crossing, cones, crossing guards with the training and authority to stop traffic safely for pedestrians, and other mechanisms should be implemented to ensure that crosswalk rules are followed and that crosswalks are safely used for the benefit of pedestrians, especially along the Route 7/Court Street corridor
- Downtown crosswalks along Main Street and College Street were upgraded with IMPRINT durable markings as part of repaving projects.
- The new Cross Street Bridge has generally improved walkability to schools for a portion of the school population that lives on the west side of Otter Creek, and from the schools to the Ilsley Public Library, town gym, and teen center, common student after-school destinations for many students.

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- 2013 Update: A new crosswalk was added across Court Street /US7 as part of the Bridge Project.

## **Other Areas Presenting Physical Barriers:**

- Court Square around Middlebury Inn—remains a dangerous crossing even after the construction of the Cross Street Bridge.
- Entry to the Middlebury Union High School remains a very busy intersection on Route 7. Realignment of entrance (Charles Avenue) with Monroe Street is a proposed, long-term solution, however it would require the acquisition of property and significant financial investment. Better timing of traffic lights, especially at school start and end times could remedy the situation somewhat, as well as a signaled cross-walk on Charles Avenue.
- Elm Street/ Seymour Street / Exchange Street at Greg's Market is very busy, and crossings difficult. In the long-term, this intersection may need signalization or roundabout)
  - 2013 Update: Elm Street/Seymour/Exchange – Crosswalk was added across Elm Street, east of Seymour Street. Crosswalk added across Exchange Street, north of Elm Street.
- Exchange Street needs sidewalk /separated bike path from Elm Street north. However, there are no residential homes on Exchange Street, so the benefits for children walking to and from school are minimal.
  - 2013 Update: Planning grant received. Funds for the Town share of new grant application have been requested through the Capital Improvement Program budget process for the first segment north of Elm Street.

## **Other Infrastructure 2013 Updates:**

- Gravel path installed from Rogers Road to Woodland Park, summer of 2013.
- White edge line painted on north side of Monroe Street (summer of 2013) in response to resident requests.
- New pedestrian signs will be installed on North Pleasant Street for the south crossing at Elm Street/Stewart.

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## Cultural Barriers

Parent Survey: Reasons for not walking given by parents:

**Spring 2013**

**Fall 2006**

Amount of Traffic	64%	not measured
Speed of Traffic	64%	58%
Safety of Intersections	58%	61%
Distance	53%	58%
Lack of Sidewalks/Paths	49%	53%
Weather/Climate	40%	49%
Time	34%	not measured
Before/After School Activities	25%	not measured
Supervision	17%	not measured
Crossing Guards	17%	30%
Violence/Crime	15%	41%
Convenience	13%	37%

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

Asked Permission?	Number of Children	Less than 1/4 mile	1/4 mile up to 1/2 mile	1/2 mile up to 1 mile	1 mile up to 2 miles	More than 2 miles
Yes	48	100%	79%	75%	58%	32%
No	35	0%	21%	25%	42%	68%

Don't know or No response: 5

Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

- Overall general attitudes
  - 57% of parents surveyed believed that the school encourages walking and biking to school
  - 72% of parents surveyed believed that walking and biking to school is fun or very fun
  - 90% of parents surveyed believed that walking and biking to school is healthy
- Other Comments
  - Crossing guards and traffic calming would be great at Buttolph Drive
  - Many parents do not require their children to ride the bus and instead drive them to



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- school. I require my children ride the bus - despite their complaints
- We need a sidewalk or path on Washington Street Extension to navigate the dangerous curve at the top of the hill
  - Need improved sidewalks and crossing guards on Route 7
  - Route 7 and Water Street crossing are not safe - need crossing guard and sidewalk
  - Need safer crosswalks at Court St/Cross St and need sidewalks on Water Street
  - (1)Children should be able to bike on sidewalks in downtown Middlebury - unsafe for them to bike in the road. (2)Children should be able to ride on the sidewalk in downtown for the morning commute. Currently, it is restricted and the road on Main Street is too busy.
  - Quarry Road is dangerous
  - I'd love if the school sent home some guidelines to help parents think about how to determine when their child is ready to walk/bike to school (at what age, etc).
  - Better signage and education for drivers would help make our streets safer

