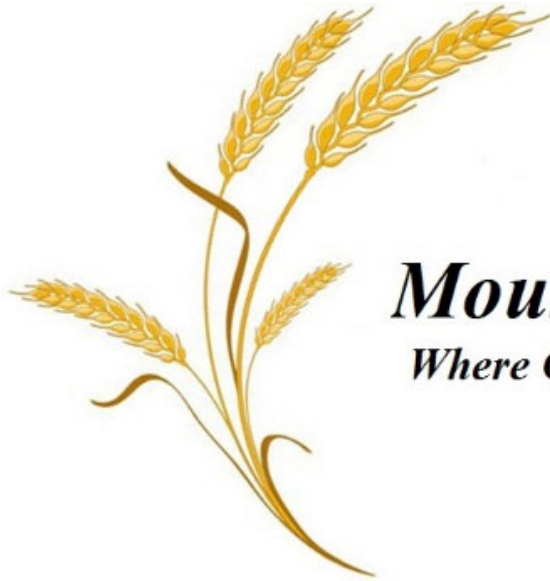
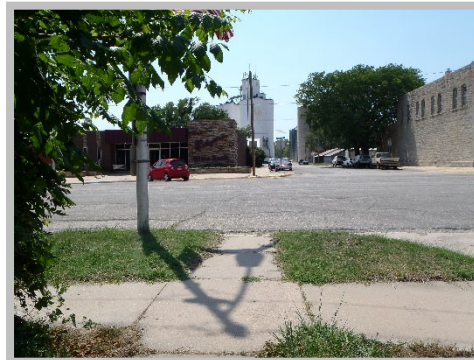


# Safe Routes to School Plan



## *Moundridge, Kansas* *Where Community is a Way of Life*



*Your Success is our Passion!*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- A. INTRODUCTION..... 2
- B. SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TEAM ..... 2
- C. SCHOOL DESCRIPTION/EXISTING TRAVEL CHARACTERISTICS ..... 3
- D. ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT TRAVEL CONDITIONS..... 4
- E. PUBLIC INPUT ..... 4
- F. OBSTACLES TO ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ..... 5
- G. THE ACTION PLAN..... 6
- H. EVALUATION ACTIVITIES..... 6
- I. PLAN PARTNERS..... 7

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

The 2013 City of Moundridge Strategic Plan Goal #3 is to, “Support a high quality park and recreation system to improve the wellness and the quality of life for all residents and visitors.” The 2015 Comprehensive Plan (CP) further detailed that, “The absence of a connected system pedestrian and bicycle routes/trails, associated with sidewalk provision is a quality of life issue...” Moundridge’s adopted tag line “Where community is a way of life” exemplifies its commitment to providing healthy living for all of its citizens.

In 2017, Moundridge worked with a consultant engineer to develop a city-wide sidewalk and park trail master plan. The master plan identified the need to repair deteriorated sidewalks, fill gaps of missing sidewalks, and locations to upgrade street corners with ADA compliant ramps. The master plan also identified potential funding sources for the city to pursue to pay for infrastructure improvements. In the summer of 2017, the city applied for and was awarded funding from the Kansas Department of Wildlife Parks and Tourism to construct a concrete path in Wheat Ridge Park. This path was completed in early 2019. Also, in 2017, the city was awarded funding from the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) for Phase 1 planning for a Safe Routes To Schools (SRTS) project.

The SRTS Plan is a result of the Phase 1 planning effort. It identifies priority infrastructure improvements and provides recommendations for the pursuit of SRTS Phase 2 funding in order to provide safer routes for students to walk and bike to school and to increase the number of students who walk and bike to school.

