

Randolph-Hamline (“Ran-Ham”) Area Safe Routes to School Plan

*Cretin Derham Hall
Expo Elementary
Holy Spirit Elementary
Randolph Heights Elementary*

**Saint Paul, Minnesota
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Project Background

After a student was hit by a car walking home from school in November 2015, four local schools, the City of Saint Paul, the Saint Paul Police Department, two district councils, and Saint Paul Public Schools convened a working group to make it easier for students to walk or bike to school in the Randolph-Hamline (“RanHam”) Neighborhood. As part of this effort, a comprehensive Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plan has been developed for the four schools; Cretin-Derham Hall (CDH), Expo Elementary, Holy Spirit Elementary and Randolph Heights Elementary. The Plan seeks to increase safe walking and biking to school though:

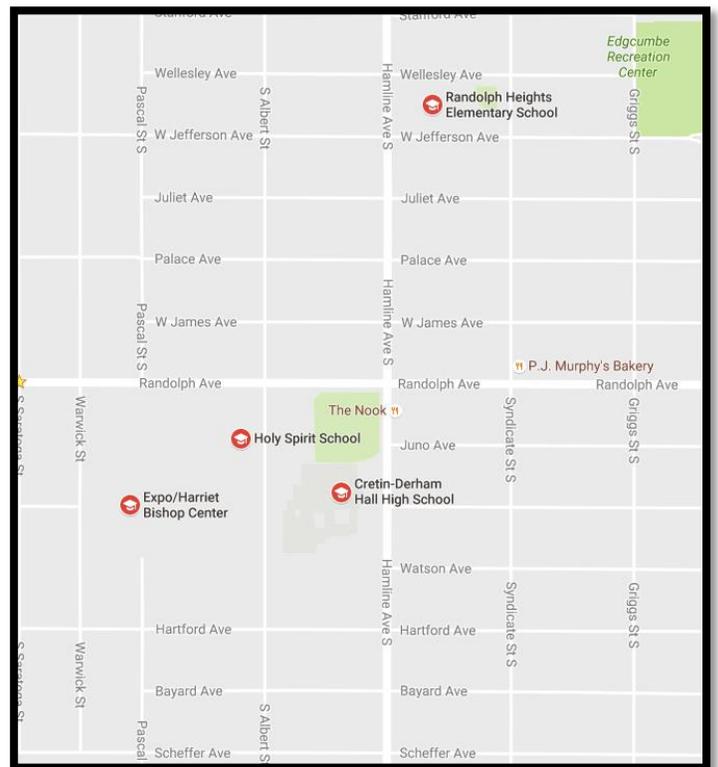
- **Education** – Teaching children to walk and bike safely.
- **Encouragement** – Developing programs that get children excited about walking or biking to school, such as walk/bike incentive programs or Walk to School Days. May also include methods that help parents and guardians feel comfortable letting their child walk or bike, such as walking to school buses or adult crossing guards.
- **Enforcement** – Having law enforcement support, such as speed zone enforcement or increased patrols, along the designated routes to school.
- **Engineering** – Identifying infrastructure barriers to walking and biking, such as sidewalk gaps, hazardous crossings, or the need for secure bicycle parking.
- **Evaluation** – Measuring the effectiveness of the various components of the SRTS project.

The following sections describe the development of the Safe Routes to School Plan for the four schools in the Randolph-Hamline neighborhood.

Existing Conditions

The area bounded by Randolph Avenue, Hartford Avenue, Hamline Avenue and Warwick Street used to house a Catholic school campus. In 1928, Cretin High School, an all-boys school, moved in at the corner of Hamline and Randolph Avenues. In September of 1937, Holy Spirit - a combined lower school and church - was established at the corner of Randolph and Albert. In 1962, Derham Hall High School, an all-girls school, moved in on Warwick Avenue, just west of Cretin High. In 1986, the two schools officially merged and in 1987 females began attending Cretin-Derham Hall (CDH) at Randolph and Hamline. Currently, Expo Elementary, a public school, resides in the old Derham Hall, and Holy Spirit and CDH have expanded their footprint and enrollment.

Randolph Heights Elementary is located at the intersection of Randolph and Jefferson, roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile north of the other three schools.



All four schools are surrounded primarily by single-family residential properties, with a few light commercial corridors on Randolph, Hamline and Snelling Avenues.

Student Data

Holy Spirit and Cretin Derham Hall

Holy Spirit serves students pre-kindergarten through 8th grade. Cretin Derham Hall serves students 9th through 12th grade. Because Holy Spirit and CDH are private schools, they draw their attendance from across the Twin Cities. Because neither school provides busing, there is a high number of parent drop-offs and at Cretin Derham Hall, a high number of student drivers. Each school estimates they see about 200 parent drop-offs per day along Albert Avenue between Randolph Avenue and Hartford Avenue.

