Safe Routes To School Action Plan

Rochester City School District - Public School 19

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GENESEE TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

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I. Safe Routes to School Introduction & Overview

1.1 Introduction

This project was funded by the Genesee Transportation Council (GTC) and is part of a model SRTS program for the Rochester, N.Y. region. Rochester and Monroe County have had a successful school traffic safety program for many years and this document is intended to complement the community's existing efforts. This Action Plan has two main themes. The first is to provide an overview of Safe Routes to Schools initiatives that can serve as examples for urban schools in Rochester. The second theme is to provide a review of the existing conditions surrounding the Dr. Charles T. Lunsford Elementary School #19 and suggest potential 'next steps' projects and programs to improve the safety, health, and wellness of the school's students.

The goal of this action plan is to identify potential physical improvements and operational measures for the school site and its surrounding area, as well as prioritized follow-on activities to advance the recommendations. This action plan will help progress Safe Routes to School for School 19, but a key to ongoing success will be a dedicated and active Safe Routes to School team, inspired by a school champion. The champion may be a teacher, an administrator, a parent, and/or a community volunteer. In order for that team to succeed, this action plan should be implemented with community consensus, including the concurrence of the School Traffic Safety Committee, and reflect the team's available time, skills, interests, and priorities.

This action plan is available for use by the school team as a framework to guide successful next steps, both in the short and long term. Included with each recommended project or program in this document are suggestions about which school team members and partners can be involved in its implementation and the role each can play to help ensure its success.

1.2 Safe Routes to School Program Overview

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national program that creates safe, convenient and fun opportunities for children to walk and bicycle to and from their schools. With a goal to increase the health and safety of children, and improve environment quality; SRTS can accomplish this by making walking and bicycling safe ways to get to school and encourage more children to do so. To accomplish this goal a comprehensive program must be established to create an environment that enhances, supports, and sustains walking and cycling as viable options for travel. With this in mind, SRTS emphasizes a holistic approach to create change that encompasses the five (5) E approach; Engineering, Enforcement, Encouragement, Education and Evaluation.

- **Engineering:** physical improvements to the environment such as crosswalks, sidewalks and signals.

- **Education:** methods to teach children, parents and neighbors about the benefits of walking and cycling to school as well teaching appropriate walking, driving and cycling behaviors to support safe travel in the school zone.

- **Encouragement:** programs such as Walk to School Day, the Walking School Bus, contests and other initiatives to entice children, parents and others to walk or bicycle to school.

- **Enforcement:** incorporates law enforcement efforts to ensure drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians obey traffic laws and practice appropriate behaviors.

- **Evaluation:** uses measurements or indicators such as the number of children walking or bicycling to school to ascertain the success of any SRTS program.

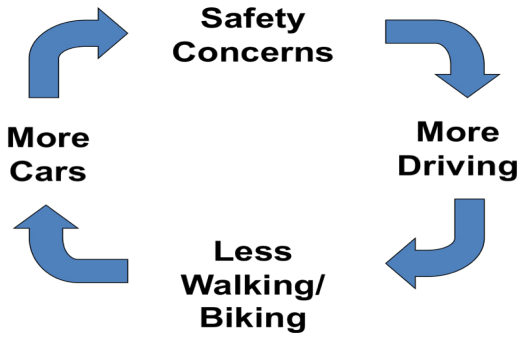
1.3 Why is Safe Routes to School Important?

Although most students in the United States walked or biked to school prior to the 1980's, the number of students walking or bicycling to school has sharply declined since then. Statistics show that 42 percent of all students between 5 and 18 years of age walked or bicycled to school in 1969 including 87 percent of those who lived within a mile of the school they attended. In 2001 fewer than 16 percent of students walked or bicycled any distance to get to school[1]. This decline is due to a number of factors, including urban growth patterns and school siting requirements that encourage school development in outlying areas, increased traffic, and parental concerns about safety. The situation is self-perpetuating: As more parents drive their children to school, there is increased traffic at the school site, resulting in more parents becoming concerned about traffic and driving their children to school.

According to a 2004 survey by the Center for Disease Control, parents whose children did not walk or bike to school cited the following barriers:

- Distance to school 61.5%
- Traffic-related danger 30.4%
- Weather: 18.6%
- Crime danger 11.7 %
- Opposing school policy 6.0%
- Other reasons (not identified) 15.0%

A comprehensive Safe Routes to School program addresses many of the reasons for reductions in walking and biking through a multi-faceted approach that uses education, encouragement, engineering and enforcement efforts to develop attitudes, behaviors and physical infrastructure that improve the walking and biking environment.



The downward spiral of walking and bicycling to school

1.4 Benefits of a Safe Routes to School Program

Safe Routes to School programs directly benefit schoolchildren, parents, and teachers by creating a safer travel environment near schools and reducing motor vehicle congestion at school drop-off and pick-up zones. Students that choose to walk or bike to school are rewarded with the health benefits of a more active lifestyle, responsibility and independence that comes from being in charge of the way they travel, and learn at an early age that walking and biking can be safe, enjoyable and good for the environment. Safe Routes to School programs offer additional benefits to neighborhoods by helping to slow traffic and provide infrastructure improvements that facilitate walking and biking for everyone. Identifying and improving routes for students to safely walk and bicycle to school is one of the

The entire family can benefit from Safe Routes to School

1 U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Barriers to Children Walking to or from School United States 2004, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report September 30, 2005. Available: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5438a2.htm. Accessed: December 28, 2007.

most cost-effective means of reducing weekday morning traffic congestion and can help reduce auto-related pollution.