## **B. SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TEAM**

The city, working in cooperation with the school district formed a local SRTS planning committee by gathering community leaders who had a connection to the local schools and who desired to make a positive difference for pedestrian and bicycle access in their community. This group met to discuss the City’s most pressing needs for providing a safer environment for walking and biking to school, what improvements would provide the greatest benefit, and to identify the scope of improvements desired. The local planning committee was comprised of the following people:

- Randy Frazer, Moundridge City Administrator
- Mike Strausz, City Street Superintendent
- Karen Brunk, USD 423
- Vicky Kessler, USD 423
- Jay Kessler, Chief of Police
- Murray McGee, Economic Development

In 2017, the City applied for funding from KDOT for Phase 1 SRTS planning efforts. The City was awarded funding in the fall of 2017. This funding was utilized to hire Kirkham Michael Consulting Engineers in April of 2018 to provide planning assistance to the steering committee.

## C. SCHOOL DESCRIPTION/EXISTING TRAVEL CHARACTERISTICS

### School Description

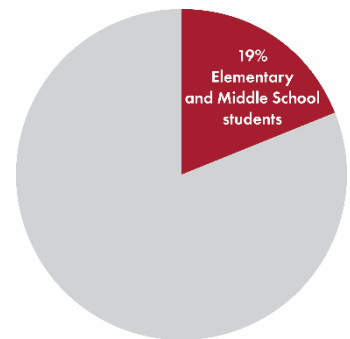
Moundridge is a 3<sup>rd</sup> Class City which currently has a population of about 1,864 people. Founded in 1887, it was transformed by a variety of immigrants looking for a better way of life, away from the hardships of war and searching for economic opportunities. Many of the names from these early immigrants can still be found in or around Moundridge today. Moundridge started as an agricultural community and agriculture, along with manufacturing, is still the predominant economic engine in town.

The Moundridge Elementary School (ES) is located on the west side of Moundridge at the intersection of Drucilla Ave and Hirschler Street, a block south of Cole Street. It houses kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. According to Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) records, it had an enrollment of 114 for the 2018/2019 school year. The Middle School (MS) is located towards the east side of town next to the high school, along Cole Street. It houses 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades. KSDE records indicate that it had an enrollment of 173 students for the 2018/2019 school year. While this plan has been developed primarily for the elementary school, the entire city falls within a one-mile radius of ES. Responses to the parent surveys revealed that while schoolchildren's places of residence are scattered across the city, about 70% indicated they lived within one-quarter mile of ES. The survey responses further indicated that about 19% of ES and MS children walk or bicycle to school.

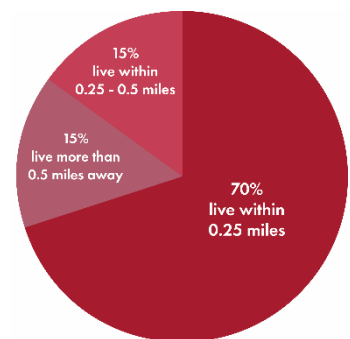
As previously mentioned, ES is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Drucilla Ave and Hirschler Street. Hirschler Street is a dead end at the west end of ES, but ES has two access points, one on the north side and one on the east side. An adult acts as a crossing guard at the intersection of Drucilla Ave and Hirschler Street where most all pedestrians cross to get to the school. The east entrance is the designated bus pickup location while the north entrance is primarily where parents pick up children in their personal automobiles.

### Student Location Demographics

Being a rural agricultural community, a significant percentage of Moundridge students live outside of Moundridge. Walking or biking is not a reasonable option for these students, so they travel to and from school either by bus or private vehicle.



% of students who walk/bike to school.



Proximity of students to school.

According to the parent surveys, approximately 19% of students walk or bike to school. These students homes are scattered across the city.

Using their personal knowledge and experience of the transportation network of the city, in conjunction with information received from the parent surveys, the SRTS planning committee evaluated the current condition of the sidewalks most likely to be utilized by schoolchildren and identified several primary deficiencies:

1. The need for sidewalk ramps;
2. Broken, heaved, or overgrown sidewalks;
3. Gaps in sidewalk continuity;
4. Street crossings that do not meet Americans with Disability Act (ADA) criteria.

