



KMS High School

Safe Routes to School Plan

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Upper Minnesota Valley
**REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION**

Acknowledgements

The UMVRDC would like to thank the individuals who served on the Action Plan Task Force for their commitment to making it safer and easier to walk and bike to school for Kerkhoven's children.

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Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
KMS Safe Routes to School Plan Vision	4
KMS Safe Routes to School Plan Goals	5
The Plan	5
Engineering.....	6
Future Actions	6
Safe Paths	6
Crossing Improvements	9
Signage	10
Education.....	11
Future Actions	11
Establish the Routes	11
Teach Students Safe Walking and Biking.....	12
Encouragement	13
Future Actions	13
Provide Structure.....	13
Reward and Acknowledge Students.....	13
Enforcement.....	14
Future Actions	14
Work with Law Enforcement	14
Evaluation.....	16
Future Actions	16
Program Success	16
Equity.....	17
Future Actions	17
Accessibility	17

Implementation Plan	18
Action Plan Matrix	19
Evaluation Plan	21
KMS High School Safe Routes to School Plan Appendix	22
What is Safe Routes to School?.....	23
Background on the school and the community.....	24
demographics	24
Existing conditions: survey results	27
Distance as a major barrier	27
Student Travel Tally Results	27
Opportunity for mode switch	28
Existing conditions: walk and bike audit results	29
Walking/Biking Audit	29
Key issues emerging from the surveys, audits, and assessment results	32
Distance to KMS High School	32
Speed and Volume of Traffic on U.S. Highway 12	33
Speed and Volume of Traffic on County Road 35.....	36
Railroad Crossing	37
Potential Solutions.....	37
Crossing Guard	41
Safety Patrol	42
Crosswalk.....	42
Design alternatives Guidebooks.....	43
Funding Sources:	45

Executive Summary

Why does walking to school matter? Physical activity can have both immediate and long-term benefits on academic performance. Almost immediately after engaging in physical activity, children are better able to concentrate on classroom tests, which can enhance learning. Over time, as children engage in developmentally appropriate physical activity, their improved fitness can have additional positive effects on academic performance in mathematics, reading, and writing. The more moderate to vigorous physical activity a child has, the higher they score on tests.



Safe Routes to School is important for Kerkhoven because if the KMS School District is going to encourage children to walk and bike to school, they need a safe community in which to do so. The Safe Routes to School Team has worked closely with the community throughout the entire planning process to ensure that the recommendations of the plan are feasible and supported by the larger community. We believe that the changes recommended in this plan will make the City of Kerkhoven a safer, healthier and more prosperous place for the whole community.

U.S. Highway 12 that runs the length of the City of Kerkhoven is signed at 30mph through the city, but it is signed at 60mph just outside the city limits. The route identified by the KMS Safe Routes to School team makes a conscious effort to remove as much pedestrian and bicycle traffic from U.S. Highway 12 as possible. The benefits of creating a designated Safe Routes to School path for KMS High School predominantly 2 blocks removed from U.S. Highway 12 are two-fold. First, there is evidence that streets with protected paths are significantly safer for bicyclists and pedestrians; a 2015 traffic study found a 43% reduction of injuries on

streets with protected paths. Secondly, by concentrating the bicycle and pedestrian traffic onto one specific route, there will be increased visibility of the non-motorized traffic in the City of Kerkhoven. When drivers see more bikers, they learn to expect them and to anticipate their movements. They slowdown, which also protects those who walk. The proposed designated Safe Route would provide the advantages both of a protected path and increased bike and pedestrian presence. The benefits of a protected path to increase and encourage walking and biking extend beyond basic safety. The American Heart Association lists the benefits of walking as: maintaining a healthy weight, preventing or managing various conditions (including heart disease, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes), strengthening bones and muscles, improving mood, and improving balance and coordination. They also advise that brisk walking contributes to their recommended 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity for overall cardiovascular health.

The benefits of a protected path to increase and encourage walking and biking also extend beyond health and safety. It can also bring economic benefits to the community. A frequently cited study on the economic benefits of walkability performed by the Victoria Transport Policy Institute lists a wide range of potential economic benefits found in communities found to be more walkable based on travel surveys. Some of the benefits listed were: increased local business activity and employment, increased neighborhood interaction and community cohesion, improved accessibility (particularly for non-drivers), reduced transportation costs, increased parking efficiency, health cost savings from improved exercise, improved accessibility for people who are transport disadvantaged, reduced external transportation costs (crash risk, pollution, etc.), improved opportunities to preserve cultural resources (e.g., historic buildings) and increased exercise.

KMS Safe Routes to School Plan Vision

We envision safe communities where students, their most valuable resource, can and do walk and bike to school safely because regional partners work together creatively to develop the physical and social environment to promote active transportation

KMS Safe Routes to School Plan Goals

Goal 1: Increase the number of students walking and biking to school

Goal 2: Increase the number of bicycle and pedestrian facilities and amenities

Goal 3: Educate parents, students, and community members about safe driving, walking and biking practices

Goal 4: Promote walking and biking to school through educational and encouragement programs and events

Goal 5: Increased partnership with local law enforcement

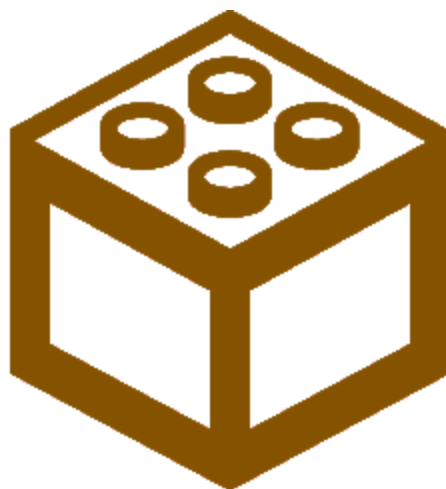
The Plan

Since 2012, MnDOT has worked to develop statewide programs to support Safe Routes to School programs across the state. Nearly 500 schools have been awarded funding through MnDOT. Additionally, the Minnesota Department of Health supports the Statewide Health Improvement Program, which funds work to increase access to physical activity opportunities.

Currently, over 225 schools throughout the state are working to advance SRTS efforts, potentially reaching over 110,000 students in two years. There are countless champions such as parents, teachers, school administrators, local public health staff, community members, state and local advocates, and public safety officials who are making the SRTS movement a reality at the ground level.

Safe Routes to School is based on the 6Es approach to SRTS. The 6Es are strategies of a comprehensive SRTS Program, which include: engineering, enforcement, education, encouragement, evaluation and equity. The most effective Safe Routes to School programs include elements of all of the 6Es:

Engineering	Create operational and physical improvements surrounding schools
Education	Teach children about the broad range of transportation choices
Encouragement	Use events and activities to promote walking and bicycling
Enforcement	Partner with local law enforcement
Evaluation	Monitor and document outcomes before and after the intervention
Equity	Achieve fairness in the distribution of benefits and costs



Engineering

Engineering refers to creating improvements surrounding schools that reduce speeds and potential conflicts with motor vehicle traffic, and establish safer and fully accessible crossings, walkways, trails and bikeways. Many communities in the State of Minnesota were not designed to be safe and comfortable for people walking and bicycling. Once problem areas are identified, communities work with local governments to prioritize local funding for improvements or apply for funding through MnDOT's SRTS grant process or other sources.

FUTURE ACTIONS

[See action plan matrix for details]

SAFE PATHS

- The KMS Safe Routes Team has identified one east/west path and 2 north/south paths for students walking or biking to school in the City of Kerkhoven. For students on the north side of U.S. Highway 12, it begins at the intersection of Wyoming Avenue and 6th Street and heads northwest to 15th Street, adjacent to the school. Children can feed into the path from any local north/south street. For students on the south side of U.S. Highway 12, it begins at the intersection of County Road 35 and Montana Avenue and heads northeast on County Road 35 until it intersects with the east/west path along Wyoming Avenue. At that point, students will turn left and walk the remaining block to school. Since County Road 35 is not yet a safe option, students may wish to turn left at U.S. Highway 12 and proceed one block west, where they can then turn right and take 15th Street in the northeast direction for the remaining block to the school campus. The KMS Safe Routes to School Plan provides recommendations for infrastructure

improvements to both Wyoming Avenue and County Road 35 based on the Federal Highway Administration's Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks Guide.