Expo Elementary and Randolph Heights

Both Expo Elementary and Randolph Heights serve students kindergarten through 5th grade. Their walk areas are half a mile, meaning that students that reside further than half a mile from the school are eligible for busing. Expo, which has twelve buses, still estimates 125 parent drop-offs per day. Randolph Heights estimates about 100.

See table below showing student enrollment and school hours.

School	Randolph Heights	Expo	Holy Spirit	CDH
Enrollment (2015-2016)	475	710	300	1215
Start Time	9:30AM	8:30AM	8:00AM	7:50AM
End Time	4:00PM	3:00PM	3:00PM	3:00PM

Safe Routes to School Activities

In November, 2015, an Expo Elementary student was hit by a car while walking home from school, and fortunately she was not injured. The outcome of the accident inspired parents at Expo to start a Safe Routes to School program. Since Expo is so close to CDH, Holy Spirit and Randolph Heights, the parents reached out to their City Councilmember, Chris Tolbert, and their local district councils, Mac-Groveland Community Council and Highland District Council, to help coordinate the program.

In January 2016 the Highland District Council’s Transportation Committee facilitated the first stakeholder meeting. Prior to that meeting, a parent survey had been sent out to all four schools to identify barriers to walking and/or biking, with 239 families responding, representing 532 students. The responses were fairly even between the four schools. The majority of respondents (68%) lived less than one mile from their school.

Of those surveyed, 34% of students walked to school (with 42% walking home), 3% of students biked, 16% take the bus (Expo and Randolph Heights only) and the rest drive or are driven. For the majority of respondents, they reported getting to or from school in less than 10 minutes.

School	Total Students Represented in Response
Randolph Heights	118
Expo	124
Holy Spirit	168
Cretin Derham Hall	122

Parents factored their student’s age into the decision on walking or biking alone. Only 20% said they would allow their Pre-K through third grader to walk to school alone, while 80% said they would allow a child older than 4-6th grade to make the trip alone.

Other than age, four main deciding factors in parents’ decision to allow walking/biking were:

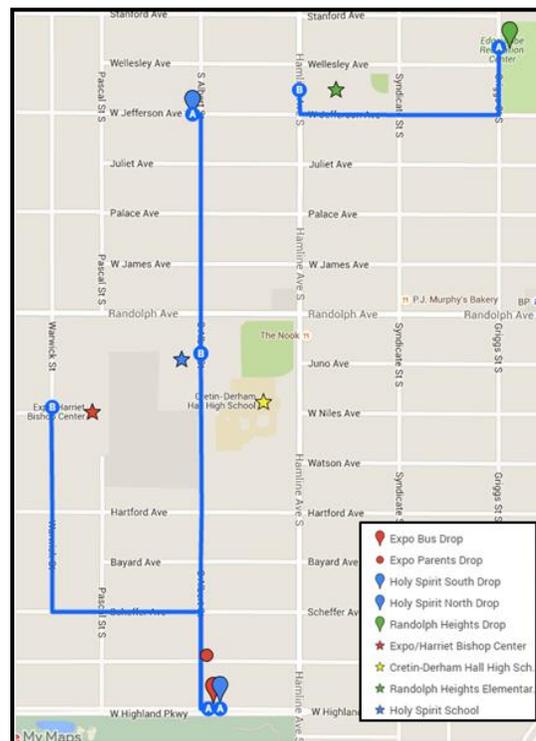
- Speed and amount of traffic along route
- Sidewalks or pathways
- Safety of intersections and crossings
- Crossing guards/school patrols

Using the survey data, the working group focused on four topics:

1. Create an on-going working group to discuss and improve these issues.
2. Each individual school work to evaluate and improve their programs and share best practices with the Working Group.
3. Organize a joint Walk/Bike to School Day to educate and encourage walkers, bikers and drivers.
4. Request traffic and speed studies from the City of Saint Paul Public Works Department and then evaluate the data and walking routes for potential infrastructure changes.

The First Annual Walk or Bike to School Day

The RanHam Schools held their first Walk or Bike to School Day on May 4, 2016 with a group of 1500 students walking or biking to school. The three primary schools identified remote bus and parent drop locations approximately a quarter to a half mile away from the schools so that all students could participate.



Saint Paul Police were on hand to ensure safe crossings and celebrate the walking and biking students.



Overall the day was a huge success. Parents and students learned about existing walk lines, teachers observed more students eating breakfast at school and focusing more quickly at the start of the day, and the neighborhood saw less car traffic than usual that morning.



Currently, there are student school patrol programs at Expo, Holy Spirit and Randolph Heights and a number of students walk and/or bike to school. The table below represents the average number on any given day that students from each school are walking or biking.