Progress - -Review of 2013-14 next steps (from 2013 Travel Plan in order to record progress):

## 1. Engineering

Evaluate sidewalk gaps within 2 mile radius of Middlebury's elementary and middle schools as indicated in 2012/13 Sidewalk Map. See appendix.	<b>On-going</b>
Use data compiled in the study to understand and prioritize infrastructure needs improving safe routes to school for biking and walking. Action: Collect data on students get to school (have them map this).	Spring 2014
Improve signage in and around school zones. Action: Review Elm St, Water St/Cross St, Creek Rd/Rt 7, blinking light at Champlain Farms/Rt 7.	<b>On-going</b>
Install pilot Rapid Flashing Beacons on pedestrian crosswalk signs at key high danger crosswalks such as Water/Cross St.	<b>Fall 2014</b>
Constructing new sidewalks or shared use paths to better connect current and new housing developments to schools. Action: Monitor effectiveness of new Woodside/Monroe St connector stone path and MALT TAM connectors between South St and Legion Fields at Creek Rd.	Summer 2014

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## 2. Enforcement Actions:(Responsibility of Police and School)

Crossing guard or Police presence at key intersections. Crossing Guard located Route 7 entrance to Mary Hogan, especially the blinking light. Increase crossing guard visibility, presence, training. Ask police to enforce motorists and ACTR buses on event days.	<b>On-going</b>
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## 3. Education Actions (Responsibility of School)

Bicycle and pedestrian safety instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spring bicycle safety fair</li> <li>• WalkSmart/BikeSmart Vermont! taught in health/PE class</li> </ul>	<b>On-going</b>
On-going school-wide awareness activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SRTS Bulletin Board</li> <li>• Educational Tips shared in school newsletter</li> </ul>	<b>On-going</b>

## 4. Encouragement Actions: (Responsibility of School/Parent Group)

Walk/Bike campaign to encourage student participation	Monthly Walk/Bike to School on the first Wednesday International Walk/Bike to School Day Way to Go Clean Commuter Weeks VT Intergenerational Walk and Roll to School Day	On-going
	Media-Parent information: awareness of the benefits to walking/biking to school.	On-going
	Launch bike swap day	April 2014
	Encourage neighborhood walking groups	Spring 2014