In addition to safety and traffic improvements, a Safe Routes to School program helps integrate physical activity into the everyday routine of school children. Since the mid-1970s the number of children who are overweight has roughly tripled from five percent to almost 17 percent. Health concerns related to sedentary lifestyles have become the focus of statewide and national efforts to reduce health risks associated with being overweight. Children who walk or bike to school have an overall higher activity level than those who are driven to school, even though the journey to school makes only a small contribution to activity levels.[2]

II. Existing Conditions

2.1 Policies and Programs

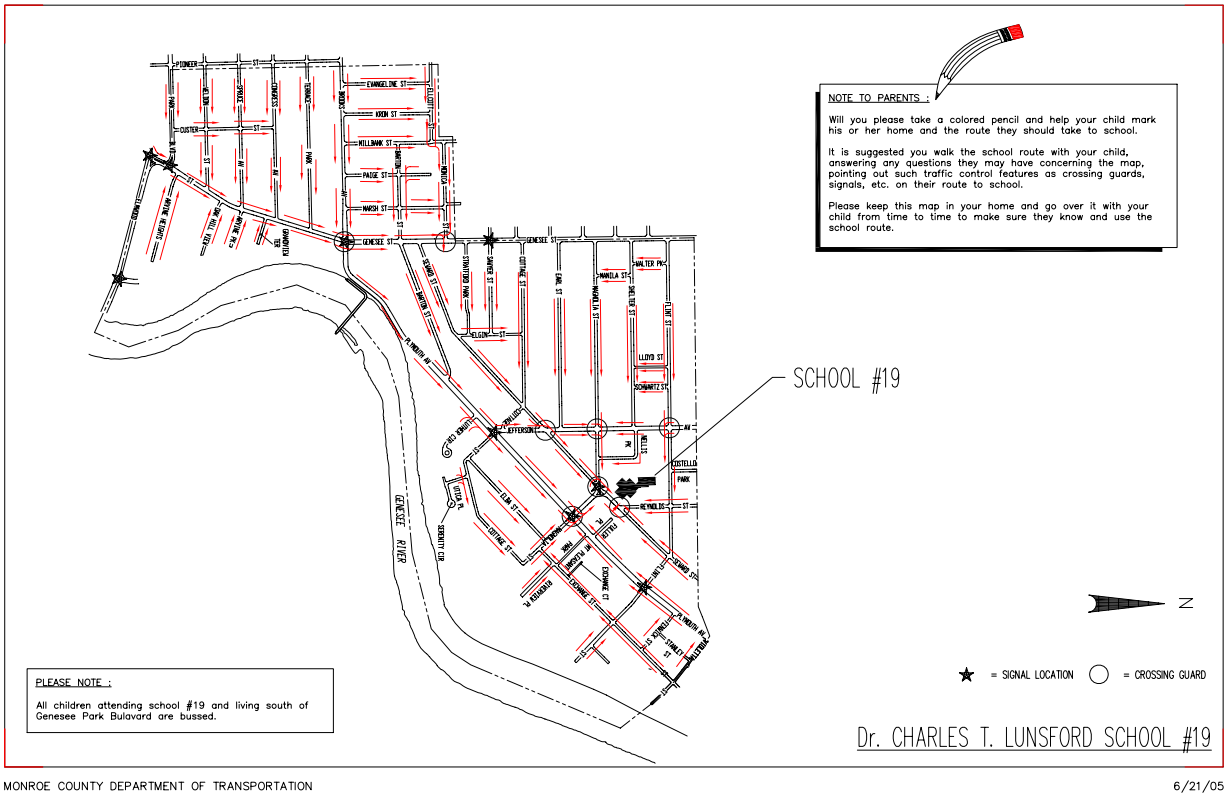
The Rochester City School District (RCSD) provides safe walking route maps for the elementary schools in the City. The maps are distributed to the schools in the fall of each year along with a cover letter outlining safe walking habits, safe driving by parents, and encouraging parent participation in the review of safe routes with their children. The letters are provided in both English and Spanish and the maps include the locations of all traffic signals, crossing guards and arrows depicting the recommended route to school. RCSD was one of the first schools in the country to promote such a Safe Routes to School program and has been publishing the maps since 1984.

K-12 students in the Rochester City School District living within a 1.5 mile radius of the school that they attend are not generally eligible to ride the school bus. However, approximately 5 years ago, RCSD implemented a school choice plan based on 3 zones within the city which allows parents to select any school within their respective zone to attend. If the school selected is further than 1.5 miles from the student's home, the student is then eligible to be bused to school, and this policy has had an effect on school transportation. Currently, 70% of the students attending School No. 19 are bussed to school, and it is estimated that prior to adoption of the policy, a greater percentage of the students walked to school. Existing efforts (including safe routes maps produced for each school and education in the classroom), could be expanded to provide additional education and encouragement efforts within the district to encourage more children to walk or bike to school.

There are approximately 320 students (capacity for 600+) attending School 19, pre-K through 6th grade. Currently 108 students are identified as walkers, which does not account for how many of the walkers are actually driven to school. Once all of the bussed students have been dismissed, the walking students are released. Parents are allowed to pick up at the bus recess area once all of the buses have departed. During a Safe Routes to School audit on October 21, 2008, four crossing guards were observed to be on duty on and near the school site to facilitate safe walking behaviors. However, off site, students and parents were also observed crossing other streets near the school where there are no crossing guards present, even though they could have crossed with a crossing guard had they followed the safe routes map. There are no bicycle racks available at the school and bicycling to school is not encouraged or promoted due to concerns of weather,

2 Cooper A, Page A, Foster L, Qahwaji D. Commuting to school: are children who walk more physically active? American Journal of Preventive Medicine. 2003 November;25(4):273-6. Cooper A, Andersen L, Wederkopp N, Page A, Frosberg K. Physical activity levels of children who walk, cycle, or are driven to school. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 2005 October; 29(3):179-184.

theft and traffic safety. It is important to note that no bicycle or pedestrian injuries or fatalities involving students have occurred in recent memory according to school district personnel.



The Rochester City School District provides a Safe Walking Route Map for each of the schools in the district. The image above is the map for School 19.

2.2 Arrivals and Departures

Parent Drop-offs / Pickups

There is no dedicated pick-up area and the available parking space surrounding the school is limited especially with the bus traffic. Parents often queue up on Seward and Reynolds Streets waiting until the buses have been dismissed. During the site visit many cars were parking on the far side of Seward, often in the crosswalk, until they were told to move by the crossing guard stationed at that corner.

Bus Arrivals / Departures

The bus riding students gather in the cafeteria at the time of dismissal waiting for their bus to be called. Given the limited space in front of the school, the buses line up on Seward Street until there is available space in front of school for them to park. At that time, a staff person radios to the cafeteria and the students for that bus are released. This procedure continues for about 15 minutes until all of the bussing children are on their respective buses.