Recommended Safe Routes Path Example

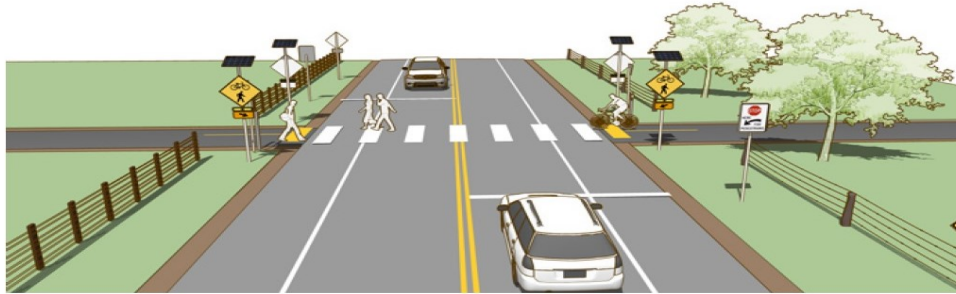
- The KMS Safe Routes Team recommends pedestrian and bicycle improvements on County Road 35 from Montana Avenue to Idaho Avenue. This will require widening of the shoulders of this road. The team is recommending a permanent sidewalk be installed on County Road 35
- The KMS Safe Routes Team recommends a sidewalk be installed at U.S. Highway 12 and 15th Street to provide a handicap accessible path between 14th Street and 15th Street along U.S. Highway 12
- The KMS Safe Routes to School Team recommends traffic calming techniques be applied on U.S. Highway 12 and County Road 35 in the City of Kerkhoven to ensure safe travel speeds throughout the city



KMS High School Safe Routes to School Designated Routes

CROSSING IMPROVEMENTS

- The KMS Safe Routes to School Team recommends a protected crossing featuring a pedestrian activated beacon, crosswalk striping and crosswalk signage at the intersection of U.S. Highway 12 and County Road 35 to provide a safe place to cross U.S. Highway 12 on the west end of the city near the school campus.



Recommended Safe Crossing Example

- The KMS Safe Routes to School Team recommends a protected crossing featuring a pedestrian activated beacon, crosswalk striping and crosswalk signage at the intersection of U.S. Highway 12 and County Road 6 to provide a safe place to cross U.S. Highway 12 on the east end of the city
- The KMS Safe Routes to School Team recommends a protected crossing featuring a pedestrian activated beacon, crosswalk striping and crosswalk signage at the intersection of U.S. Highway 12 and 7th Street to provide a safe place to cross U.S. Highway 12
- The KMS Safe Routes to School Team recommends a marked crosswalk on County Road 35 & Wyoming Avenue to ensure safe crossing of County Road 35 by students utilizing the east/west route along Wyoming Avenue
- The KMS Safe Routes to School Team recommends a marked crosswalk on County Road 6 & Wyoming Avenue to ensure safe crossing of County Road 6 by students utilizing the east/west route along Wyoming Avenue
- The KMS Safe Routes to School Team recommends improved safety on railroad crossing at County Road 35 and U.S. Highway 12 to provide Kerkhoven with a safe place to cross the railroad tracks on the west end of the city near the school campus

SIGNAGE

- The KMS Safe Routes to School Team recommends new bus stop signage at every bus stop in Kerkhoven to raise awareness of where buses will stop for boarding and where kids may loiter waiting for the bus
- The KMS Safe Routes to School Team recommends flashing 'School Zone' signage along US Highway 12 west of 15th Street to alert traffic entering the city that they are entering a school zone while school is in session



Education

Education is a key component of comprehensive SRTS programs. Education means teaching children about the broad range of transportation choices, instructing them in important lifelong bicycling and walking safety skills and launching driver safety campaigns in the vicinity of schools.

The KMS School District believes the health of their students is a central part of their mission. They have a health committee that manages the district's initiatives to ensure the district is encouraging and fostering healthy habits

FUTURE ACTIONS

[See action plan matrix for details]

ESTABLISH THE ROUTES

- The KMS Safe Routes Team recommends that district staff teach students the identified Safe Routes to ensure that students are familiar with the paths identified as most safe for walking and biking within the City of Kerkhoven
- The KMS Safe Routes Team recommends that district staff use outreach to inform parents, community members, and businesses about the Safe Routes to reinforce the recommended paths
- The KMS Safe Routes Team recommends district staff distribute the walk/bike to school map created by the UMVRDC during the planning process
- The KMS Safe Routes Team recommends district staff post a high-visibility map of the walk/bike routes in the school

TEACH STUDENTS SAFE WALKING AND BIKING

- The KMS Safe Routes Team recommends developing an ongoing school safety campaign to continue to teach children safe habits, including walking and biking in the community of Kerkhoven
- The KMS Safe Routes Team is recommending that the bike safety program currently offered at KMS Elementary School be offered at KMS High School to reinforce safe bicycling habits and to reinforce the recommended paths by riding with an instructor
- The KMS Safe Routes Team is recommending KMS High School introduce a pedestrian safety class to reinforce safe walking habits and to reinforce the recommended paths





Encouragement

Encouragement refers to using events and activities to promote walking and bicycling and to generate enthusiasm for the program with students, parents, staff and surrounding community.

KMS School District currently participates in the national Walk & Bike to School Days and has had huge success in participation. The KMS Safe Routes to School plan will continue to grow on this tradition by improving the safety of the routes students use to walk and bike to school

FUTURE ACTIONS

[See action plan matrix for details]

PROVIDE STRUCTURE

- The KMS School District will continue the tradition of encouraging students to walk and bike to school on the national Walk & Bike to School Days. It will use this opportunity to reinforce the recommended routes and foster new walking and biking habits

REWARD AND ACKNOWLEDGE STUDENTS

- The KMS Safe Routes to School Team is recommending a mileage club to track the distance students cover while walking and biking to school. Rewards will be given to the highest achievers



Enforcement

Enforcement in SRTS is usually coordinated with local law enforcement to ensure that traffic laws are obeyed in the vicinity of schools (this includes enforcement of speeds, yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks and proper walking and bicycling behaviors) and initiating community enforcement such as crossing guard programs and student safety patrols. Many parents cite speeding cars or distracted drivers as primary concerns affecting whether or not they allow their child to walk or bicycle to school. Enforcement activities help increase compliance with traffic and parking laws, making the streets safer for all users.

FUTURE ACTIONS

[See action plan matrix for details]

WORK WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

- The KMS Safe Routes Team recommends the KMS School District work with local law enforcement to communicate the identified crossings and enforce traffic laws at these intersections. This will be especially important until the recommended infrastructure improvements are made
- The KMS Safe Routes Team recommends that KMS School District, the City of Kerkhoven and local law enforcement work together to enforce traffic laws on U.S. Highway 12, County Road 35, County Road 5 and all local streets
- The KMS Safe Routes Team recommends that the KMS School District work with local law enforcement to enforce no parking areas around the school to ensure identified crosswalks are visibly clear to avoid traffic conflicts
- The KMS Safe Routes Team recommends the KMS School District work

with local law enforcement to communicate the identified corridors for Safe Routes to ensure they can work together to keep the paths safe for students



Evaluation

Evaluation means monitoring and documenting outcomes, attitudes and trends through the collection of data before and after the intervention. Evaluation will help demonstrate the impact of the KMS Safe Routes to School program. We've already documented current conditions with baseline surveys- next we will continue this process to measure the results of the KMS Safe Routes to School program.

The KMS Safe Routes to School Team needed a starting point to measure the success of the Safe Routes program. A travel tally was administrated by KMS School District staff in the classroom to get information on how many children currently walk and bike to school.

The KMS Safe Routes to School Team also needed a benchmark to determine the success of the engineering improvements. In 2017, a parent survey was administrated to understand parent's concerns with walking and biking in the City of Kerkhoven.

FUTURE ACTIONS

[See action plan matrix for details]

PROGRAM SUCCESS

- The KMS Safe Routes Team recommends annual follow-up travel tallies to determine if more children are walking and biking to school as a result of the Safe Routes program
- The KMS Safe Routes Team recommends that KMS School District annually have staff perform pedestrian and bike counts to collect data on how many students are walking and biking to school.



Equity

Equity is a needs-based approach to allocating resources that aims to achieve fairness in the distribution of benefits and costs. Discussion of equity acknowledges that some communities and populations may require additional resources in order to have the same opportunities as other communities.

