

Creating a Child Friendly City: Milwaukee's Safe Routes to School Program

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Michael Anderson (Wisconsin Bike Fed)*



**WISCONSIN
BIKE FED**



PRESENTERS



Mike Amsden

City of Milwaukee Dept of Public Works
Multimodal Transportation Manager



Michael Anderson

Wisconsin Bike Fed
Youth Programs Manger MKE

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL MKE

- Collaboration between Milwaukee DPW, Wisconsin Bike Fed, and Milwaukee Public Schools
- Combines Bike Fed education experience with DPW public input process
- Results include actual street improvements





BACKGROUND

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL MKE

DPW

- Infrastructure & Neighborhood Engagement

Bike Fed

- Education & Student Engagement
- 1000+ students/annually
- School Safety Plans

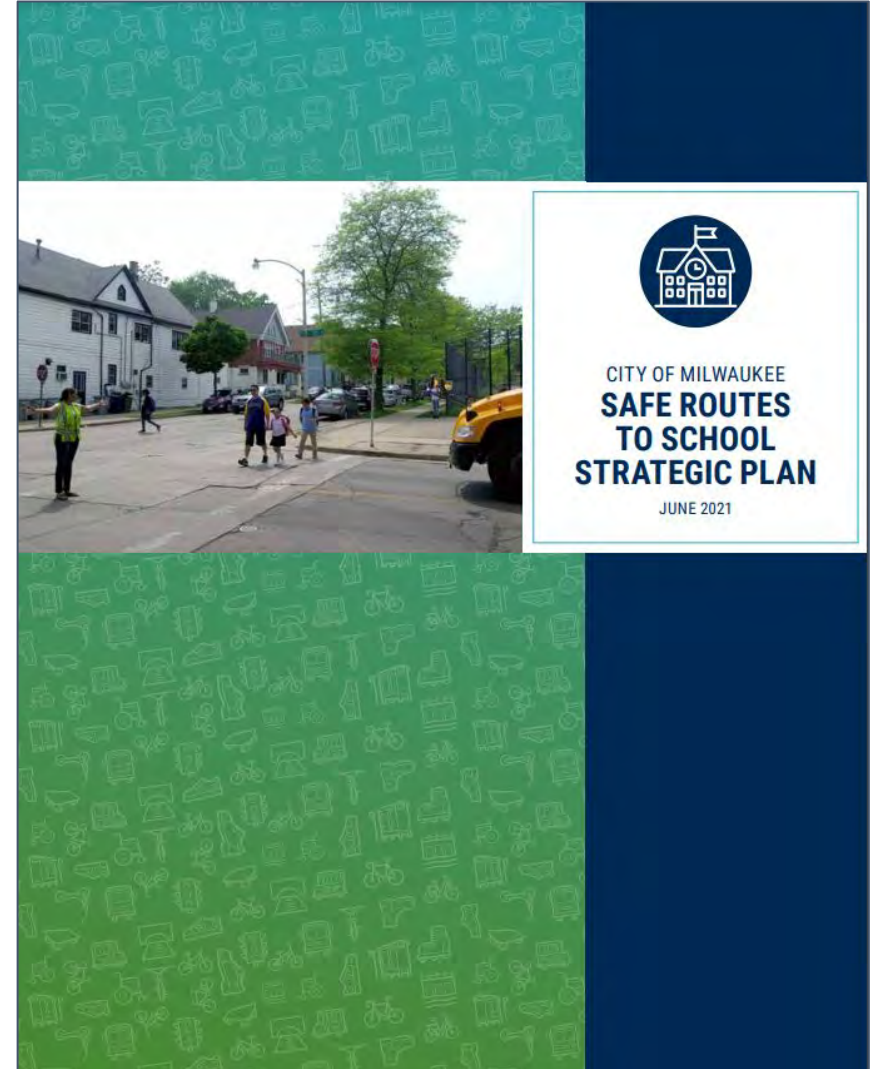
MPS

- Education & School Engagement
- Expansion of Walk/Bike Safety in Phy Ed



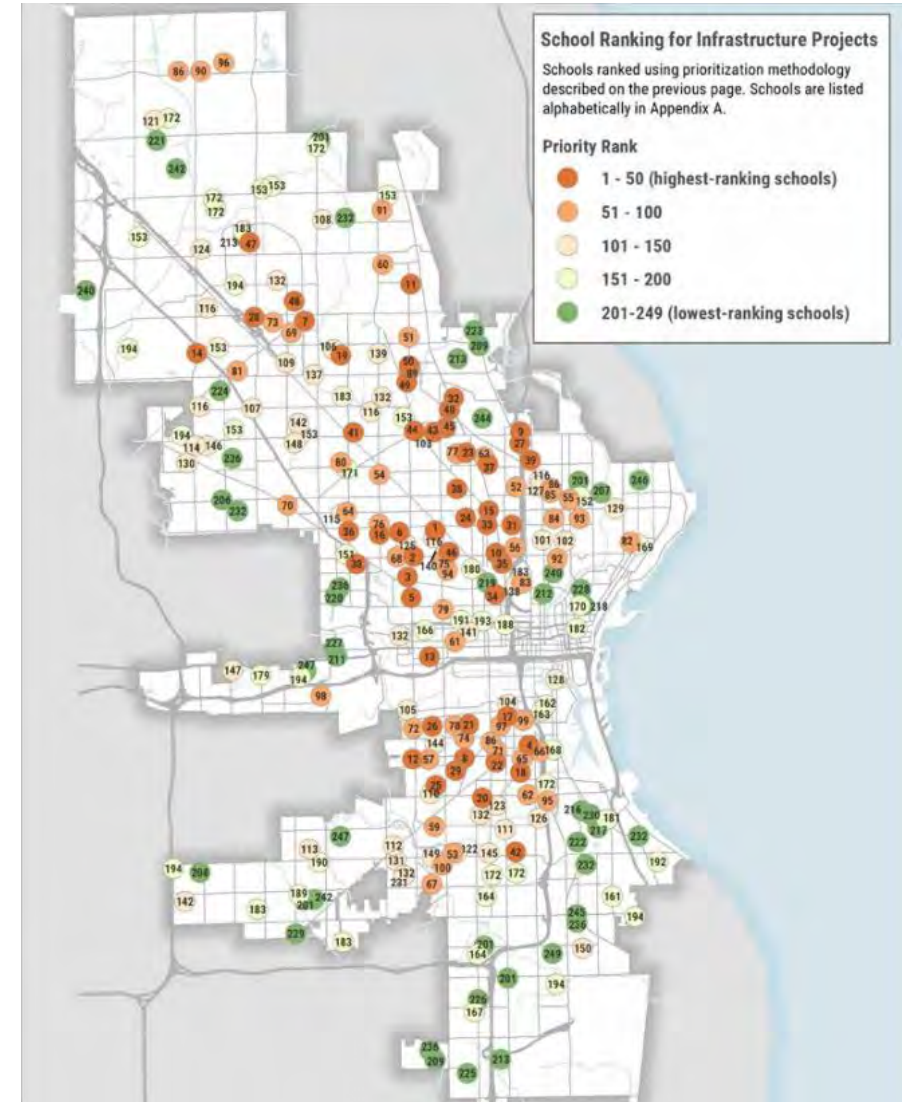
BACKGROUND - MILWAUKEE DPW

- **Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan**
 - Goal to better coordinate policies and initiatives between agencies
 - Included both recommendations and prioritization ranking of all Milwaukee schools



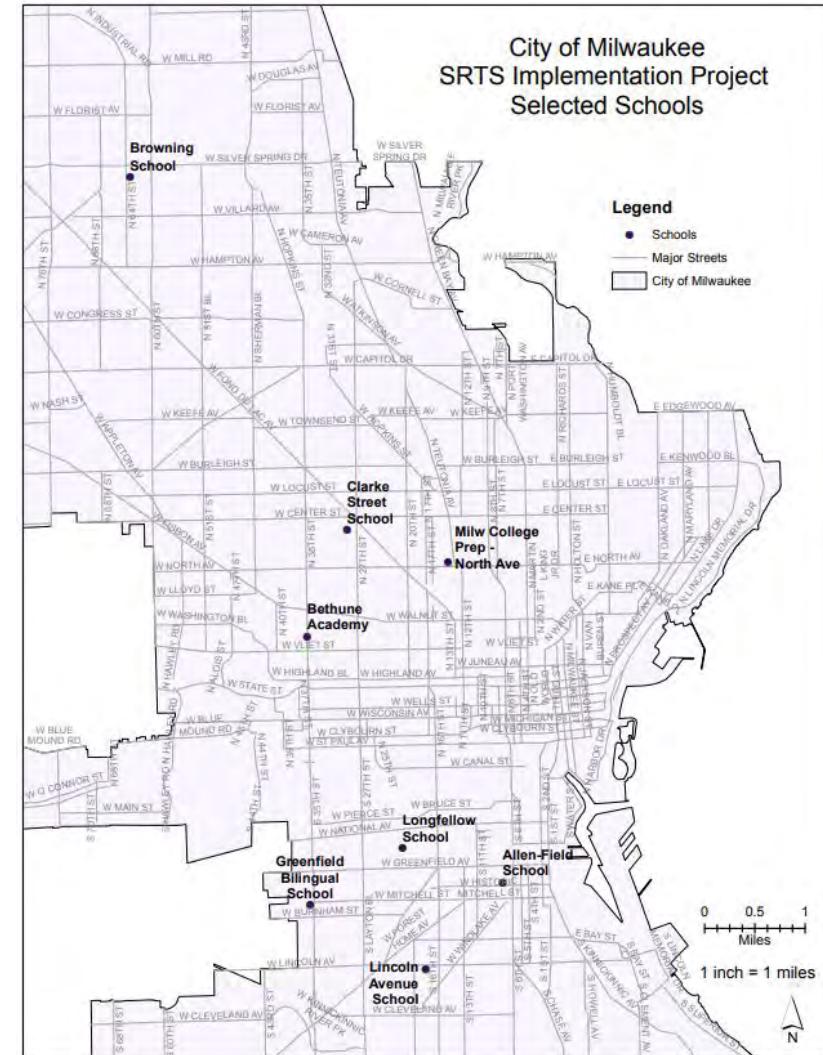
BACKGROUND - MILWAUKEE DPW

- **Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan**
 - Schools prioritized based on:
 - Pedestrian crash risk
 - Students in walk zone
 - Equity
 - Most high priority schools located in historically under-invested neighborhoods