4. Evaluation Actions: collect and review data regarding bicycling and walking to school to monitor accomplishments

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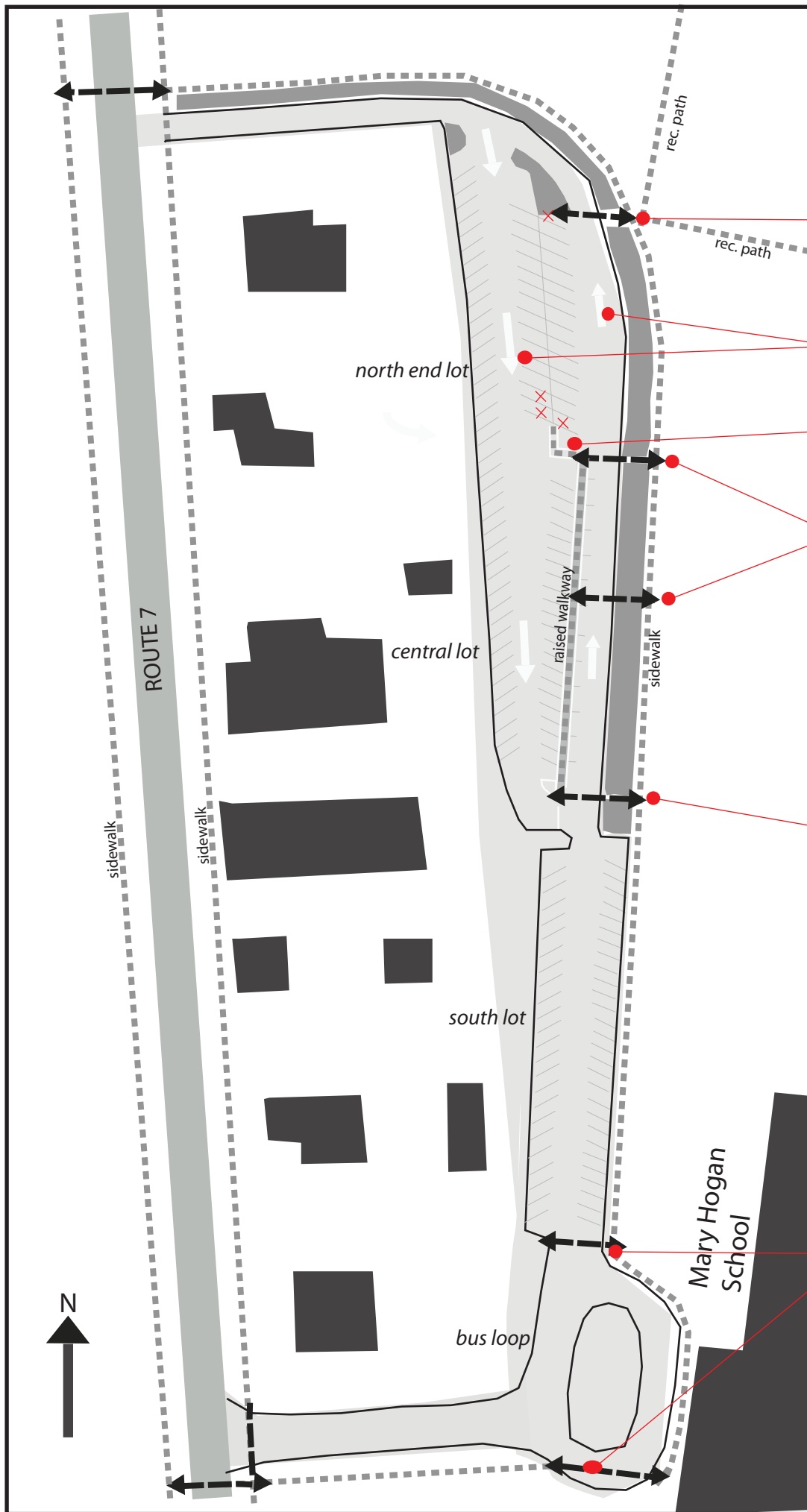
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	Student Tallies & Parent Survey	Oct & May
	Crosswalk Observation Days	Oct & May



### **Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons:**

*Rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB), as shown to the left, are warning beacons used to increase visibility of students and all pedestrians as they cross the roadway at uncontrolled crosswalks. This type of signal is pedestrian-activated, i.e., the signal will only flash if a pedestrian has pushed a button, indicating that they need to cross the street. Any proposed RRFB locations need to meet current guidance provided in the interim approval of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). For proposed uncontrolled crosswalks on state maintained roads, VTrans approval and justification are needed. Cost: \$2,000-\$5,000*



1. North end striped crossing from parking lot to main sidewalk and rec paths.

2. Stencil directional arrows.

2. Storm drain to be fixed/graded to clear pooling.

3. Two midway, striped crossings from raised walkway (replace existing grass strip and trees with drained/plowed walkway - replace trees elsewhere).

NOTE: this raised walkway treatment could be added at a later date to north lot, if school sees it working - there is room to shift parking to the east and allow central walkway.

4. South end striped crosswalk and curb removal, keep pedestrian off the storm grate, away from stormwater (may lose this crossing when snow pile there).

5. Striped crossings.

**DRAFT**  
**Mary Hogan Parking Lot Safety**  
**SRTS Committee**  
**August 7th 2014**