The City of Kerkhoven has a more diverse population than other communities of similar size, with 12% of the population being non-white. It is exceptionally important that the City of Kerkhoven is constantly working to address equity within its community.

FUTURE ACTIONS

[See action plan matrix for details]

ACCESSIBILITY

By making the City of Kerkhoven more walkable from every residential area, the Safe Routes to School plan will provide opportunity equally across the community.

Implementation Plan

The UMVRDC planning staff compiled a list of suggested strategies based upon public engagement and existing Safe Routes to School Plans from the region. The plan was distributed to the following list of stakeholders to document support for each strategy:

- KMS School District School Board
- Murdock City Council
- Kerkhoven City Council
- Kerkhoven EDA Board
- the KMS School District teaching staff
- the Swift County Highway Department
- KMS School District Community Members
- KMS parents
- the local Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) coordinator

We received physical responses from: the KMS School District School Board, the Murdock City Council, the Kerkhoven City Council and Kerkhoven EDA Board, the KMS School District teaching staff and the local SHIP coordinator. We have KMS School District Community Members and KMS student parents represented on the school board as well as well as teaching staff. We also consulted with the Swift County Highway Department on the engineering aspects of the plan affecting the county roads in Murdock. Below is the action plan that identifies strategies and the support they received from the stakeholders.

ACTION PLAN MATRIX

Action	Strategy Type	Description	Timeline	Cost	Lead/ Partners
Teach Students Routes	Education	Teach students the identified Safe Routes for each school	2017	Low	KMS School District
Inform Community	Education	Use outreach to inform parents, community members, and businesses about the Safe Routes	2017	Low	KMS School District
Distribute Map	Education	Distribute a walk/bike to school map	2017	Low	KMS School District
Safety Campaign	Education	Develop a school safety campaign	2017	Low	KMS School District/ SHIP
Bike Safety	Education	Offer bike riding safety training during summer program	2017	Low	KMS School District
Pedestrian Safety	Education	Introduce a pedestrian safety class	2017	Low	KMS School District
High Visibility Map	Education	Post high-visibility map to reinforce the Safe Routes	2017	Low	KMS School District
Walk to School Days	Encouragement	Establish annual walk/bike to school day(s)	2017	Low	KMS School District
Mileage Club	Encouragement	Establish a mileage club to award active students	2017	Low	KMS School District/ SHIP
Enforce Identified Crossings	Enforcement	Enforce traffic laws at identified crossings for improvement	As needed	Medium	City of Kerkhoven/ Local Law Enforcement
Enforce Traffic Laws	Enforcement	Enforce traffic laws on identified state highways and county roads	As needed	Medium	City of Kerkhoven/ Local Law Enforcement
Enforce No Parking	Enforcement	Enforce 'No Parking' areas around the school	As needed	Medium	City of Kerkhoven/ Local Law Enforcement
Establish Safe Routes	Enforcement	Work with law enforcement to establish corridors for Safe Routes	As needed	Medium	KMS School District/ City of Kerkhoven/ Local Law Enforcement

Action	Strategy Type	Description	Timeline	Cost	Lead/ Partners
Install Crosswalk	Engineering	Visible crosswalk from school sidewalk to Wyoming Ave across CR 35	As soon as funding is available	Medium	City of Kerkhoven/ MnDOT
Protected Path	Engineering	Protected path on Wyoming Ave from N 6th to N 15th Streets	2017	High	City of Kerkhoven
Improve Intersection	Engineering	Protected crossing and crosswalk on CR 6 and Highway 12	As soon as funding is available	High	City of Kerkhoven/ MnDOT
Improve Intersection	Engineering	Protected crossing and crosswalk on CR 35 and Highway 12	As soon as funding is available	High	City of Kerkhoven/ MnDOT
Improve Intersection	Engineering	Protected crossing and crosswalk on 7th Street and Highway 12	As soon as funding is available	High	City of Kerkhoven/ MnDOT
Install Crosswalk	Engineering	Marked crosswalk on CR 6 & Wyoming	As soon as funding is available	High	City of Kerkhoven/ Swift County Highway Department
Bus Stop Signage	Engineering	New bus stop signage at every bus stop in Kerkhoven	As soon as funding is available	Medium	City of Kerkhoven/ SHIP/ Local Bus Companies
Sidewalk Infrastructure	Engineering	Sidewalk at carwash on Highway 12 and 15th	As soon as funding is available	High	City of Kerkhoven/ MnDOT
Calm Traffic	Engineering	Calm traffic on state highways and county roads	Ongoing project	High	City of Kerkhoven/ Swift County Highway Department/ MnDOT
Railroad Safety	Engineering	Improved safety on railroad crossing at CR 35 and US Highway 12	As soon as funding is available	High	City of Kerkhoven/ Swift County Highway Department/ Local Railroad Authority
Sidewalk Infrastructure	Engineering	Sidewalk on CR 35 from Montana Avenue to Idaho Avenue	As soon as funding is available	High	City of Kerkhoven/ Swift County Highway Department/ MnDOT
Calm Traffic	Engineering	Flashing 'School Zone' signage along US Highway 12 west of 15th Street	As soon as funding is available	High	City of Kerkhoven/ Swift County Highway Department/ MnDOT

Action	Strategy Type	Description	Timeline	Cost	Lead/ Partners
Travel Tally	Evaluation	Administer student travel tally to benchmark yearly progress	Annually	Low	KMS School District
Pedestrian/ Bike Counts	Evaluation	Have staff perform pedestrian/bike counts to benchmark yearly progress	Annually	Low	KMS School District

Evaluation Plan

Our action plan identified a number of evaluation strategies to measure the success of the KMS Safe Routes to School Plan: administering a student travel tally to benchmark yearly progress, having staff perform pedestrian/bike counts to benchmark yearly progress, distributing a parent survey annually to benchmark yearly progress, evaluating participation in Walk to School Day, meeting to evaluate progress on established Safe Routes Action Plan and working with SHIP to review county health statistics for school-age children. These strategies all received majority support from our stakeholders. One strategy received minority support, which was: implementing data gathering for other statistics to measure the prevalence of students walking to school. The lead agencies, timeline and costs associated with these evaluation strategies can be found in the action plan matrix.

KMS High School Safe Routes to School Plan Appendix

What is Safe Routes to School?

To increase opportunities for children to walk and bicycle to school safely, the 2005 federal transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU, provided funding for Safe Routes to School (SRTS) in all 50 states. It was created, in part, to help reverse the alarming nationwide increase in childhood obesity and inactivity. It has numerous benefits to local communities including reducing traffic congestion, improving air quality and helping kids arrive to school focused and ready to learn.

Minnesota has a healthy and growing SRTS movement. Since 2005, when the first federal funds were allocated to SRTS initiatives in Minnesota, SRTS initiatives across the state have made a profound impact on the ability of students to choose walking or bicycling as a viable mode of transportation to school. In the early days of the program, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota's Center for Prevention began to support SRTS by creating the monthly SRTS Network call and by providing technical assistance to schools and communities.

Since 2012, MnDOT has worked to develop programs to support SRTS school programs across the state. In 2012, MnDOT contracted with the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota and BCBS MN Center for Prevention to develop the Walk! Bike! Fun! bicycle and pedestrian safety curriculum and provide technical assistance to schools. Work on this resource center and strategic plan began in 2014.

Nearly 500 schools have been awarded funding through MnDOT planning, infrastructure or non-infrastructure grants. Additionally, the Minnesota Department of Health supports local public health agencies and their partners throughout the state in initiating and implementing SRTS work. Much of this support is a result of the Statewide Health Improvement Program, which funds work to increase access to physical activity opportunities. Currently, half of grantees are working to advance SRTS efforts in their schools or communities, reaching over 225 schools throughout the state, potentially reaching over 110,000 students in two years. Because of MnDOT and MDH efforts and funding opportunities, many schools and school districts throughout Minnesota are participating in SRTS initiatives on some level. There are countless champions such as parents, teachers, school administrators, local public health staff, community members, state and local advocates, and public safety officials who are making the SRTS movement a reality at the ground level.

Background on the school and the community

DEMOGRAPHICS

Kerkhoven is a small city located in West Central Minnesota. It is located along U.S. Highway 12 that runs from Aberdeen, Washington to Detroit, Michigan, for almost 2,500 miles. U.S. Highway 12 is a thoroughfare that remains an important road for local and regional travel.