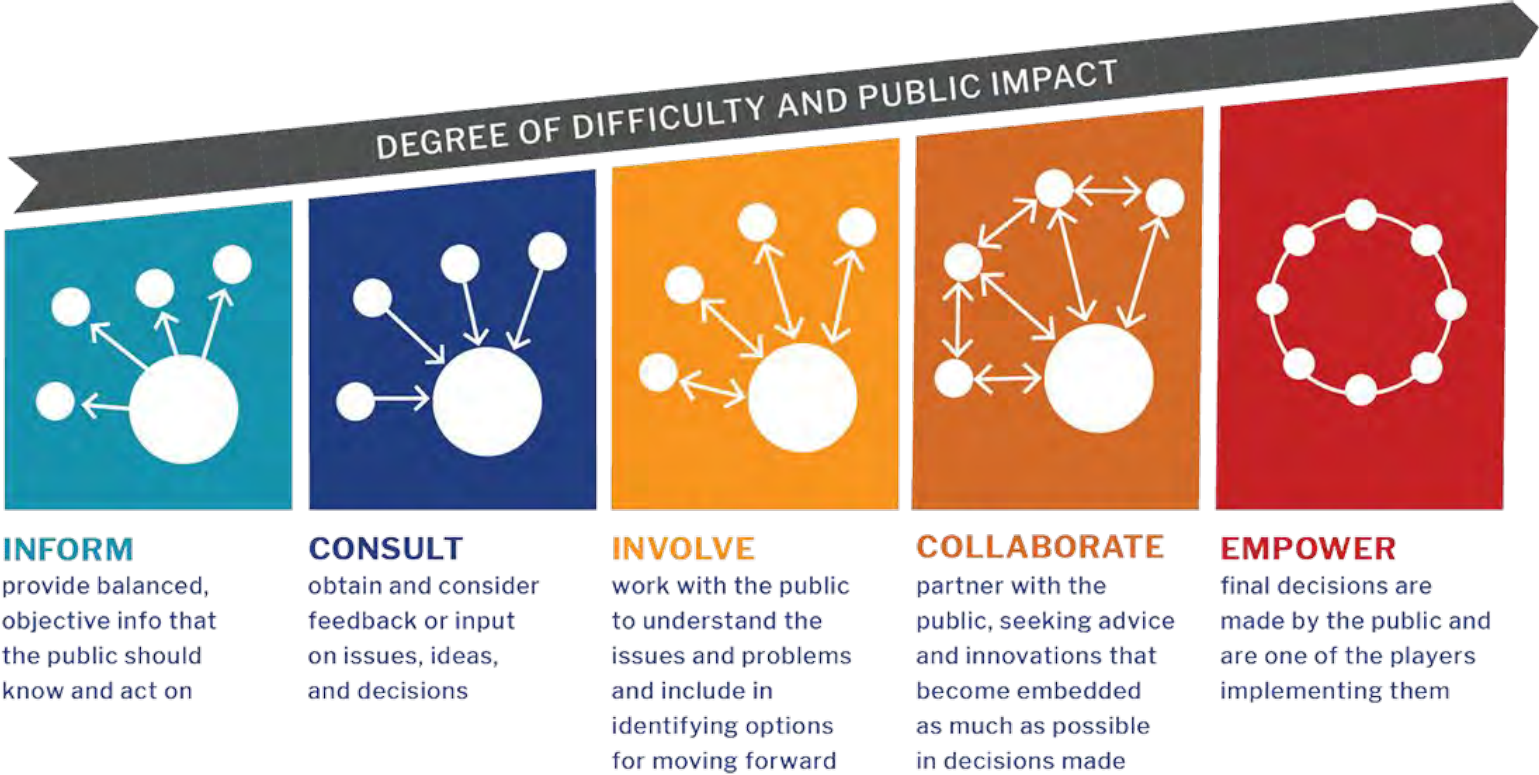


BACKGROUND - MILWAUKEE DPW

- **“Safe Routes to School Implementation” Project**
 - Funded by federal Transportation Alternatives Program grant
 - Goal to build traffic safety improvements around 8 schools
 - Budget \$75,000 per school
 - Kicked off in 2019



BACKGROUND - MILWAUKEE DPW



Source: International Association for Public Participation

BACKGROUND - MILWAUKEE DPW

- **Additional City-funded SRTS Projects since 2021**
 - Federal process takes significant extra time and effort
 - Commitment to locally funding one SRTS project each year (at \$75,000)