School	Randolph Heights	Expo Elementary	Holy Spirit	Cretin Derham Hall
Walkers	45	40	40-50	150
Bikers	10	5-10	3-5	25

The designated school crossing locations near the schools are:

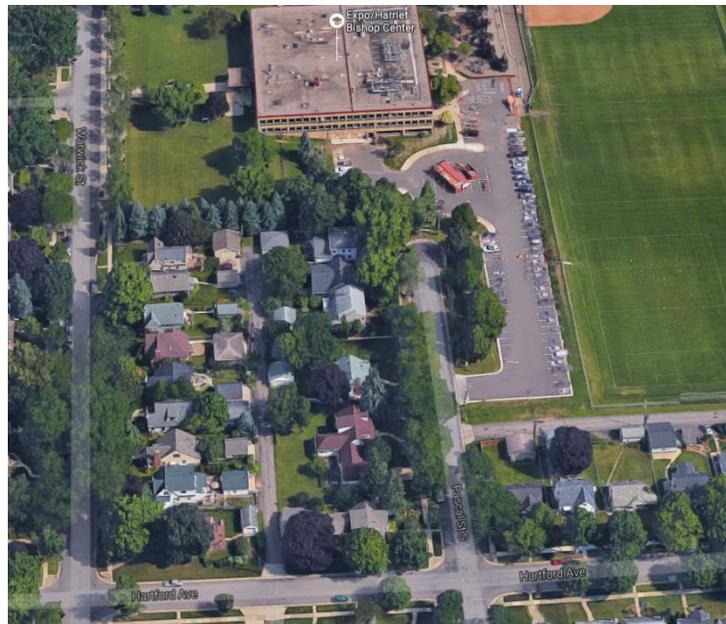
- Warwick Street and Randolph Avenue
- Hamline Avenue and Randolph Avenue
- Albert Street and Randolph Avenue
- Snelling Avenue and Randolph Avenue
- Hamline Avenue and Bayard Avenue

Infrastructure

Each school has different parent/bus drop-off access routes. Because Expo, Cretin Derham Hall and Holy Spirit were originally one campus their infrastructure concerns are charted below in the South Infrastructure Section. Randolph Heights concerns are outlined in the North Infrastructure Section. A number of students walk or bike across the neighborhood through both sections, making it important to look at the entire area holistically in the Safe Route to School Plan.

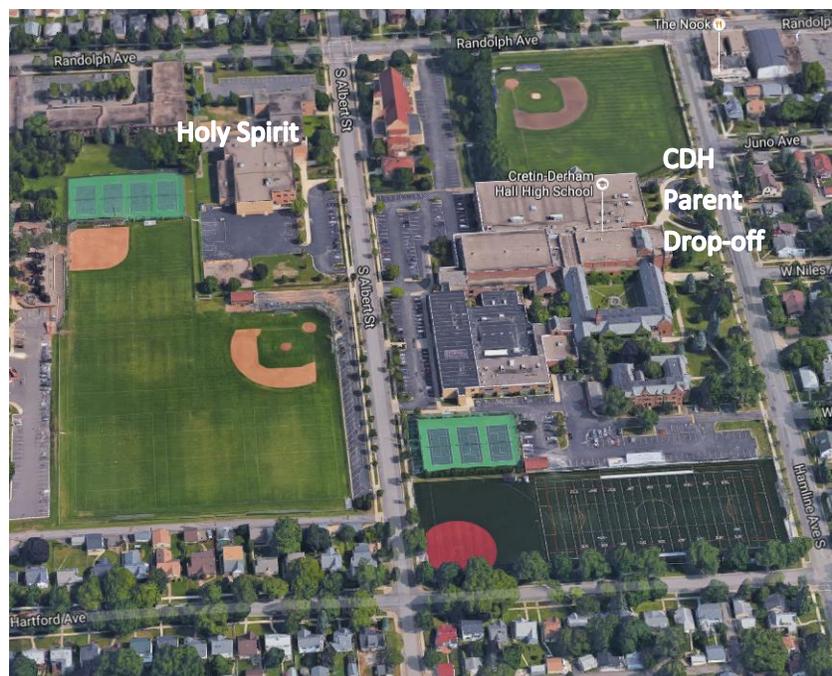
South Infrastructure

Expo buses drop-off on Warwick approaching from the south. Parents drop-off students on the east side of the school where a dead-end street provides access to the parking lot and a circular area which provides a turn around. The intersection off of this access point, Hartford Avenue and Pascal Street, is where the student was hit in November 2015.



The east/west alley north of Hartford gets a high amount of cut-through traffic. In spring 2016 Saint Paul Public Works took traffic and speed counts in the there. They found an ADT (average daily traffic) of 53 vehicles and an 85% speed of 16 miles per hour (Meaning that 85% of the traffic speeds with 16 mph and below). The alley already has speed bumps, but the City agreed to repaint them in hopes of slowing down traffic.