KMS High School is in the City of Kerkhoven in Swift County, MN. Swift County is in rural west central Minnesota with a population of 9,783. Kerkhoven, according to the 2016 U.S. Census estimate, has a population of 761. The community has seen an overall increase in population of nearly 18 percent from 1960-2010. Kerkhoven is one of only a handful of communities in the region that has experienced a positive overall growth rate since 1960. However, the population held steady with no growth from 2000 to 2010 and is projected to decrease over the next few decades.

The 2010 census data shows that there is a large percentage of the population in the middle aged and 10 and under age cohorts, which is uncommon for communities in the region as many have aging populations. Kerkhoven is more diverse than other communities in the region with over 12% of the population being non-white. This diversity may explain the higher percentages of youth in the population.

Kerkhoven is part of the KMS School District, which has seen a decrease in enrollment over the past decade, however it has had the second slowest rate of decline of all school districts in the region. Note that data is only available for public school districts.

School Information

KMS High School currently has 267 students enrolled. 193 of these students are evenly distributed through the grades of seventh through twelfth grade. KMS High School also hosts a Pre-K program with 74 enrolled students. Our parent survey found that 31% of the student population lives in the walk/bike zone of the school district (within 2 miles). An unbridged railroad crossing, non-residential streets without sidewalks on both sides, streets with posted speed limits of 40mph or more and streets with gaps in walking biking access can all be found within the town of Kerkhoven. These features all affect the walkability of the City of Kerkhoven.

KMS High School covers approximately 30 acres and hosts the junior high school, senior high school and Pre-K programs. The school can be accessed from three sides on foot or by bike: the northeast, southwest and southeast sides. The school sits on the intersection of a small local road and a U.S. Highway whose speed limit is 60mph just northwest of the school. The bus loading and unloading are not currently separated from automobile pick-up although the school features an expansive parking lot in the front of the building that allows ample space for peak times.

Swift County SHIP Data

The Statewide Health Improvement Partnership collects health data by county on school-aged children biannually. Swift County currently has six public schools in operation: Benson High School, Benson Area Learning Center, Northside Elementary School, KMS High School, Appleton Elementary School and KMS Elementary School.

According to the 2016 Minnesota Student Survey, 37% of 8th grade students in Swift County are classified as overweight or obese.

26% of the 11th grade students are also overweight or obese. The study also found that 21% of 5th grade students are not currently meeting the American Heart Association's recommendation for overall cardiovascular health. 20% of 11th graders are also not meeting this minimum requirement.

The survey found that there is a significant percentage of students in Swift County classified as overweight or obese, both of which are associated with health risks such as high blood pressure or type 2 diabetes. It also found there are many students who are not currently getting the minimum recommended amount of daily activity to protect their health.

Street Profile

Within the City of Kerkhoven there is one U.S. Highway (Highway 12), two county roads (County Road 33 and County Road 6) and many small, low-traffic local roads. All streets in the City of Kerkhoven are two lanes wide. The curb radii are all classified as small (less than or equal to 15 ft), which can reduce automobile traffic speed. The only exception was found at the intersection of 15th Street and U.S. Highway 12. On the southeast side of this intersection a medium curb radius was observed. The average daily traffic on County Road 33 adjacent to the school is 980 vehicles per day.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities and Safety



Kerkhoven does not have any bicycle facilities in the form of sharrows, dedicated bicycle lanes, or otherwise. There are no designated bike routes in the school's walk/bike zone. There are also no existing multi-use paths in the school's walk/bike zone to facilitate biking or create a safe path for pedestrians through town. There are some sidewalks, but they are incomplete and completely absent from large areas of the city. The sidewalks directly outside of the school are in good shape but once you leave the school property, sidewalks are in widely varying states of integrity. Most of the sidewalks observed are mostly clear of debris and obstacles. A crosswalk does exist on County Road 35 NE of the school. It is clearly marked with signs and paint. There is also a marked crosswalk across Highway 12 at 9th Street. There are no crossing guards during any time of the day. There were a few 2-per-corner ADA accessible ramps near the school and on Atlantic Avenue where it was recently restored, but most sidewalks in town did not feature them.

There are no pedestrian crossing signals, countdown pedestrian crossing signals, pedestrian hybrid beacons, rectangular rapid flash beacons, raised medians, or pedestrian refuges in the school's walk/bike zone. There are yellow signs on County Road 35 as you approach the school from the NE direction designating a school speed zone and indicating the speed limit is 20mph when school is in session.

Existing conditions: survey results

DISTANCE AS A MAJOR BARRIER

We received 69 responses to the Parent Survey out of the 267 currently enrolled children. This sample size is large enough to produce results that are statistically significant enough to represent the school. One of the most striking results was that 69% of students live more than 2 miles from the school. Distance is a major barrier for walking and biking to school in the City of Kerkhoven.

11% of parents identified amount of traffic along route as an issue that affects their decision to let their child walk or bike to school. 11% say if there was an appropriate improvement to the amount of traffic, they would probably let their child walk or bike to or from school. 9% responded that if there were appropriate improvements made to speed of traffic along the route, they would probably let their child walk or bike to or from school. 9% responded that if there were appropriate improvements made to the safety of intersections, they would probably let their child walk or bike to or from school. 7% responded that if there were either adults to walk with or appropriate sidewalk improvements made, they would probably let their child walk or bike to or from school.

STUDENT TRAVEL TALLY RESULTS

The KMS Safe Routes to School Team received 15 Student Travel Tally responses from 15 unique classrooms over a period of four days (10/3-10/6), which yielded information on 966 trips. Mean temperatures were mild, between 46 and 65 degrees each day. The student travel tally found the majority students take a family vehicle or the bus to school (a combined 82%). The current share of students walking or biking to school is a combined 12%, with walking comprising 9% and bicycle riding the additional 3%. One trend that emerged from morning and afternoon tallies are students arriving in a family car but utilizing the bus for their trip home in the afternoon. The KMS Safe Routes to School Team also noted a much larger share of family vehicle trips compared to the KMS Elementary School. It is practical to assume many high school students are driving themselves to school, which likely contributes to this difference.

Mode	Morning Tally	Morning Share	Afternoon Tally	Afternoon Share	Total	% of Total
School Bus	134	29%	176	35%	310	32%
Family Vehicle	267	57%	220	44%	487	50%
Walk	42	9%	43	9%	85	9%
Bike	10	2%	23	5%	33	3%
Carpool	17	4%	19	4%	36	4%
City Bus	0	0%	1	0%	1	0%
Other	0	0%	14	3%	14	1%

Table 1- KMS High School Student Travel Tally Results

OPPORTUNITY FOR MODE SWITCH

Our parent survey for the high school found that 31% of students at KMS High School (including the Pre-K students) live within 2 miles of the school. It also found that currently only 7% of children that attend KMS High School currently walk or bike to school (this is significantly lower than the findings of the student travel tally that indicated 12% of students are currently walking or biking to KMS High School). Our parent survey indicates that there is a potential for a 24% increase of students walking or biking to school for children who live within two miles of the school. Based on student population of 267, that amounts to just over 64 students.

Key findings regarding mode share:

- It appears that if the amount of traffic near the school was reduced, we could potentially increase the number of students walking to school by up to 11%
- This would increase the percentage students currently walking or biking to school by more than 1.5 times from 7% to 18%
- Reducing the amount of traffic, reducing the speed of traffic and increasing the safety of intersections have the most potential to increase non-motorized mode share
- It is difficult to tell what (if any) overlap we have between the three groups
- Sidewalks and adults to walk with were also significant areas where improvements could be made
- Increasing the safety of sidewalks or adding the appropriate crossing guards could boost the share of children walking or biking to school to 14% (a 7% increase)



Existing conditions: walk and bike audit results

WALKING/BIKING AUDIT

The KMS walking and biking audit was completed by Wayne Hurley, Planning Director from West Central Initiative, Ashlie Johnson, Health Educator from Countryside Public Health, and Laura Ostlie, Economic Development Planner from Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission on November 10th, 2017. The audit took place in both the cities of Murdock and Kerkhoven. Fortunately, the weather turned out to be mild and sunny on that autumn day. Below are a few of the takeaways from the Kerkhoven community:

- The bus stop near the Lutheran church in town had several challenges the team observed during the walking/biking audit:
 - The bus stop did not have visible signage. The sign that was up was a flimsy, laminated piece of paper held up by a thin post in the ground. The team felt it is unlikely this sign will be able to withstand Minnesota weather