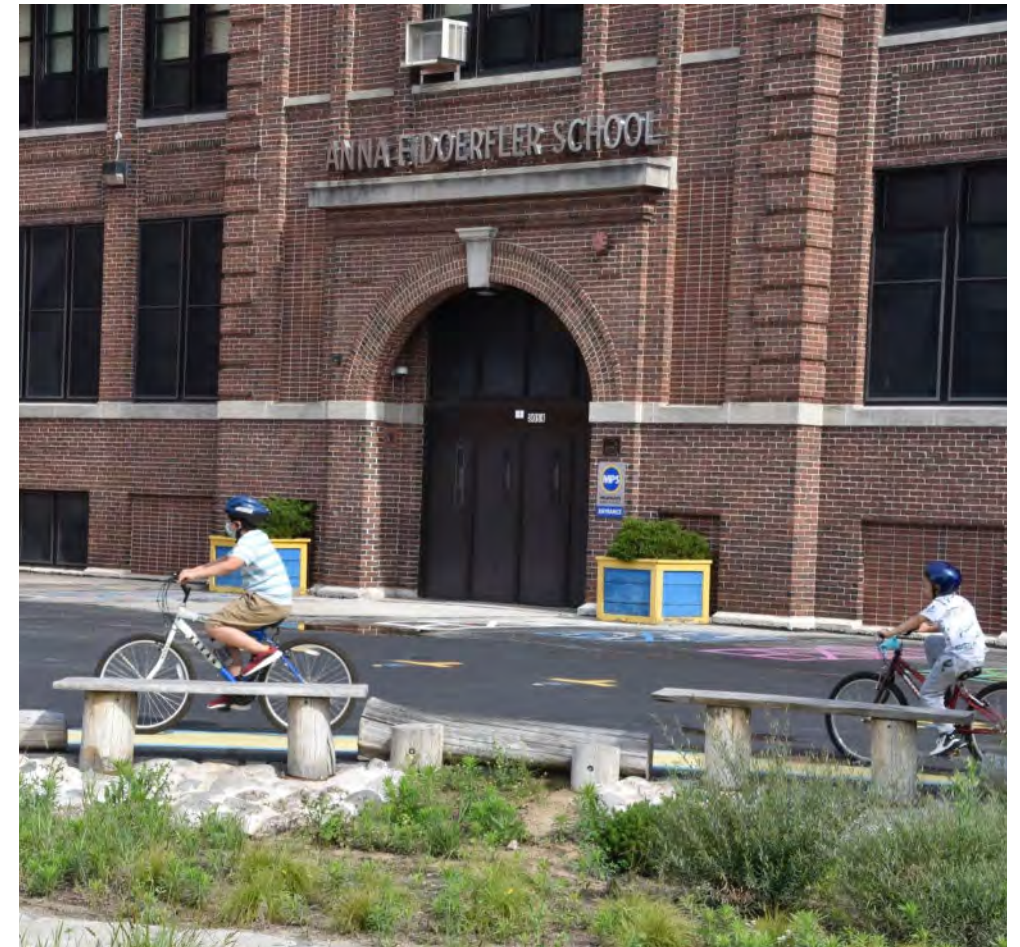
BACKGROUND - WISCONSIN BIKE FED

- **SRTS with MPS Phy Ed**
 - Bicycle Driver's Ed
 - Walking Wisdom
 - Summer Camp
- **Safe Routes Strategic Plan**
 - Expansion of bikes in MPS
 - Traffic Gardens - Phy Ed
 - Safe Routes to School
Infrastructure Engagement



BACKGROUND - WISCONSIN BIKE FED

- **SRTS with MPS Phy Ed**
 - Bicycle Driver's Ed
 - Walking Wisdom
 - School Team Support
 - Summer Camp



BACKGROUND - WISCONSIN BIKE FED

- **Safe Routes Strategic Plan**
 - Expansion of bike education in MPS
 - Traffic Gardens
 - Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Engagement



BACKGROUND - WISCONSIN BIKE FED

- **Lincoln Avenue Efforts**

- Walking School Bus
- Summer Camp
- Community School Leadership Team



COLLABORATION

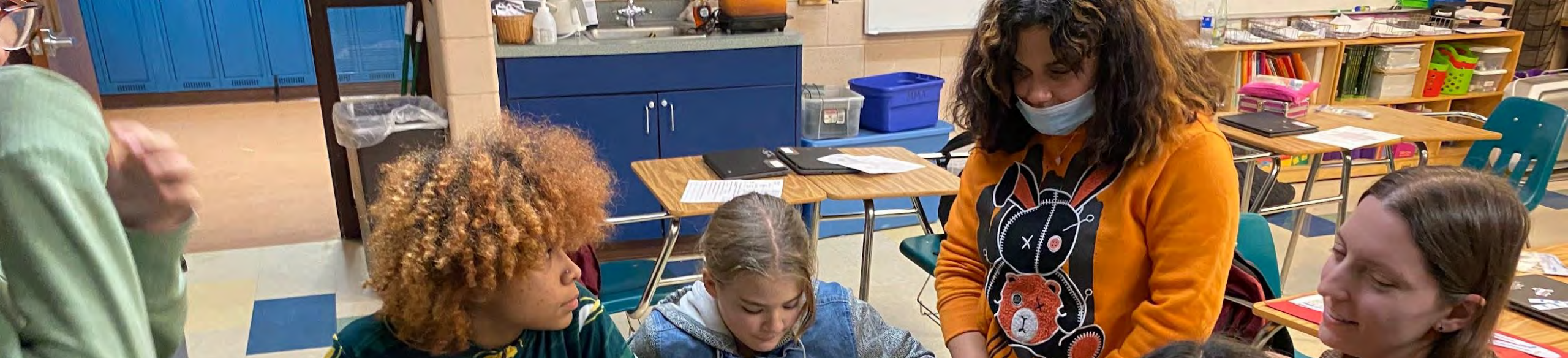
- DPW held first design workshop at Lincoln Avenue School
- Bike Fed attended the workshop and saw an opportunity...