Pedestrian & Bicycle Arrivals / Departures

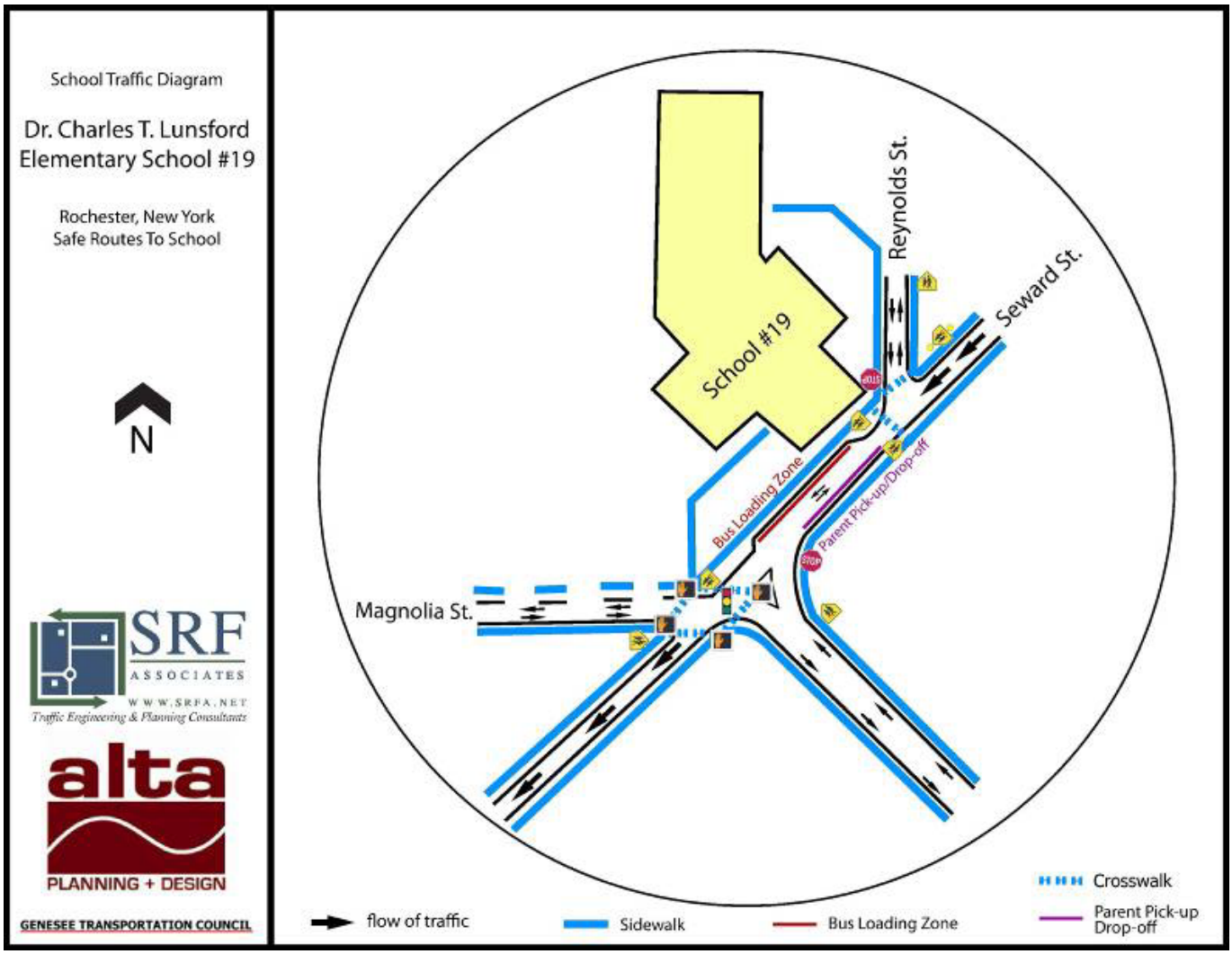
Once all of the bussed students have been dismissed, the walking students are released. The sidewalk infrastructure around the school is complete and there are four crossing guards stationed at key crossings around the school. Despite the presence of the crossing guards at these locations, students were also observed to be crossing the street at the unmarked, unguarded intersection of Jefferson and Shelter Streets where traffic controls such as stop signs do not exist and against the recommended walking route.

The maps on the following pages show the school area and existing conditions at School 19 as observed during the SRTS audit.

Note that crossing guard locations are described in the text of this document and are shown on the Safe Walking Route Maps provided by RCSD. The school traffic diagram depicts general conditions observed in the school zone, and is not indented as a comprehensive inventory of signage and pavement markings.

2.3 School Area Base Map

2.4 Existing Conditions Map



III. Recommendations
3.1 Physical Improvements

Engineering measures for Safe Routes to School include the design, construction and maintenance of physical infrastructure that can improve the safety and comfort of students that are walking and biking to school. This infrastructure includes signage, stenciling, and traffic control devices such as stop signs, bulb-outs, sidewalks, paths, bike lanes, and trails. When considering engineering measures, it is best to identify the problem first, and then use accepted engineering practices to develop an appropriate solution. Traffic engineering analysis reveals that unnecessary control measures tend to lessen the respect for those controls that are needed. Effective traffic control can best be obtained through the uniform application of realistic policies, practices, and guidelines developed through properly conducted engineering studies. A decision to use a specific device at a particular location should be made on the basis of an engineering and/or traffic study reviewed and approved by the School Traffic Safety Committee with the input of school staff and affected stakeholders. Of equal importance is the maintenance and monitoring of traffic control devices. Devices should be properly maintained to ensure legibility, visibility, and functionality. If a device is found to be ineffective or improperly functioning, the entity that maintains the device should be immediately notified. Finally, devices used on a part-time basis, such as warning flashers, should be in operation only during the time periods when they are required – when children are present; otherwise they risk being ignored by motorists who believe they are improperly functioning.

A speed radar sign is an effective way to ensure that motorists comply with speed limits.

Potential engineering strategies for within the school zone, for areas along the school route, at street crossings, and for use in slowing down traffic are below. Many of the strategies, such as on-street warning signs, are most effective if they are only used during school commute hours. Although some engineering solutions are higher-cost infrastructure improvements, many engineering tools can be implemented without large expenditures, such as posting signs, modifying signal timings, or striping crosswalks or bike lanes. The engineering strategies listed below may also be utilized at other schools within the RCSD, depending on local conditions.

This image shows a New York State MUTCD approved school speed limit sign, figure number 7B 100.

The following potential solutions for the Dr. Charles T. Lunsford Elementary School #19 should be considered by the school administration, should it choose to implement a Safe Routes to School Program. Note that some of the concepts will require additional engineering analysis and participation by partner agencies such as the Monroe County Department of Transportation, City of Rochester Engineering, and the Rochester City Police Department for their implementation. The map at the end of this section visually displays the recommendations and their respective locations. It is noted that the physical and operational improvements discussed within this and the following section are intended to describe potential improvements that should be considered by the school and interested stakeholders. Additional recommendations and the suggested prioritization for each improvement are included in the subsequent "Next Steps' chapter of this Action Plan.