- Street parking was not restricted from the bus stop location. During the walking/biking audit, a truck was parked in front of this location while the team walked by
-
- The sidewalk only stretched within two homes in front of this bus stop. It abruptly stopped on either side and grass had grown over. This sidewalk also did not meet ADA guidelines



Sidewalks in the City of Kerkhoven

- The team observed significant inconsistency of the sidewalks within Kerkhoven
- The public, multi-family housing the team observed on Clara Avenue did not

have ADA sidewalks located in front of it

- In front of the Presbyterian Church, a large tree had grown and uprooted the sidewalk, making it difficult to maneuver without going onto the street
- The team noted that the Nolan Baker Ford Dealership may be a great location for bump outs on the curbs due to the location within the city and amenities near it
- Due to the traffic near Nolan Baker car dealership, the team felt that connecting the sidewalk east of the Kerkhoven Community Center would be beneficial to the walkability/bikeability of Kerkhoven
- The school's summer childcare program is located at the Kerkhoven High School. The park and swimming pool in which they frequent daily has no sidewalk access. The students (as young as preschoolers) are required to travel Wyoming Avenue without the protection sidewalks may provide
- The team felt a visible crosswalk would be valuable from the school sidewalk system to Wyoming Avenue
- The team observed that the city's mobile home park lacked any sidewalks providing connectivity to the adjacent streets
- The team observed that the railroad crossings on County Road 35 along with County Road 6 did not meet ADA requirements



Railroad Crossing in Kerkhoven

- The team observed no crosswalk markings on Highway 12 from Lamecker's Hardware to Sophie's (the local ice cream shop). This has historically been a high-traffic area, specifically from people traveling from the pool during the summer months

- During the audit, the team identified multiple locations where utility pole spots were missing from sidewalk. This created open gravel or dirt holes within the sidewalk. An easy fix may be filling in these with concrete
- A carwash that is located on Hwy 12 and 15th Street. The team believe it could benefit from a sidewalk to the school. Multiple students walked or biked through the nearby alleyway instead
- The team observed traffic flowing onto Idaho Street during pickup and drop off times. A sidewalk may provide pedestrians a safer route at that point
- Signage referencing a four-way stop was observed on Idaho Ave and County Road 35, yet there were only three signs visible at the intersection

Key issues emerging from the surveys, audits, and assessment results

KMS High School is located in the City of Kerkhoven in Swift County, MN. KMS High School is located alongside County Road 35 with an average daily traffic of 980 vehicles and 2 blocks north of U.S. Highway 12 with an average daily traffic of 3,950 vehicles. The latest crash data reports that between the years of 2012-2016, three traffic fatalities occurred on Highway 12 in Swift County. KMS High School does not currently separate school bus and family vehicle traffic out in front of the school. There is a turnaround that is part of the large surface parking lot that spans the southern front side of the school building. The school is also located 5 blocks from an unbridged railroad crossing. Students that live south of U.S. Highway 12 must cross both an unbridged railroad crossing as well as the highway to access the school campus. These characteristics introduce several challenges that affect walking and bicycling in the City of Kerkhoven.

DISTANCE TO KMS HIGH SCHOOL

69% of students that attend KMS High School live more than 2 miles from the school. Walking or biking to school from home will likely never be a realistic option for these students. One possible solution to incorporate these children in the Safe Routes to School Program could be walking school buses. A walking school bus is a group of children who walk to school on designated routes with adult supervision, while picking up kids along the route, just like a school bus. For some neighborhoods, it's a casual group walk, while others set up a formal plan with adults scheduled to walk on certain days. Children could be dropped off by the bus somewhere along the Safe Route to School and have the option to walk the rest of

the way to school. Children who are dropped off at the intersection of 6th Street and Wyoming Avenue would complete 13 minutes of exercise walking the 0.6 miles to school. Walking to and from this point over a five-day week would amount to 130 minutes of physical activity. That is 87% of their weekly recommended physical activity by the American Heart Association.

Map 3 - Kerkhoven Safe Routes to School Recommended Paths



SPEED AND VOLUME OF TRAFFIC ON U.S. HIGHWAY 12



11% of parents surveyed indicated volume of traffic as a concern and 10% indicated speed of traffic as a concern. U.S. Highway 12, a thoroughfare that runs from Washington to Michigan, is the highest volume roadway in the City of Kerkhoven and is located 1 block south of the school. 43% of fatal traffic crashes in Swift County between the years of 2012-2016 occurred on U.S. Highway 12. The community expressed concern in Safe Routes to School planning meetings that pass-through traffic may not slow down to the posted 30mph in the City of Kerkhoven. That is a major concern for students walking and biking in the City of Kerkhoven considering recent studies finding a pedestrian stuck by a vehicle at 40mph has a 30% chance of survival. The KMS Safe Routes to School team has recommended a main corridor for the identified route as Wyoming Avenue, which is 2 blocks removed from U.S. Highway 12. There are students that currently live south of U.S. Highway 12 and must cross this highway to reach the school building. We are recommending these students utilize County Road 35 or U.S. Highway 12 and 15th Street as shown on the Safe Routes map for the City of Kerkhoven. Based on the high speed and high volume of traffic on this roadway, many improvements at this crossing are being recommended.

The speed limit on U.S. Highway 12 is 60mph before it reaches the City of

Kerkhoven and the school is located at the westernmost edge that eastbound traffic will reach before it enters the city. For this reason, the KMS Safe Routes Team believes it necessary for engineering improvements to U.S. Highway 12 before you reach the City of Kerkhoven. The KMS Safe Routes Team is recommending signage west of 15th Street along U.S. Highway 12 that is flashing during school hours to alert motorists travelling eastbound along U.S. Highway 12 they are fast approaching a school zone and a recommended safe crossing point for students of the KMS School District.

SPEED AND VOLUME OF TRAFFIC ON COUNTY ROAD 35

County Road 35 bisects U.S. Highway 12 and runs north to south the entire distance of the city. The speed on County Road 35 is 55mph before it reaches Kerkhoven and there are currently no shoulders on the road. Pedestrian and bicycle traffic has no choice but to occupy a vehicle lane. With the average daily traffic of 980 vehicles travelling at 55mph, this has potential for conflict with severe consequences. This is a significant challenge for the walkability of the City of Kerkhoven. This is an obstacle for students who live on the south side of U.S. Highway 12 as well as residents of the city who wish to access the downtown by foot or bicycle.



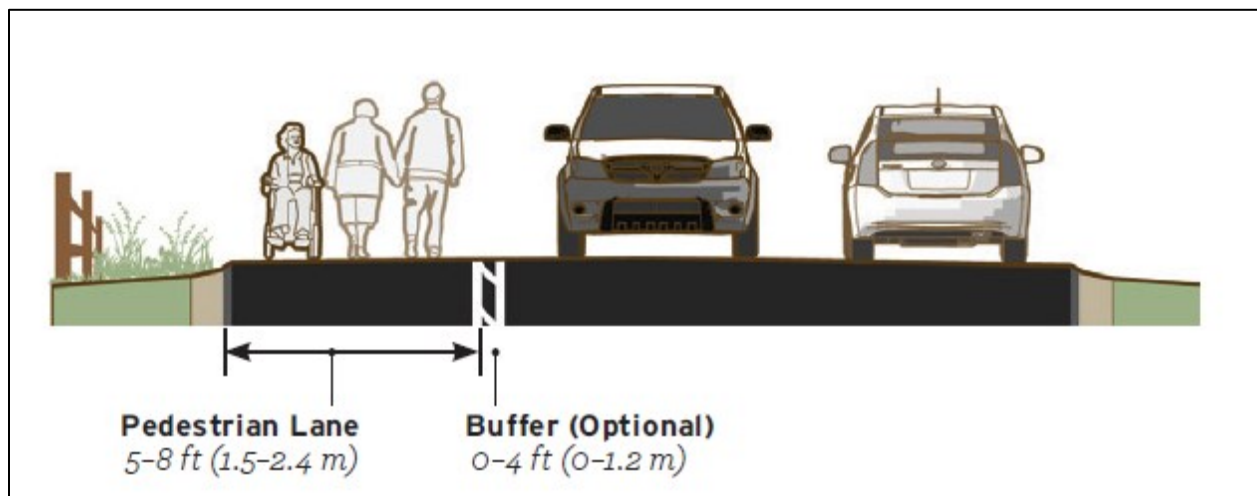
Kerkhoven ADT Map

The KMS Safe Routes Team has identified the need for a pedestrian lane or sidewalk along County Road 35 based on the guidelines above. County Road 35 will need shoulder widening to make any of the federally recommended pedestrian improvements possible. The KMS Safe Routes Team has also identified intersection improvements must be made at the intersection of U.S. Highway 12 and County Road 35.