COLLABORATION

- Bike Fed worked with school staff to bring the design workshop to the classroom
- DPW provided workshop materials, presentation, etc
- Bike Fed developed surrounding curriculum





THE PROGRAM



GOALS

- **DPW Goals**

- Get project input from both students and school community
- Strengthen relationship between community & City government

- **Bike Fed Goals**

- Prepare students so they can share their input
- Expand educational opportunities for youth design projects; ChildFriendlyCitiesMKE
- Strengthen Community Safety



COMMUNITY & CLASSROOM EFFORTS

- **Community Workshops**
 - Everyone invited, including school neighbors
 - After school
- **Classroom Program**
 - Students only
 - During school hours



STRUCTURE - COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

- **Community Workshop**
 - One 60 - 90 minute session
 - Teams of 4 - 8 around tables
 - Large aerial map for each team
 - Post-it notes, pens, cheat sheets, infrastructure icons etc provided



STRUCTURE - COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

- **Activity 1: Identifying Issues**
 - Focus on discussing the traffic safety problems each team wants to address
 - Can include a brief community walk
 - Recommend participants add written notes to their maps



STRUCTURE - COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

- **Infrastructure Options Overview**
 - Shift focus to addressing identified problems
 - Walk through each infrastructure type
 - Printed “cheatsheet” avoids participants having to memorize details



STRUCTURE - COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

- Photo
- Description
- Cost
- Icon
- Benefits

Speed Hump

\$8,000

Raised area across a roadway

- For neighborhood streets
- Reduces traffic speeds and crashes



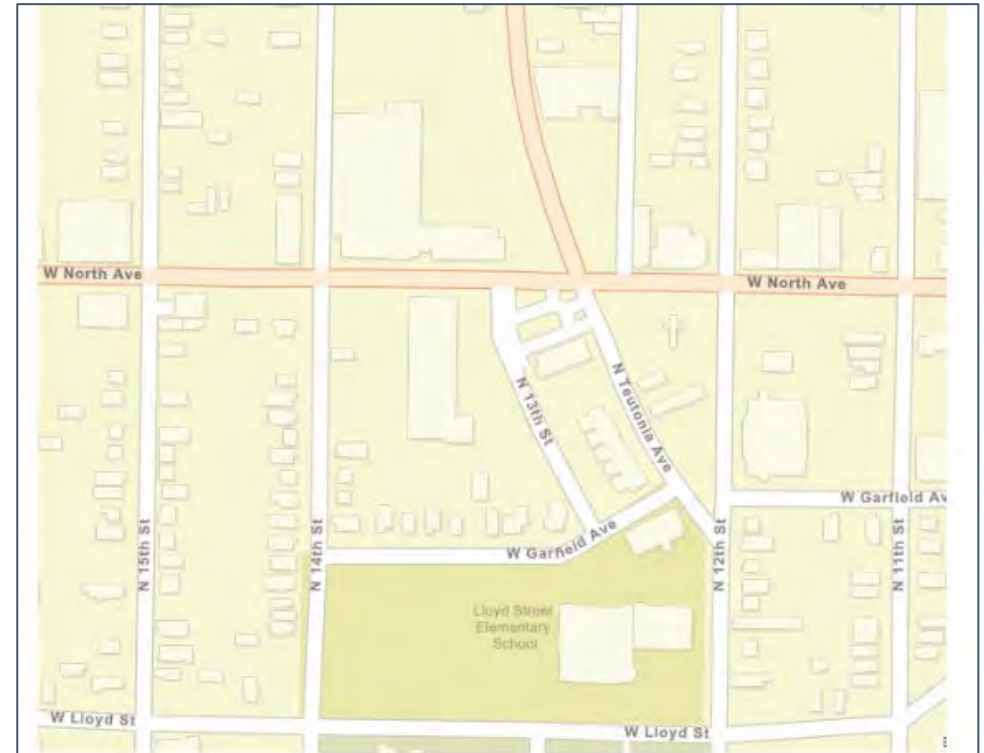
STRUCTURE - COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

- **Activity 2: Design Workshop**
 - Teams decide how they would address the identified safety issues
 - Place corresponding icons on map
 - Participants must stay within assigned budget



STRUCTURE - COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

- **Online Survey Option**
 - Included on advertising materials for anyone who can't attend
 - Questions focused on identifying issues and problem locations



Where do you have a concern about the safety of people going to or from school?

1. First location

Location

Issue(s)

STRUCTURE - CLASSROOM PROGRAM

- **Classroom Program**
 - Four 50 minute classroom sessions over one week
 - 1 - Junior Urbanist: Background
 - 2 - Mapping & Concern Gathering
 - 3 - Collective Budgeting: Math
 - 4 - Design Workshop*



STRUCTURE - CLASSROOM PROGRAM

• Junior Urbanist

Unit Objectives:

Students will be able to identify and discuss the benefits of walking and biking to school. Students will recognize the differences between various forms of traffic calming infrastructure.