School advance warning assembly from the MUTCD figure S1-1.

Signage and School Zone Recommendations

School Zone signage and pavement markings are one of the most cost effective infrastructure treatments to traffic calm the area and alert drivers to the presence of school children. East Main Street and Halls Corners Road should be posted with

high visibility school signs and pavement markings. The school zone speed limit should be set at 20 mph during the school hours and that limit should be utilized and set at the lowest appropriate speed as dictated by the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law and the New York State Supplement to the National Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Speed limits within the school zone will be enforced by the Police Department. Speed radar signs should also be considered to reinforce driver awareness of the reduced speed limit. Speed radar signs could be solar powered but would require a connection to the electric grid or battery backup for those occasions when the sunlight is not sufficient to power the device.

Simple engineering measures such as pedestrian refuges can improve real and perceived safety.

The School Zone

In New York, school zones can be designated on all roadways contiguous to a school serving K through 12th grade. A New York School Speed Limit assembly (see figure below) shall be used to indicate the speed limit where a reduced speed zone for a school area has been established (in accordance with law based upon an engineering study) or where a speed limit is specified for such areas by statute. The New York School Speed Limit assembly shall be placed at or as near as practical to the point where the reduced speed zone begins. In order for a school speed limit to be established, the school and the jurisdiction responsible for the highway must provide written documentation of their support for a school speed limit.

This photo of the intersection at Magnolia and Seward Streets shows opportunities for cost-effective improvements such as upgraded signage and pavement markings

As dictated by NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law, the numerical value of a school speed limit should be approximately 10 MPH below the normally prevailing 85th percentile speed on the highway, or at approximately the actual 85th percentile speed within the zone during school crossing periods. School speed limits shall not be set below 15 MPH and the maximum length of a school speed zone shall not be greater than 1320 feet (0.25 mile) on a highway passing a school building, entrance or exit of a school abutting on the highway. With School Zones signed and delineated, focused traffic enforcement can occur to target speeding and other moving violations.

School Area Signage

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) provides guidance on the use of school area signs and markings. The key signs should include the School Advance Warning Assembly, the School Crosswalk Warning Assembly, and the School Speed Limit Assembly. One way of increasing the visibility of school area signage is through the use of Florescent Yellow-Green signs.

Pavement Markings

Pavement markings have important functions in school area traffic control. In some cases, they are used to supplement the regulations or warnings provided by devices such as traffic signs or signals. In other instances, they are used alone and produce results that cannot be obtained by the use of any other device, and can serve as an effective means of conveying certain regulations, guidance, and warnings that could not otherwise be made clearly understandable. Pavement markings have limitations – they might not

be clearly visible when wet or covered in snow, and might not be durable when subjected to heavy traffic. The "SLOW SCHOOL XING" marking, used in advance of uncontrolled crosswalks, is an important school-specific pavement marking. The MUTCD also provides guidance on the use of stop lines, yield lines, curb markings, and other symbol markings.

Sidewalks and Paths

The sidewalk infrastructure around School 19 is well developed and largely complete. While there are areas where the sidewalk needs minor repairs (including providing ADA compliant curb ramps), there are no significant gaps in the network. Given the urban nature of the school setting, there are limited opportunities for path development, which means the focus of the action plan infrastructure elements should be on improving the safety of the existing facilities. The streetscapes near the school could also be enhanced with additional street trees, which provide both shade and a traffic calming effect.

The intersection of Flint and Reynolds Streets is an example of a location where ADA compliant curb ramps are needed.

Crossings

School crosswalks denote the preferred location for children to cross the street. Crosswalks should be marked at all intersections on established routes to school where there is substantial conflict between motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrian movements, at uncontrolled designated school crossings where students are encouraged to cross between intersections, or where students would not otherwise recognize the proper place to cross. The SLOW SCHOOL XING marking can be used in advance of uncontrolled school crosswalks. Various striping patterns can be used although the standard crosswalk consists of two parallel lines, called the "transverse" pattern. High visibility markings should be considered for all high-volume crossings near schools, and where conditions demonstrate a need for an increased visibility marking (e.g., a mid-block location). MCDOT recommends using the "piano key" or 'continental' crossing pattern for the best visibility and ease of maintenance; the first priority should be the crossings directly in front of or adjacent to the school where there is high daily pedestrian traffic.

In-Street Yield-to-Pedestrian Signs

In-Street Yield-to-Pedestrian Signs are flexible signs placed in the roadway to enhance a crosswalk at uncontrolled crossing locations. These signs communicate the message 'State Law: Yield to Pedestrians.' At school crosswalks, these signs can be installed on a portable base and brought out in the morning and back in at the end of each day by school staff, which may reduce the chance that the sign will become "invisible" to motorists by being left out all the time. In order to reduce a potential 'false sense of security' for children, the signs could be limited to guarded crossings without signal controls. Maintenance can be an issue as the signs may be run over by vehicles and need to be replaced occasionally. Installing the signs in a raised median can help extend their lifetime. If School 19 decides to employ the use of the Yield-to Pedestrian signs, it would be necessary to acquire approval from MCDOT and a City of Rochester street permit.

Advance Stop and Yield Lines

Stop lines consist of solid white lines extending across approach lanes to indicate the point at which the stop is intended or required to be made, in compliance with a STOP sign or traffic signal. The MUTCD requires stop lines be placed a minimum of four feet in advance of the crosswalk line at controlled intersections. At uncontrolled crosswalk

locations in New York, "yield" lines may be used instead of stop lines (New York State law requires motorists to yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk). The yield lines consist of a row of solid white isosceles triangles pointing toward approaching vehicles, and are often referred to as "shark's teeth."

Traffic Pattern Modifications

One- way street conversions and separation of bus and parent drop off zones can enhance pedestrian safety in the school zone. The traffic pattern and limited space in front of the school poses a number of challenges for both the walking and motoring public. The intersection of Magnolia and Seward Streets creates a complicated gateway to the school and may limit visibility of the pedestrians in the area. A recommendation was previously made to convert Seward Street to 1-way travel southwesterly traffic between Magnolia and Reynolds Streets

Curb Extensions

Curb extensions (sometimes called curb bulbs or bulb-outs) have many benefits for pedestrians. They shorten the street crossing distance, provide additional space at corners, allow pedestrians to see and be seen before entering the crosswalk, and simplify the placement of elements like curb ramps. Curb extensions may be used at any corner or mid-block location where a parking lane can absorb the extension of the curb. Curb extensions are often effective at locations with crossing distances wider than 36 feet; locations adjacent to high-intensity pick-up/drop-off activity; or at locations with sight distance or visibility issues. Curb extensions have the potential to conflict with bicycle travel if not designed properly. Curb extensions should not extend into a bike lane, and should generally align with the edge of the parking lane. Curb extensions must be designed to accommodate drainage or trash accumulation, and may be costly to install due to utility and drainage relocation. While one of their main advantages is reducing vehicle turning speeds, they can have an impact on snow removal and the turning ability of trucks and other large vehicles.