RAILROAD CROSSING

There is an unbridged railroad crossing at the intersection of County Road 35 just south of U.S. Highway 12. Stakeholders from the community have identified this crossing as a safety concern for their children. This railroad must be traversed to reach the school or the downtown for any city residents living south of U.S. Highway 12. The KMS Safe Routes to School Team recommends safety improvements to the railroad crossing at County Road 35 to ensure students and residents from the south side of U.S. Highway 12 can safely navigate to the school campus and the downtown area of Kerkhoven.

Potential Solutions



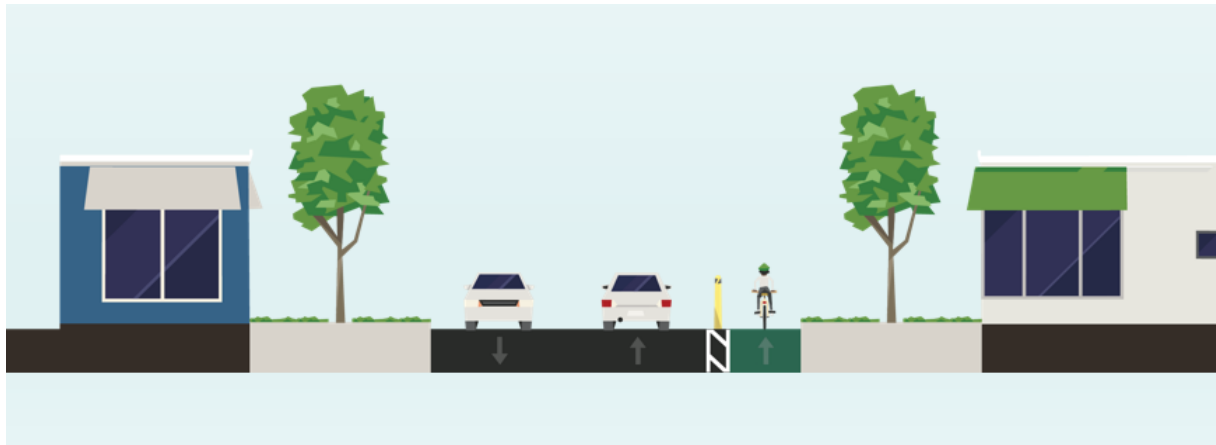
The KMS Safe Routes to School Plan recommends several design alternatives for the established path. The most basic alternative is a striped lane for walking and biking that provides signage as illustrated below.

Striped Lane with Signage



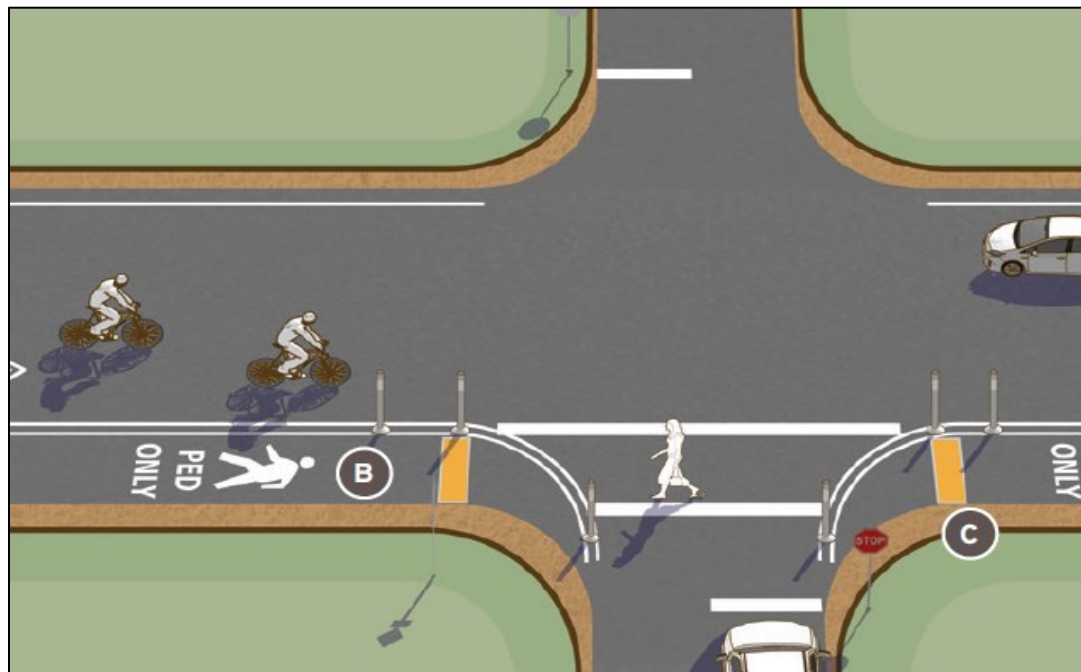
Photo Displaying Recommended Signage

A similar alternative features the same striping and lane width, but includes a flexible delineator to function in a similar manner to rumble strips to alert a motorist they have drifted out of the vehicle travel lane. This design alternative is illustrated below.



Striped Lane with Flexible Delineator

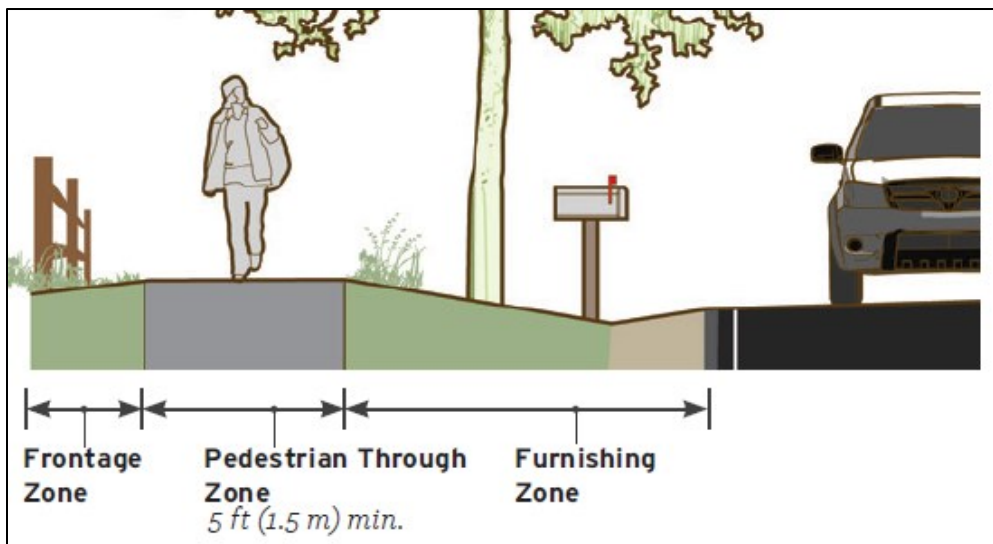
Both have a similar treatment regarding intersections, illustrated in Figure 6. Thick, double white lines are to cross the roadway at the intersection to clearly mark the path for passing motorists. The STAR guide recommends 'No Parking' signage on the pedestrian lane and recommends the lane be for pedestrians only.



Intersection Treatments

Considering there are no existing bike paths or bike lanes, it may be preferred by the community to allow the lane to accommodate bicycles as well, given the low volumes of pedestrian and cycle traffic expected. The STAR guide also recommends that as part of the planning process, agencies should consider: detectability by people with vision disabilities, undesired use by bicyclists, accessible cross-slope requirements and maintenance strategies, such as sweeping and snow removal. Flexible delineator posts can be temporarily removed to allow for the clearing the roadway in winter months. The STAR guide recommends a pedestrian lane as a temporary or interim solution until a physical sidewalk can be constructed.