Standards Addressed:

SS.Geog5.b.5 Examine how human actions modify the physical environment when using natural resources (renewable and nonrenewable).

SS.Econ1.b.4 Infer potential incentives in a real-world situation.

SS.Econ4.c.5 Discuss reasons a government taxes people.

SS.Econ1.a.3 Use economic reasoning to compare and contrast the costs and benefits of a decision.



STRUCTURE - CLASSROOM PROGRAM

Community Mapping & Concern Gathering

Name: _____
 Room #: _____
 Team Name: _____

Cardinal Directions



Legend / Map Key

	School
	Bike Lane
	Bike Route



1. Can you find the map's **Legend**? Circle the map Legend when you find it!
2. Can you locate the cardinal direction **EAST "E"** on the map? Circle the cardinal direction **EAST** when you find it! "E" is short for **EAST**.
3. Find 3 streets that are close to school and list these streets below.

4. Which direction does the **FRONT** of school face? _____
5. What are the two numbered streets that are next to Grant School? _____ & _____
6. Draw an **ARROW** ↖ pointing to the **NORTH** side of School.
7. Name one street that is on a **Bike Route**. _____

In your team discuss and record 3 concerns the group has about pedestrian safety around Grant Public School

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

♥ _____ & _____

▲ _____ & _____

Record your observations at 4 intersections in the boxes.



WISCONSIN BIKE FED

★ _____ & _____

⊙ _____ & _____

Do you have concerns at other locations or intersections? I.e. Lincoln, Layton, or Alleys?



STRUCTURE - CLASSROOM PROGRAM

• Community Mapping & Concern Gathering

Unit Objectives:

Students will use a Map to identify the location of School and nearby streets.

Students will orient themselves according to cardinal directions.

Students will observe the behavior of people driving, road conditions, and record their observations.

Instructors will facilitate a walk around school and engage students.

SS.Inq4.a.i: Communicate conclusions from a variety of teacher- provided presentation options.

SS.Inq5.a.i Explore opportunities for personal or collaborative civic engagement with community, school, state, tribal, national, and/or global implications.

SS.BH1.a.4 Describe how a person's understanding, perceptions, and behaviors are affected by relationships and environments.

SS.BH4.a.i Classify technologies based on intended use, access, and design, and how they might change people's lives (for better or worse).

SS.Geog1.b.i Identify purposes of and differences among maps, globes, aerial photographs, charts, and satellite images.

SS.Geog3.b.4 Summarize how transportation and communication have changed economic activities over time.

SS.Geog4.a.4 Identify and describe how people may view places in the community differently (e.g., students and senior citizens responding to a new playground).

SS.Geog5.b.5 Examine how human actions modify the physical environment when using natural resources (renewable and nonrenewable).



STRUCTURE - CLASSROOM PROGRAM

- **Community Design Workshop**
 - Day 4: Scholars are ready!



CREATING ALTERNATIVES

- **Post-workshop – creating alternatives!**
- **Step 1: Record Map Designs**
 - Excel sheets to record locations and improvement types
 - Sum results per grade level & overall



CREATING ALTERNATIVES

- **Step 2: Identify common patterns**
 - Preferred locations
 - Preferred improvements
 - Consider weighting results by item cost
- **Step 3: Create representative options w/in project budget**
 - Example: crossing treatments vs reducing speeds

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Grand Totals	Pedestrian Island	High-Vis Crosswalk	Crosswalk	In Street Sign
6	Rogers & Layton	0	0	0	1
7	Becher & 31st	0	0	0	0
8	Becher & 30th	0	13	1	4
9	Becher & 29th	0	12	1	5
10	Becher & 28th	0	2	2	2
11	Becher & Layton	0	1	0	1
12	Grant & 31st	0	1	1	1
13	Grant & 30th	0	11	3	4
14	Grant & 29th	1	12	8	4
15	Grant & 28th	0	3	2	2
16	Grant & Layton	0	1	1	3
17	Lincoln & 31st	2	2	0	1
18	Lincoln & 30th	0	1	0	0

**Option 1:
BLUE**



*Slowing Down –
School Entrance*

**Option 2:
GREEN**



*Slowing Down –
To/From School*

**Option 3:
ORANGE**



Crossing Streets

CHOOSING AN ALTERNATIVE

• Voting

- Primary challenge is concisely explaining alternatives
- Participants may not remember symbols etc
- Suggest including questions like “What do you like about this alternative?”



DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

- DPW designs chosen improvements
- Designs bid out for construction over summer

Curb Extensions and High Visibility Crosswalks being constructed at Longfellow Community School (August 2023)





AN UNEXPECTED OBSTACLE: COVID-19



WORKSHOPS CANCELED!

- **Initial quick fix:** online surveys to collect input on traffic safety issues
- **Longer term:** created more involved “round 2” public engagement opportunities

ACADEMY TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMUNITY WALK!



**Thursday
September 30th
2:45 PM**

co-hosted by:



Meet outside by
the play lot!