The existing curb extension at Seward and Magnolia Streets helps define the bus loading area in front of the School.

Lighting

Safe sidewalks are a primary component of good pedestrian environments, and well-lit environments convey a feeling of comfort and safety, particularly at night. Lighting should be scaled for pedestrians, located in the furnishings and/or frontage zones of the sidewalk, and provided at roadway crossings to increase pedestrian visibility

Crossing Guards

Adult crossing guards are used to help create gaps in traffic at uncontrolled intersections, and to "platoon" children across the street at controlled intersections. The presence of a crossing guard in the roadway serves as an easily recognized indication to drivers that pedestrians are about to use the crosswalk and that all traffic must stop. When all traffic has stopped, the adult guard can allow the children to cross. School 19 currently utilizes four crossing guards provided by RPD at crossings on Seward, Magnolia and Jefferson Streets. While crossing guards are provided nearby, students were also observed to cross at the unmarked, unguarded intersection of Jefferson and Shelter Streets. Since it would be cost prohibitive to provide crossing guards at every location, parents and children should be encouraged to follow the designated routes, use

the existing locations which are served by crossing guards when available, and should be informed on how to cross safely at unguarded crossings as part of the school's SRTS program. The RPD should continue to post crossing guards and to ensure that they are trained consistently with the guidance provided in Section 7E of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

Bicycle Parking

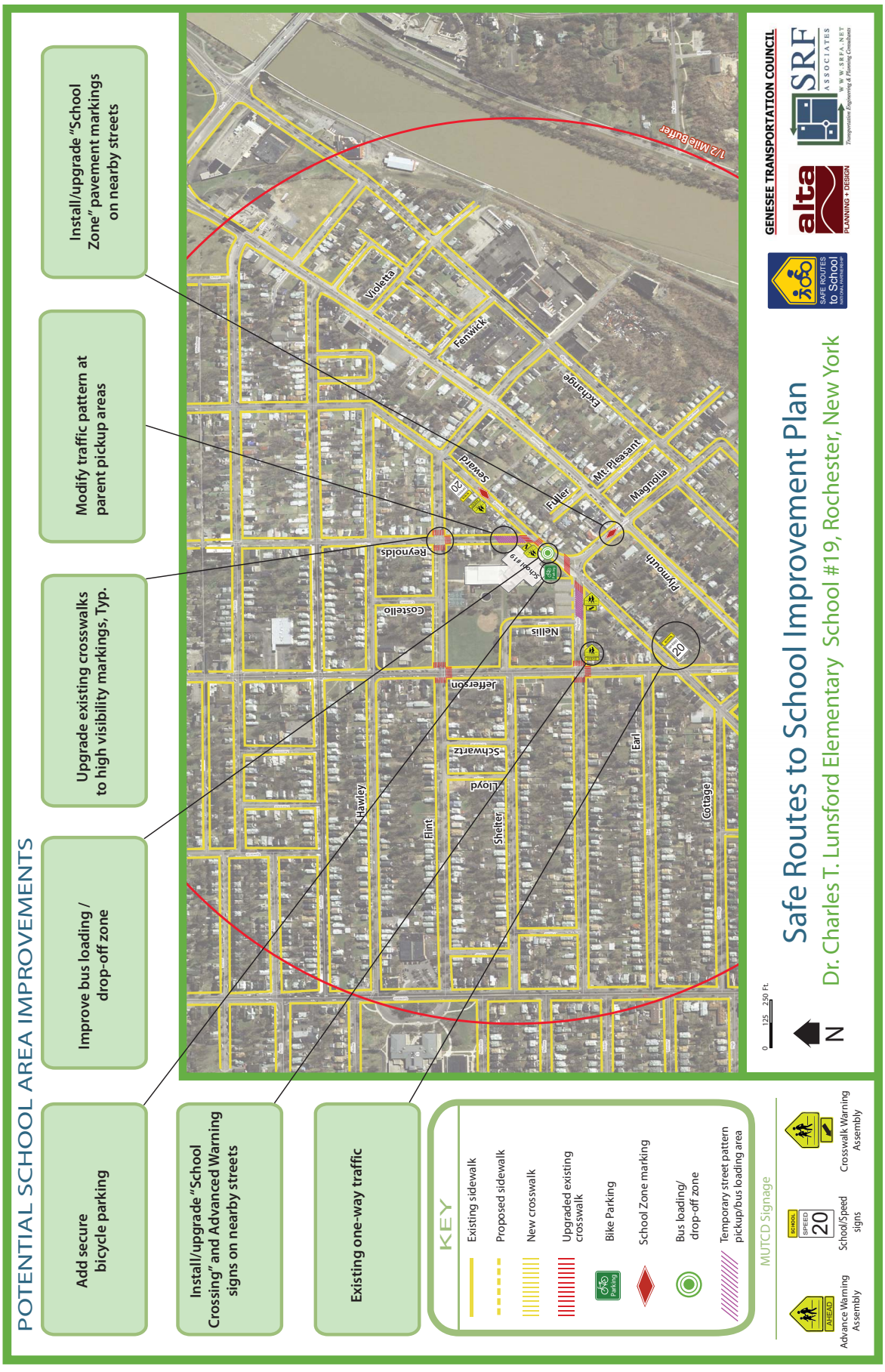
School 19 does not currently provide bike parking on the school grounds and this can be changed as part of the Action Plan. Providing secure and convenient bicycle parking is one way to help encourage more children, faculty, staff and visitors to bicycle to school. Attributes of good bike parking include:

- Protection from vandalism/theft
- Protection from damage to the bicycle
- Protection from weather
- Convenient to destination

A sufficient amount of parking must be made available so that bicycles are not crowded. Secure parking in either a fenced-in or high visibility location could be provided. If possible, a covered shelter should be provided to protect the bicycles during inclement weather. The preferred bike rack design should keep the bike upright by supporting the frame, allow the bike to be locked by the frame, and allow one or both wheels to be secured.