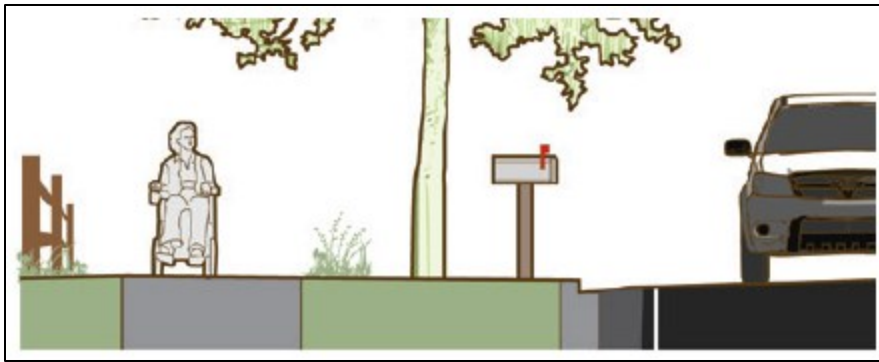
For sidewalks, the design guide recommends a 5ft sidewalk with a 4-6ft buffer between the sidewalk and the road, referred to as a “Furnishing Zone” and a 1-2ft buffer between the sidewalk and the adjacent property, referred to as a “Frontage Zone”. This is illustrated in the following figures.



Five Foot Sidewalk with Frontage and Furnishing Zones



Sidewalk with Wide Furnishing Zone



Sidewalk with Thin Furnishing Zone

The KMS Safe Routes to School Plan recommends a pedestrian activated flashing beacon for the recommending crossing at County Road 35 and U.S. Highway 12. The KMS Safe Routes Team also believes the City of Kerkhoven could benefit from similar crossing improvements at the intersection of County Road 6 and U.S. Highway 12 and the intersection of 7th Street and U.S. Highway 12. One such example is a Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (or RRFB). RRFBs are user-actuated amber LEDs that supplement warning signs at un-signalized intersections or mid-block crosswalks. They can be activated by pedestrians manually by a push button or passively by a pedestrian detection system. RRFBs are a lower cost alternative to traffic signals and hybrid signals that are shown to increase driver yielding behavior at crosswalks significantly when supplementing standard pedestrian crossing warning signs and markings. RRFBs typically receive power by standalone solar panel units, but may also be wired to a traditional power source.

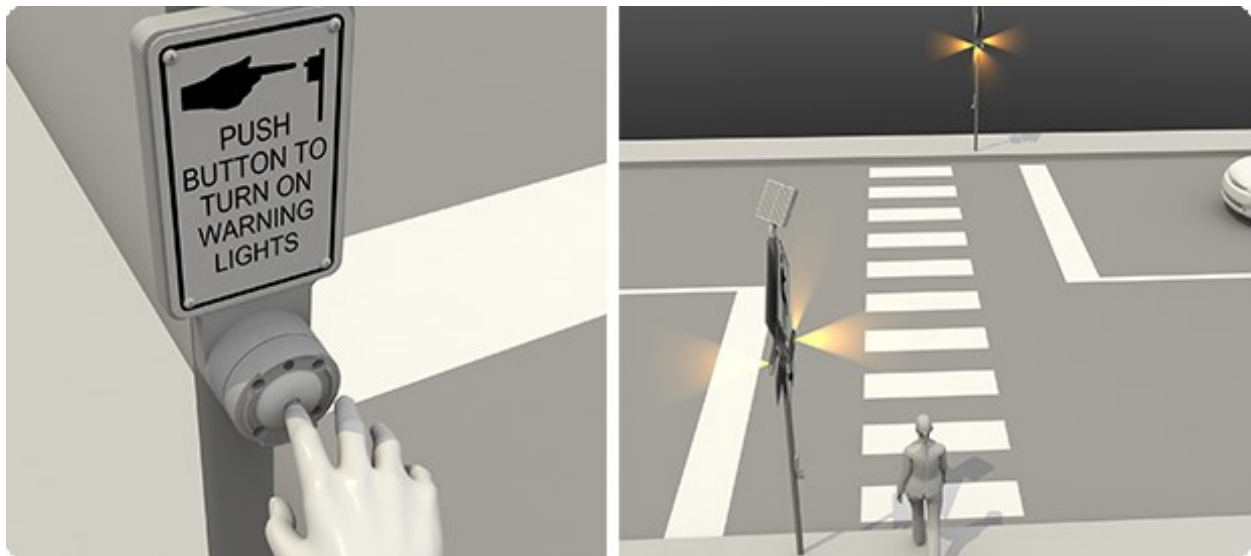


Illustration of a Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (or RRFB)

CROSSING GUARD

To supplement an infrastructure improvement at the recommended crossing of County Road 33 at Kenner Avenue, the Safe Routes to School Plan also recommends an adult crossing guard. Crossing guards help children safely cross the street at key locations. They also remind drivers of the presence of pedestrians. The presence of adult crossing guards can lead to more parents feeling comfortable about their children walking or bicycling to school. While the primary role of an adult school crossing guard is to guide children safely across the street, children also remain responsible for their own safety. In this manner, a guard plays another key function — a role model helping children develop the skills necessary to cross streets safely at all times.



The design and implementation of an adult school crossing guard program is largely the decision of local communities. Ideally, the development of an adult school crossing guard program involves a community partnership that includes the expertise of law enforcement agencies, traffic engineering or planning departments and school systems. The group establishes crossing procedures for a variety of traffic situations as well as hires, trains and equips the guards and secures long-term funding for the program.

SAFETY PATROL



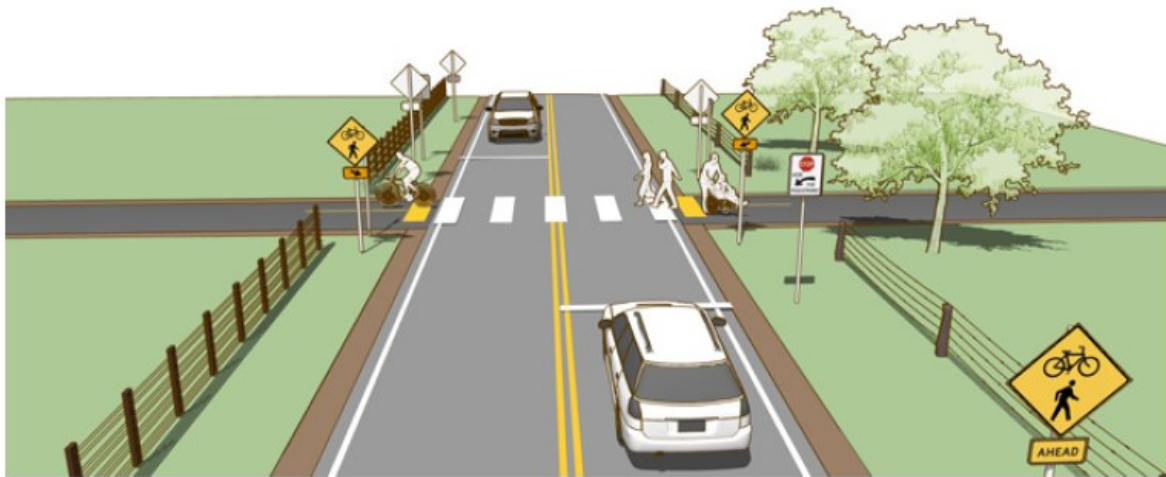
To supplement the crossing guard and infrastructure improvements and assist with congestion during peak times, the KMS Safe Routes to School Plan also recommends the establishment of a student safety patrol. Student safety patrols enhance enforcement of drop-off and pick-up procedures at school by increasing safety for students and traffic flow efficiency for parents. Such efforts allow students to participate in promoting traffic safety where they learn skills they can use in their everyday lives. Having a student safety patrol program at a school requires approval by the school and a committed teacher or parent volunteer to coordinate the student trainings and patrols. Before beginning a program, school officials should be contacted for approval of the program and to determine how liability issues will be addressed.

CROSSWALK



The KMS Safe Routes to School Team has identified 5 intersections in the City of Kerkhoven where crosswalks should be located: the intersection of County Road 35 and U.S. Highway 12, the intersection of County Road 6 and U.S. Highway 12, the intersection of 7th Street and U.S. Highway 12, the intersection of Wyoming Avenue and County Road 6 and the intersection of County Road 35 and Wyoming Avenue. These crosswalks would allow students and residents of the city multiple

opportunities to cross U.S. Highway 12 without having to walk to either end of the town and provide safe intersections for the east/west path on Wyoming Avenue. These are also the currently utilized crossing points, so it would improve the safety of bikers and pedestrians already utilizing these crossings. The Federal Highway Administration's Manual Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) guide states that warning signs should be installed at crosswalks and adequate visibility should be provided by parking prohibitions. Signage should be installed to comply with federal recommendations.