2

**Walk with us
around the
neighborhood and
help point out
needs for traffic
safety**

3

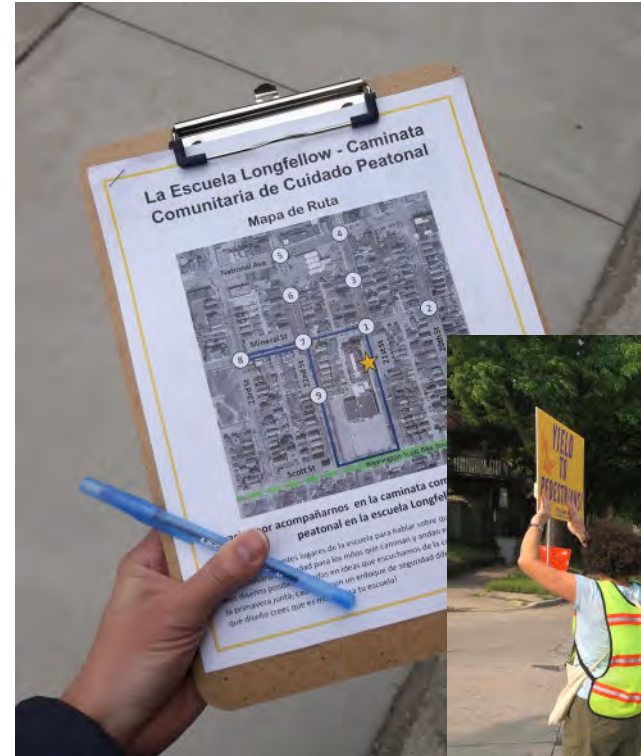


Stay Connected!

Stay connected to the West Side Academy's Community School Leadership Team as we work to increase health and safety goals for students and their families!

EXPANDED “ROUND 2”

- **Community walks**
 - Visited key locations to discuss
 - Used chalk spray paint to show potential improvements
 - Created handouts to summarize options
- **Zoom presentations**
 - Live Q&A + simple “before and after” slides to help visualize proposed changes