These photos show examples of preferred bike rack designs that support a bicycle in an upright position without placing additional strain on the wheels.

3.2 School Improvement Plan Map



3.3 Operational Measures

Operational measures for Safe Routes to School include the non-infrastructure programs and initiatives that can improve the experience of students walking and biking to school. These measures can support engineering efforts with a balanced approach that includes education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation efforts to provide a safe community environment where walking and bicycling are supported as positive activities.

Education and Encouragement

Education and encouragement efforts are operational measures that the school can consider to enhance the effectiveness of the physical improvements recommended in section 3.1. These tools focus on teaching traffic, pedestrian and bicycle safety to parents and students, increasing public awareness of Safe Routes to School goals and benefits, and promoting changes in behavior to increase walking and bicycling. Encouragement activities include a variety of special events and contests, outreach campaigns, presentations to school and community groups, and surveys of current practices and attitudes related to the school commute. A major objective of educational and encouragement tools is to increase the understanding by parents, school personnel, students, and the community of the health and safety concerns that can be addressed by successful Safe Routes to School programs.

According to statistics reported by the school, approximately 30 percent of the students at School #19 are considered to be walkers, but some of those students may be driven to school by their parents or other caregivers on at least some occasions. The school choice zone program provides additional school options to families in the school district. However, providing these options may also have the unintended consequence of increasing transportation costs for the school district. If more children were able to safely walk and/or bicycle to school, students would benefit from improved health and activity levels and the RCSD might benefit from reduced transportation costs.

Additionally, there are many initiatives and resources specific to New York State that can be taken advantage of to encourage more students to walk and bike to school. The New York Network of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership promotes and provides in-kind resources for Walk and Bicycle to School Day events, the Poster Art Contest, the Writing Contest and the Walking School Bus Program. On the local level, the Monroe County Office of Traffic Safety offers a number of resources including traffic safety education and a bike helmet contest for grades K-6. A safe routes to school task force should be established as part of this action plan and Walk to School Day and other education and encouragement programs can be utilized to increase the percentage of children walking and biking to school. The following section of the plan offers a number of programs and resources which can help to attain this goal.

Walk and Bicycle to School Day

This annual international event occurs on the first Wednesday of October and School 19 can register for the event at www.walktoschool.org. The web site provides resources and ideas on how to implement a successful Walk and Bike to School Day. The New York Network of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership can provide retro-reflective zipper pulls and other prizes for all of the student participants and the Monroe County Office of Traffic Safety can support the event and offer traffic safety education. Additional walk and bike to school days can be held yearly, monthly, or even weekly, depending on the level of support and participation from children, parents, and school and local officials. Some schools organize more frequent days – such as weekly Walking/ Wheeling Wednesdays or Walk and Roll Fridays – to give people an opportunity to enjoy

the event on a regular basis. Parents and other volunteers accompany the children, and often there are designated staging areas along the route to school where different groups can gather and walk or bike together. The events should be promoted through press releases, articles in school newsletters, and posters and flyers for children to take home.

Writing and Poster Contests

As part of the International Walk and Bicycle to School Day, School 19 students should be encouraged to participate in the annual writing contest, "Why the principal should walk to school with me" and poster contest, "Walking to School Safely". These contests are both fun, project-based learning encouragement/ educational programs for schools to participate in. All winners receive a certificate of achievement and a prize package for their entire class, which includes pedometers and t-shirts. Details on these contests can be downloaded: http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/state/4373/newyork

Walking School Bus

The Walking School Bus is another encouragement program the Safe Routes to School Partnership is spearheading in New York State as a way to sustain long term initiatives that will make walking to school safe. A walking school bus is a group of children walking to school accompanied by one or more adults. The Partnership offers trainings on how to organize a Walking School Bus and interested members of the Safe Routes to School Task Force should be recruited to host a training and mobilize the resources to start such a program. Additional information on the Walking School Bus is available from:

- RideWise TMA - www.ridewise.org/walksafely.shtml
- Pedestrian Bicycle Information Center/Partnership for a Walkable America - www.walkingschoolbus.org
- Active and Safe Routes to School – California - www.saferoutestoschool.ca
- Go for Green – California - www.goforgreen.ca

Suggested Route to School Maps

Suggested Route to School maps are one of the most cost-effective and tangible means available for encouraging school children to walk or bike to school. The purpose of the maps is to provide school officials, parents, and students with a tool to help plan the best walking and bicycling routes to and from school. The Rochester School District was one of the first in the country to provide route to school maps and the effort should continue. The maps are reviewed by the School Traffic Safety Committee on an annual basis to insure that the information is up-to-date and the safest routes are being provided.

Bicycle Rodeos

A bicycle rodeo provides children with a basic understanding of the rules of the road, educates those children and their parents about elementary bike safety, gives trained personnel a chance to look over the equipment the kids are riding, and involves parents, teachers, and/or local civic organizations in a worthwhile activity. A bicycle rodeo involves "stations" that teach skills, such as:

- Looking over a shoulder without weaving
- Fast-braking without skidding
- Dealing with traffic at intersections

The Monroe County Office of Traffic Safety has the resources to provide bicycle rodeos and while these events can be challenging to organize in active urban environments, School #19 should consider sponsoring a bike rodeo as part of International Walk and Bike to School Day or other event(s) as a near term goal in the next 1-3 years. More information on bicycle rodeos is available through:

- Bicycling Life at www.bicyclinglife.com/SafetySkills/BicycleRodeo.htm
- Guide to Bicycle Rodeos (Adventure Cycling Association) at 1-800-721-8719

Other Education and Encouragement Programs

Once School 19 has established a Safe Routes to School Task Force and has successfully hosted a Walk to School Day event, other education and encouragement programs should be initiated to provide students with incentives to walk and bike to school. A 'Golden Sneaker Award' can be given to the student or classroom that accumulates the most miles or most trips to school. Each participating class can also track the distance the students have traveled and plot it on a map. Then they can "travel" to a destination chosen by the class within those miles – such as a "Walk and Bike Across The Erie Canal" program where students track the miles they walk on a map of New York State. This program can help students become aware that they can travel great distances on foot or bike. Each new destination can be reached by the class to find out more about other parts of the country. At the end of a designated time, the class that traveled the farthest gets a special reward. For more information, see www.saferoutestoschools.org/events.html

Other educational lessons can be brought in to health, science, physical education and other class lesson plans. Resources for these programs include:

- The New York State Department of Transportation at https://www.nysdot.gov/divisions/operating/opdm/local-programs-bureau/srts/srts-curriculum
- The National Safe Kids Campaign, www.safekids.org/members/unitedStates.html

Enforcement Efforts

Enforcement efforts are operational measures that can be implemented by the local law enforcement community. These efforts support both the physical and programmatic measures included in the prior sections and play a key role in creating a safe walking and bicycling experience in the school zone. Since these programs will be carried out by the Rochester Police Department (RPD), it would be helpful to have a member of the RPD on the Safe Routes to School Task Force. The School District should continue to work with RPD and could request their help with programs such as Pedestrian Sting Operations and enforcement of the school speed limit.