FHWA STAR Guide Crosswalk Recommendations

DESIGN ALTERNATIVES GUIDEBOOKS

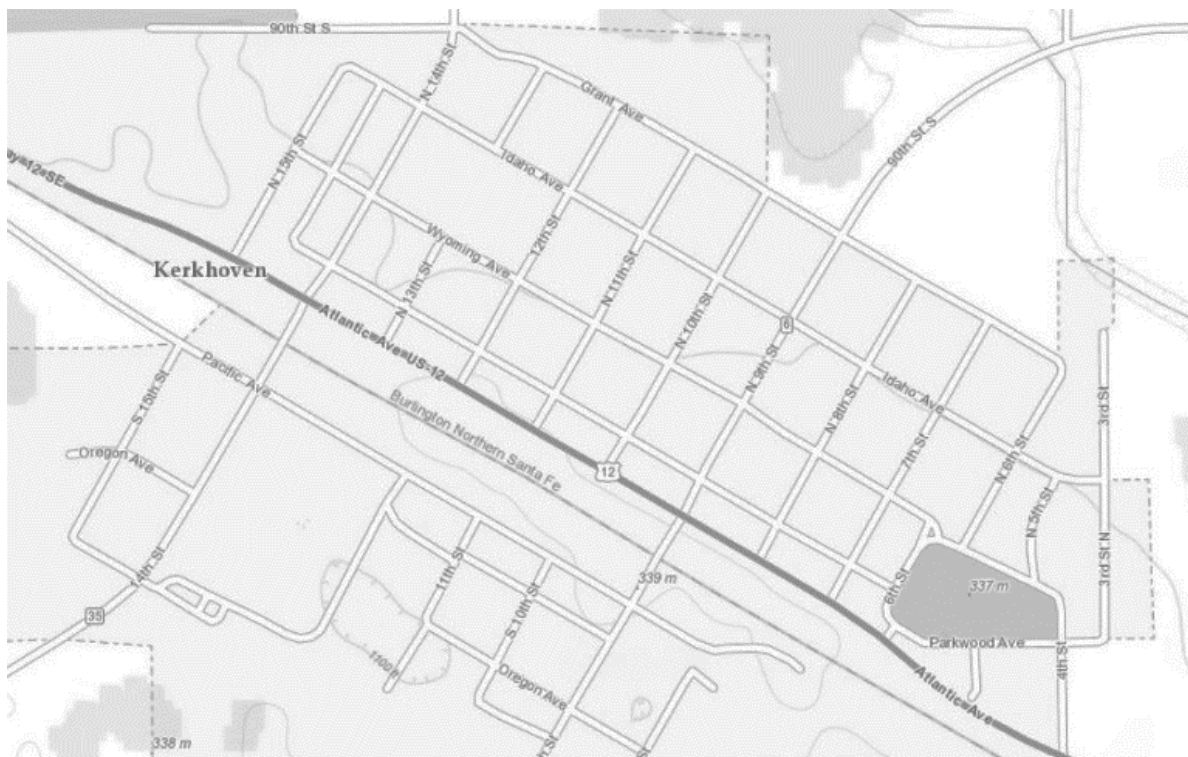
There are many design guides provided by different organizations that recommend designs for traffic engineering. These guides should be consulted when considering any signage or physical engineering solutions. Two popular organizations are the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO). The FHWA guides referenced in this document are the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) guide and the Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks (STAR) guide. The NACTO guides are generally regarded as more progressive and updated more rapidly and frequently than the federal guides. The NACTO guides are explicitly tailored to urban areas but do provide supporting evidence where they agree with the FHWA manuals.

The FHWA's Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks (STAR) guide recommends that it is essential to provide separation for children from motorized traffic in school areas. They recommend that preferred facilities near schools provide as much separation as possible between children and motorized vehicles. They also recommend that facilities such as side paths and paved shoulders should be wider

than typical facilities. The STAR guide states that sidewalks are preferred over shoulders (in this case referring to a pedestrian lane of any sort in the road). The STAR guide recommends pedestrian lanes in areas near schools as an interim or temporary accommodation for roadways lacking sidewalks. The design recommendations list an 8ft lane as the preferred width and 5ft as the minimum to allow for side-by-side walking. It recommends a double white line for extra emphasis and to discourage motor vehicle encroachment and states a flexible delineator to increase separation can be used.

Connectivity and Convenience

Kerkhoven is designed on a traditional grid system that provides direct connectivity. The city is also very compact, dense (926 people per square mile) and features a vibrant downtown located mostly on the north side of U.S. Highway 12. The low traffic volumes on the side streets, combined with the grid system and compact footprint, afford Kerkhoven the opportunity to become a walking and biking friendly town.



The Grid Street System of Kerkhoven

FUNDING SOURCES:

State and federal support for SRTS

In 2013, the state legislature allocated \$250,000 per year for Safe Routes to School non-infrastructure programs. In 2014, the state legislature allocated \$1 million per year to the SRTS infrastructure grant program and increased the non-infrastructure funds to \$500,000 per year. The Minnesota Safe Routes to School program awarded \$350,000 in planning grants in the 2016-2017 grant cycle but reduced this amount to \$250,000 for the 2017-2018 grant cycle. Less than half of the schools who applied for planning grant funding for the 2017-2018 grant cycle received funding.

MnDOT Transportation Alternatives

Infrastructure

The Transportation Alternatives Solicitation is a competitive grant opportunity for local communities and regional agencies to fund projects for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, historic preservation, Safe Routes to School and more. Minnesota will be soliciting projects for approximately \$7.5 million annually in available grant funding across the state.

Non-Infrastructure



Mini-grants award up to \$2,500 to a school to support SRTS activities. This includes training and supplies for school patrol programs, incentives and materials to support walking and biking encouragement events, bicycle racks, and other items to support walking and biking programs at K-12 schools in Minnesota.

Safe Routes to School

MnDOT's planning assistance grant provides planning expertise and plan development support to schools. Planning is completed by the local regional development organization, metropolitan planning organization, or the statewide SRTS planning consultant team. MnDOT will contract directly with the planning organizations and consultant.

BlueCross BlueShield & Center for Prevention Active Places Demonstration Projects:



**BlueCross
BlueShield**

To make neighborhoods more amenable to walking, biking and other forms of physical activity, BCBS and CFP offer funding for temporary, low-cost projects to help illustrate how small changes to our surroundings make it easier for people to be physically active. And, by giving people opportunities to experience their neighborhoods in a new way, these projects also aim to build support and momentum for more permanent, long-term changes within communities.

PeopleForBikes Community Grant Program:

The PeopleForBikes Community Grant Program supports bicycle infrastructure projects and targeted advocacy initiatives that make it easier and safer for people of all ages and abilities to ride.

PeopleForBikes accepts grant applications from non-profit organizations with a focus on bicycling, active transportation, or community development, from city or county agencies or departments, and from state or federal agencies working locally.

PeopleForBikes focuses most grant funds on bicycle infrastructure projects such as: bike paths, lanes, trails, and bridges; mountain bike facilities, bike parks and pump tracks, BMX facilities, end-of-trip facilities such as bike racks, bike parking, bike repair stations and bike storage.

PeopleForBikes will fund engineering and design work, construction costs including materials, labor, and equipment rental, and reasonable volunteer support costs. For advocacy projects, we will fund staffing that is directly related to accomplishing the goals of the initiative.

PeopleForBikes accepts requests for funding of up to \$10,000. We do not require a specific percentage match, but we do look at leverage and funding partnerships very carefully. We will not consider grant requests in which our funding would amount to 50% or more of the project budget.



SHIP: The Statewide Health Improvement Partnership



Countryside Public Health

SHIP works with communities across Minnesota to make healthy choices possible through locally driven solutions to advance active living. As a result, Minnesota has more communities that are making it easier for residents to integrate walking or biking into daily routines, whether it's for transportation or recreation.

One example of how SHIP gets students moving more is through active classrooms, which integrate physical activity into lessons and increase opportunities for movement during class time. These strategies are proven to enhance students' attention, classroom behavior and academic achievement.