OTHER COVID-19 PROGRAMS

- **Zablocki Elementary**
 - Pandemic engagement with DCD
 - Zablocki Walks



OTHER PROGRAMS

- **Golda Meir Leadership Team**

- Walking Wisdom
- Walk Audit
- Persuasive Writing
- Field Trip to City Hall



BENEFITS, SUCCESSES, & CHALLENGES



BENEFITS

- **Classroom Benefits**

- Real World Consequences
- Culturally Responsive
- Increased student engagement

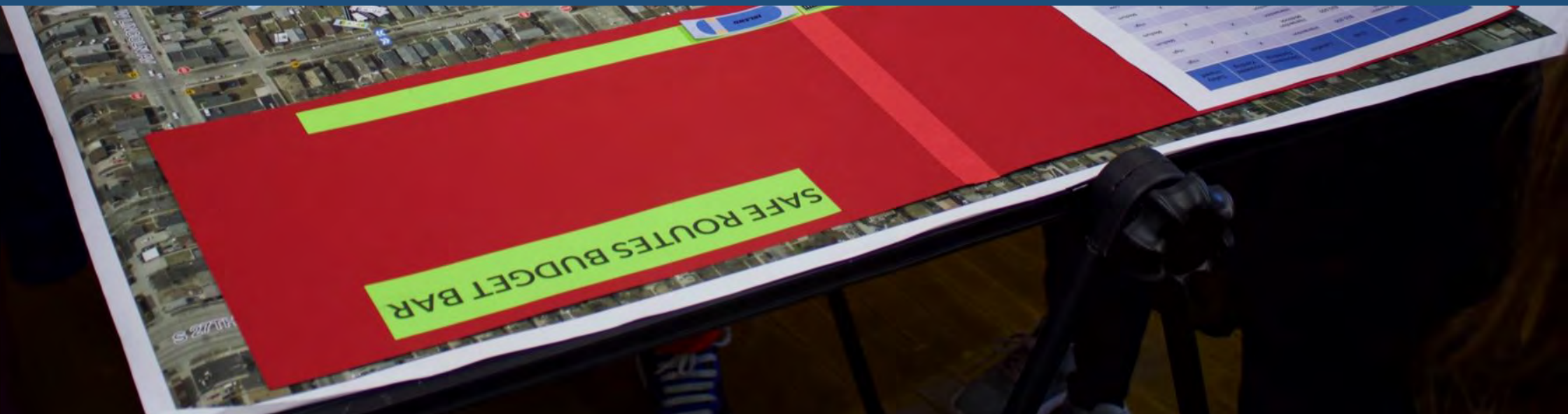
- **Community Benefits**

- Traffic safety
- Air quality
- Health





SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES



SUCCESSSES

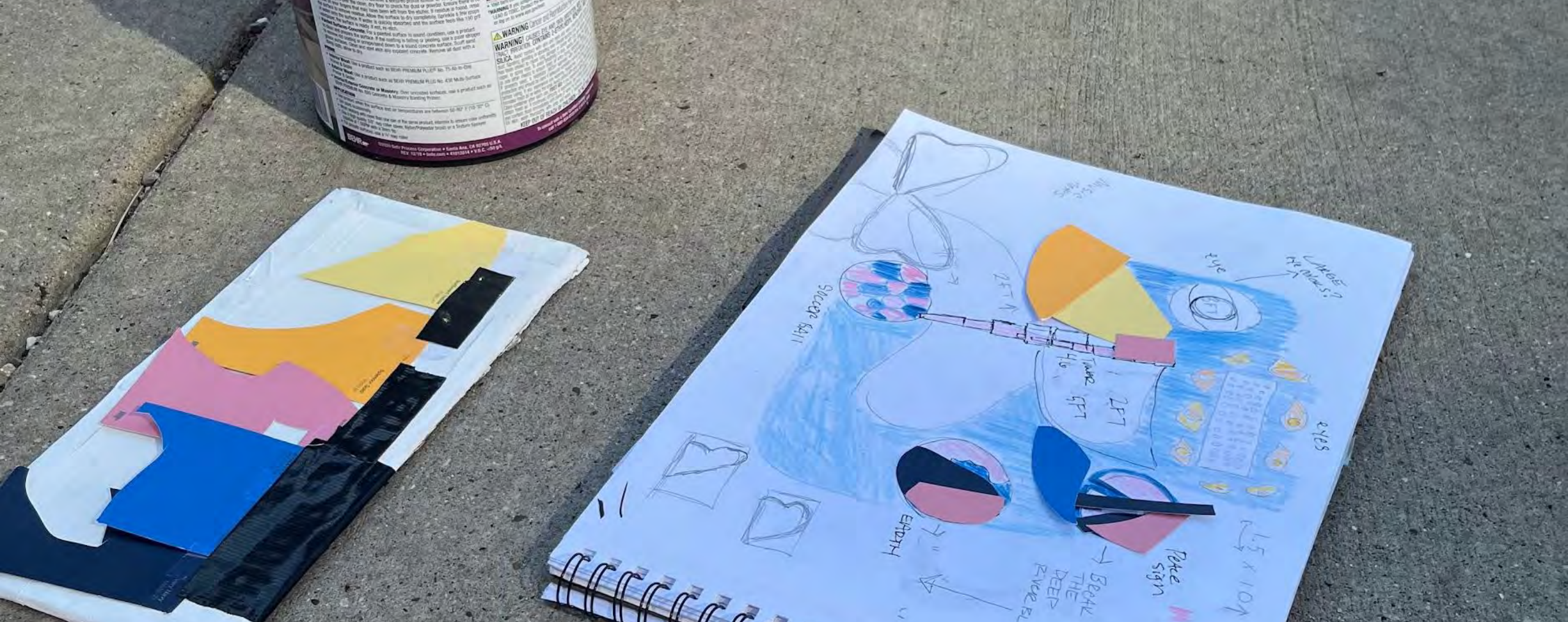
- 10 completed infrastructure projects
- Over 400 students!
- Champion-led writing projects



CHALLENGES

- Adaptions in different learning conditions
- Capacity & budget
- Construction timeline





FUTURE EXPANSION

SHARED CURRICULUM + EXPANSION

- Updated Report & Lessons in November after Auer Avenue School project
- Continued ties into state standards
- Paint the Pavement Report
- Native Plantings



ART ACTIVITIES

- **Paint the Pavement**
 - America Walks Lesson Plans & Lessons @ Maryland Ave
 - Report Dec 2023
- **Auer Avenue**
 - Community School Leadership team ready for Spring/Summer 2023



NATIVE PLANTINGS

- **Lincoln Avenue**
 - ReFLO & Before
- **Westside Academy**
 - Potentially through Community School Framework
- **Auer Avenue**
 - Potential addition to Child Friendly Cities Lesson plans



KEY TAKEAWAYS



RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Expanded Programs**
 - Increase Local Funds
 - Seek Grant Opportunities
 - Nurture SRTS Champions
 - High School TAP
- **Replicable Programs**
 - Mini-Lessons
 - Funding for Guidebook & continued lesson plan development
 - Construction costs/timelines



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Kids are already experts**
 - They know their own experience and see the experiences of others
 - Giving them the tools and platform to advocate for their communities



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Champions may not be obvious**
 - Principal may not have capacity
 - Look for parent coordinators, student leadership, individual teachers, after school program organizers



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Start small and build up**
 - Both DPW and Bike Fed had their own established programs before expanding
 - Piloted one school first
- **Walking and walk safety are good places to start**
 - Incorporate into existing events, projects, and classes



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Make it fun!**
 - You don't have to stay in the classroom (or the conference room)
 - Get participants moving and interacting with each other
 - Fun and engaging for kids is often fun for adults too



THANK YOU!



@MilwaukeeDPW @WisconsinBikeFed



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@MilwaukeeDPW



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- Key takeaways from the program so far and how they can be applied to other project types and other communities (NSHTA)
 - Educationally how the students are more engaged when learning has a real life consequence (budgeting, articulating impacts)
 - Interactivity = great - plans for kids often work well for adults too
 - Federal funding versus local funding
 - If people don't have an existing SRTS program and applying for TAP funding, writing so that they have flexibility to adjust on the fly. EG "bicycle driver's ed" only would've been too restrictive.
 - Making the classroom work fit in with teacher needs (formalized lesson plan with state learning standards for teachers etc)
 -