More information is available from the following websites:

- School Zone Safety: www.activelivingresources.org/safe_school_zones.html
- Pedestrian Sting Operations: www.walkinginfo.org/ee/sting.htm
- Speed Trailers: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/research/pub/HS809012.html
- "Keep Kids Alive – Drive 25" Campaign: www.keepkidsalivedrive25.org

IV. Next Steps

4.1 Recommendations

This part of the Dr. Charles T. Lunsford Elementary School 19 Safe Routes to School Action Plan outlines a series of recommendations and next steps. These recommendations represent a balanced approach which covers both physical improvements as well as operational measures. The recommendations presented here are meant to be flexible in implementation and the decision to undertake a project or program should be made based on the available resources of the school team, the RCSD, the City of Rochester, Monroe County, the Genesee Transportation Council and other interested agencies.

1. SRTS Facilitator & Safety Education. Identify a staff member or volunteer to lead the Safe Routes to School Program for the school and work cooperatively with the Monroe County Office of Traffic Safety's SRTS program coordinator.

2. Safe Routes to School Task Force & Program Promotion. Develop a school-based task force to maintain communications between stakeholders at the school and the STSC as existing and proposed SRTS efforts are advanced.

3. International Walk and Bike to School Day Event. Participate in International Walk to School Day, which is held annually on the first Wednesday in October.

4. School Zone Signage Upgrade. The County SRTS program is currently coordinating replacement of existing school zone signs, and the school can enhance this effort by coordinating the installation of new signage with safety education efforts.

5. Pedestrian Crossing Improvements. Upgrade key pedestrian crossings within the vicinity of the school including the Seward Street crossing immediately in front of the school, the intersection of Seward and Magnolia Streets, and the intersections of Jefferson Avenue with Flint Street and Seward Street.

6. Radar Equipped Speed Signs. The School Traffic Safety Committee can coordinate with the existing County SRTS program to provide radar equipped speed trailers if speeding issues are identified in the school zone.

7. Law Enforcement Efforts. Coordinate with RPD and seek their assistance in increasing police presence during the school commute period.

8. Bike Parking. Provide secure bicycle parking for students, staff, faculty and visitors who choose to bike to school.

9. Safe Routes to School Encouragement. Develop award and promotional programs to encourage continued support of the safe walking and bicycling.

10. Traffic Flow / Streetscape Improvements. Convert Seward Street to 1-way southwesterly traffic between Magnolia and Reynolds Streets. This operational change would simplify the school zone traffic pattern. The parent pick-up and drop-off zone could also be relocated to Nellis, Reynolds and/or Magnolia Streets to eliminate the conflict between parent vehicles and buses and improve the flow of traffic in front of the school.

Implementing these recommendations will require a collaborative effort. To successfully implement a Safe Routes to Schools program, the school-based Safe Routes to School Task Force and the school administration will need to coordinate with multiple agencies, seek input from the community and ensure that stakeholders and potential partners are part of the process. The map on the following page visually displays the potential improvements and their relative locations, and the next section of the document provides a more detailed action plan for the identified recommendations.

4.2 Action Plan

To assist in the implementation of the recommendations initiatives, additional information is provided in the tables below for each item, including the groups that should be involved and an approximate cost range for the project. Generally, costs for each next step are categorized as follows:

$	= Minimal to $500	Volunteer effort and low funding required
$$	= $500 to $10,000	Moderate amounts of funding required
$$$	= $10,000 +	High amounts of funding required

Priority Recommendation #1	**Identification of SRTS Facilitator & Initiation of Basic Bicycling and Walking Safety Education**
Cost	$
Groups	School Administration, Local Advisory Committee, and the Monroe County Office of Traffic Safety
Description	The school should identify a staff member or volunteer (possibly an interested parent) to initiate an expanded Safe Routes to School Program for the school. The facilitator should continue to work cooperatively with the Monroe County Office of Traffic Safety's SRTS program coordinator. A recommended first step would be to provide a presentation on SRTS education for students, with specific attention on safe walking and bicycling skills. Ideally, this introductory session should include a representative from law enforcement (RPD) as well.

Priority Recommendation #2	**Formation of Safe Routes to School Task Force & Program Promotion**
Cost	$
Groups	Safe Routes to School Facilitator and School Administration
Description	A facilitator can reach out to interested persons to form a SRTS task force for the school. The task force should include members of the local advisory committee, parents, teachers, school administration, students and the local community. The task force should review the existing RCSD Wellness Policy and identify areas within the policy that would be supported by a SRTS program. The school based task force could help to maintain and improve communications between stakeholders at the school and the STSC as existing and proposed SRTS efforts are advanced.

Priority Recommendation #3	International Walk and Bike to School Day Event
Cost	$-$$
Groups	School #19 SRTS Task force, School Administration, PTA, and the Monroe County Office of Traffic Safety
Description	International Walk to School Day is held annually on the first Wednesday in October. This event can serve as a kick-off event to generate awareness and enthusiasm for a Safe Routes to School program. Events may include a special Walking School Bus lead by local politicians or school administrators, school assembly, and contest. Schools may find additional information and register for the event at www.walktoschool.org. Events such as these tend to attract increased attention and excitement that can be tapped to attract volunteers to maintain efforts year-round. The task force should work with the Monroe County Office of Traffic Safety to expand the education and encouragement programs that were initiated in Recommendation # 1.

Priority Recommendation #4	School Zone Signage Upgrade
Cost	$$
Groups	Safe Routes to School Task force and School Administration
Description	The school, through the SRTS Task force, should perform a preliminary review of existing signs for conformity with the National and State Manuals of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and identify additional signs, if any, that should be provided to most effectively improve and protect the safety of the students that currently walk or could walk and/or bicycle to school.