#### **D. ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT TRAVEL CONDITIONS**

While the primary pedestrian routes to ES for the most part have sidewalks along them, many of the existing sidewalks exhibit significant deterioration, some have sidewalk gaps, and very few, if any, have curb ramps that are completely ADA compliant. In most cases, the street surfaces will need improvements at sidewalk crossing locations because there is a lip where the pavement intersects the gutter, or the street surface is uneven. There are striped crosswalks at designated pedestrian crossing locations.

The main entry to ES is located on the north side of the building with a secondary entry on the east side. The sidewalk along the north side of the school is broken where it crosses the northeast driveway. There are sidewalk ramps at the Drucilla Ave intersection, but they are lacking detectable warning devices (truncated domes). There is a bicycle rack along the north side of the building.

#### **E. PUBLIC INPUT**

As part of the City's development of a Strategic Plan in 2013, public consultation resulted in the recommendation for Moundridge to improve its sidewalks. The public was again consulted in July 2017 when the City mailed surveys with monthly water bills. More than 100 responses were received. The majority of respondents voiced concerns over the condition of the existing sidewalks in Moundridge, highlighting certain areas that they believed were unsafe for pedestrian travel. Of the individualized responses submitted with the surveys, about 68% noted concerns with the condition of existing sidewalks. Public input has continued to be an important component of Moundridge's SRTS plan development. It started with completion of parent surveys. The data collected from these surveys was used to assist with prioritizing locations for infrastructure improvements. A public open house was held in 2018 to educate the



included in the SRTS project, but will be addressed with local funds outside of the SRTS project. Likewise, if there are any pavements in need of improvements at street crossing locations, these improvements will be completed by city forces using local funds outside of the SRTS project.

## **G. THE ACTION PLAN**

### Engineering Activities

The steering committee has the full support of the Moundridge City Council and USD 423 to move forward with pursuing infrastructure improvement funds for the priority locations identified in this plan. This Master Plan document will be used by the engineering consultant to develop a project application for Phase 2 SRTS infrastructure improvement funding through the KDOT Transportation Alternatives program. This Phase 2 application will be submitted during the October 2019 call for projects. The Mayor of Moundridge has approved a resolution in support of providing the local match should the Phase 2 funding application be accepted by KDOT.

If awarded funds, an engineering consultant will be employed by the city to develop plans for constructing the priority improvements and for providing inspection services during construction.

After completion of the infrastructure improvements identified in this plan, the city's needs will be re-assessed with the possibility of then pursuing infrastructure improvements for future priorities.

### Encouragement, Education, and Enforcement Activities

ES will continue to utilize a crossing guard to encourage and enforce schoolchildren safely crossing Drucilla Ave. The school will investigate the coordination of crossing guard training with local law enforcement.

Local volunteers have previously put on a bicycle rodeo to educate children on the laws and safe practices for bicycling and to encourage bicycling in Moundridge for its health benefits. ES will promote safe walking and biking habits for its students by sharing safety tips throughout the school year and by seeking cooperation from local law enforcement for providing support to the schools by enforcing traffic laws in the vicinity of the schools.

The school had a walking school bus in 2018 and a bike to school day in Spring 2019. Due to weather, there was no walking school bus in 2019 but they have plans to do so in the spring of 2020. The EMS and other members of the community helped provide safe intersection crossings. Coordination and promotion is through <http://www.walkbiketoschool.org>.

## **H. EVALUATION ACTIVITIES**

After completion of this SRTS infrastructure improvement project, another round of Parent Surveys will be completed. The survey responses will be compared to previous surveys to evaluate if perceptions of safety have changed, to identify if any new concerns have arisen, and to see if the number of schoolchildren walking and biking to school has increased.

## **I. PLAN PARTNERS**

It is our belief that a solid partnership between our schools, local government, and our citizens is critical to the success of our SRTS Plan.

Our SRTS Plan has been endorsed by the following representatives:

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