Priority Recommendation #5	Pedestrian Crossing Improvements
Cost	$$ Depending on location
Groups	School Traffic Safety Committee, School #19 SRTS Task force, School Administration, Monroe County DOT
Description	The School #19 SRTS Task force, with cooperation from the School Traffic Safety Committee, should identify resources that can be used to upgrade key pedestrian crossings within the immediate vicinity of the school including the Seward Street crossing immediately in front of the school, the intersection of Seward and Magnolia Streets, and the intersections of Jefferson Avenue with Flint Street and Seward Street. The school should also contact the Monroe County DOT and the City of Rochester Engineer in regards to the potential use of In-Street Pedestrian Crossing Signs at strategic locations such as the Seward Street crossing in front of the school.

Priority Recommendation #6	Radar Equipped Speed Signs
Cost	$$
Groups	School Traffic Safety Committee, School #19 SRTS Taskforce, Monroe County DOT, Rochester City Police Department
Description	Radar Equipped Speed Signs with bright LED displays placed on Seward and Magnolia Streets could improve safety in the school zone if a speed study identifies speeding as an issue of concern. If a study confirms the sign are needed, the School Traffic Safety Committee should coordinate with the existing County SRTS program to provide radar equipped speed trailers at these locations.

Priority Recommendation #7	Law Enforcement Efforts
Cost	$-$$$
Groups	Rochester Police Department, School Administration, School #19 SRTS Task force
Description	An improvement in driver behavior is typically shown if a police vehicle is present. The school should reach out to RPD and seek their assistance in increasing police presence during the school commute period. The school should also ensure that its crossing guards are following the best and safest practices as discussed in section 3.1, Crossing Guards.

Priority Recommendation #8	Install Bike Parking at the School
Cost	$
Groups	School #19 SRTS Taskforce and School Administration
Description	The lack of safe, available parking at the school is a major hindrance to any students, faculty, staff and visitors who would like to ride to school. The school should install bicycle parking in suitable location(s), after the completion of the safety education program suggested in # 1 and with a clearly established policy that students must wear bicycle helmets. This could be linked with participation in the MCOTS helmet coloring contest and other local resources to provide helmets for students that need them.

Priority Recommendation #9	**On-going Safe Routes to School Encouragement**
Cost	$
Groups	School #19 SRTS Task force and School Administration
Description	The school should continue to encourage safe bicycling and walking, implementing contests such as the 'Golden Sneaker' Award and weekly biking and walking days. The Task force should include Safe Routes to School information in the school newsletter. Possible features include: • Explanation of the Safe Routes to School Program and goals of the program • Facts about walking, biking, physical activity, traffic safety, etc. • Upcoming Safe Routes to School events • Announcement of contest winners

Priority Recommendation #10	**Traffic Flow / Streetscape Improvements**
Cost	$ - $$$
Groups	School #19 SRTS Taskforce, Monroe County, City of Rochester
Description	The City, County and School should coordinate efforts to improve the bus loading / parent drop off zone, including: • Potential southwesterly 1-way traffic on Seward Street • 'School Zone' markings on approaches to the school • Streetscape improvements including lighting, street trees, and ADA compliant curb ramps

A summary table of these actions is provided on the following page. It is important to recognize that Rochester has a successful, long-term effort to improve School Traffic Safety. This report is intended to help build upon those efforts and encourage new approaches to improve safety, health, physical activity and quality of life for the school and its surrounding neighborhood. School #19 has the potential to capitalize on a variety of initiatives proposed in this document, and will hopefully serve as a model for the Rochester community.

Safe Routes to School Action Plan
Dr. Charles T. Lunsford Elementary School #19
Summary of Priority Recommendations

Priority	Recommendation	Cost	Groups	Status
1	Identify SRTS facilitator/ Initiate basic SRTS	$	School Admin., SRTS facilitator, MCOTS	Recommendation
2	Formation of SRTS task force	$	School Admin., SRTS facilitator	Recommendation
3	International Walk to School Day	$-$$	School Admin., SRTS task force, PTA, MCOTS	Recommendation
4	School Zone Signage Upgrade/ SRTS Program Coordination	$-$$	School Admin., SRTS task force, STSC, MCDOT	Underway by MCDOT (County SRTS Program)
5	Pedestrian Crossing Improvements	$$	School Admin., SRTS task force, STSC, MCDOT, COR	Recommendation
6	Radar Equipped Speed Signs	$	School Admin., SRTS task force, STSC, MCDOT, RPD	Underway by MCDOT (County SRTS Program)
7	Enforcement	$-$$	School Admin., SRTS task force, STSC, RPD	Ongoing, Recommendation
8	Install Bike Parking at School	$$	School Admin., SRTS task force, STSC, COR	Recommendation for 1-3 year time frame
9	Ongoing SRTS Encouragement	$	School Admin., SRTS task force, MCOTS	Recommendation
10	Traffic Flow/Streetscape Improvements	$$-$$$	School Admin, SRTS task force, MCOTS, MCDOT	Recommended for consideration

Cost Key:

$ = Minimal to $500

$$ = $500 to $10,000

$$$ = $10,000 +

Groups Key:

MCOTS = Monroe County Office of Traffic Safety

MCDOT = Monroe County Department of Transportation

STSC = School Traffic Safety Committee

RPD = City of Rochester Police Department

COR = City of Rochester

RPD = City of Rochester Police Dept.

V. Appendix

Resources & References:

• Active Living Resource Center www.activelivingresources.org

• American Automobile Association, "Adult School Crossing Guards."
www.aaafoundation.org/products/index.cfm?button=item-detail&ID=404&storeid=1

• CDC, Kids Walk to School (community presentation)
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/index.htm

• "Civilian Guards for School Crossings." Center for Public Safety of Northwestern University, 405 Church Street, Evanston, IL 60204.

• FHWA's Office of Safety – SRTS
http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes

• Marin County (CA) Safe Routes to School
www.saferoutestoschool.org

• Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices
www.mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2003/pdf-index.htm

• National Center for Bicycling & Walking
www.bikewalk.org/safe_routes_to_school/SRTS_introduction.htm

• New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC)
www.nysgtsc.state.ny.us/

• New York State Supplement to the National Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
www.nysdot.gov/divisions/operating/oom/transportation-systems/repository/4A4B9D271F500EE0430A3DFC03500E

• New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law
http://www.nysgtsc.state.ny.us/vt-ndx.htm

• NHTSA Safe Routes to School Tool Kit
www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/Safe-Routes-2002/toc.html

• Pedestrian & Bicycle Information Center
www.saferoutesinfo.org

• Safe Routes to School National Partnership
www.saferoutespartnership.org