Holy Spirit and Cretin Derham Hall do not have buses, and thus have a higher number of parent drop-offs. Holy Spirit has several parent drop-off/pick up locations outlined in their Parent Handbook. CDH parents are encouraged to drop off and pick up students on Hamline Avenue. Additionally, many students drive to school, and they are required to register their car and obtain a parking permit. Please see the map below and the handbook excerpts.



From the Cretin Derham Parent/Student Handbook (2016-2017):

“Traffic around Cretin-Derham Hall at dismissal is very heavy. An additional concern is the Holy Spirit children who dismiss a few minutes after Cretin-Derham Hall students. In order to insure the safety of everyone, we ask the following:

- *No parking in or use of the Holy Spirit school parking lot.*
- *Follow the traffic signs and directions posted in the Albert Street lots.*
- *Cars may wait for students on either side of Albert Street.*
- *Use the drop off site on Hamline Avenue.*
- *Please be courteous while waiting and do not block traffic or pedestrians.”*

Patrols

Fifth graders who serve as safety patrols are stationed at their corners from 7:50 to 8:00 a.m. to help children cross the streets near school. The patrols also help at the intersections in the afternoon. There are no lines as such, but students are expected to be orderly and somewhat subdued on the walk to or from school. Patrol intersections are located at Albert and Hartford; Randolph and Hamline; and Randolph and Albert. Patrols will not be present if the temperature is -15° or lower and will not be present during rain storms when there is the likelihood of lightning.

Drop-Off/Pick-Up Procedures

Pick-Up Locations by Last Name

- #1 Students A – F will be picked up at the northwest entrance to the school.
- #2 Student G – L will be picked up on Albert Street near the northeast entrance to the school.
- #3 Students M – R will be picked up at the main entrance.
- #4 Students S – Z will be picked up outside of the gym entrance.

How Can I Most Effectively Use the Pick-Up Lane?

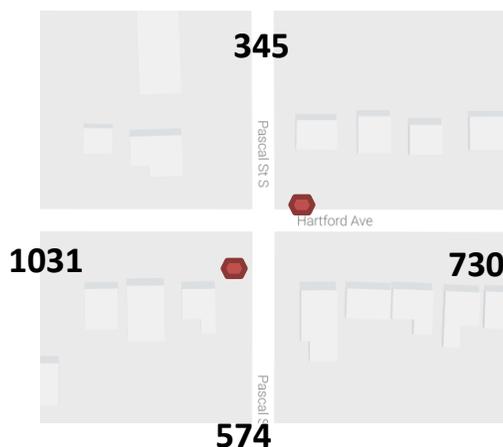
Pull into the pick-up lane, moving as far ahead as possible. When your child is safely in your vehicle, please exit as promptly as possible, allowing for other cars to move forward. As you leave the parking lot, please remember to take right turns only.

From the Holy Spirit Parent Handbook (2016-2017)

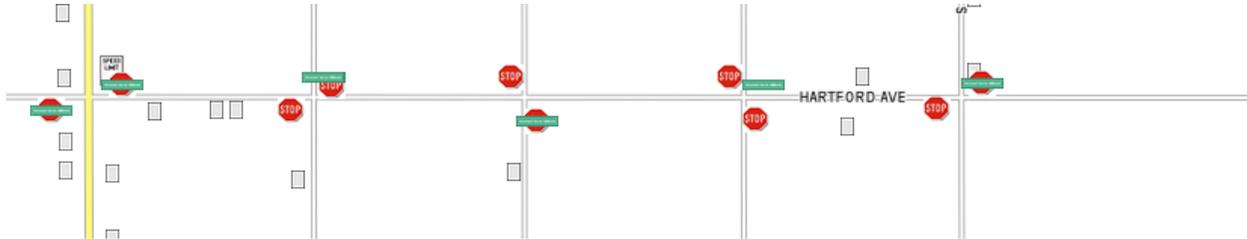
In May of 2016, the intersections of Hartford and Albert and Hartford and Pascal were examined by Saint Paul Public Works. Albert had an ADT of 1760 vehicles, which is slightly higher than a normal residential street. No speeding was found (southbound 85%= 28 MPH, northbound 85%= 25 MPH). Public Works found a high number of turn movements from Albert onto Randolph, and noted that the current “No turn on red when school patrol present” sign was not only necessary, but effective.

On Hartford between Saratoga and Warwick an ADT of 1,620 was found. Also, between Pascal and Albert a 1,540 ADT and between Albert and Hamline a 1,640 ADT were found. Further, speeding was not found to be an issue (eastbound 85%= 28 MPH, westbound 85%= 28 MPH).

At the intersection of Pascal and Hartford uneven approach data was found—leading traffic engineers hesitant to add a four-way stop because of the traffic back up it would create.



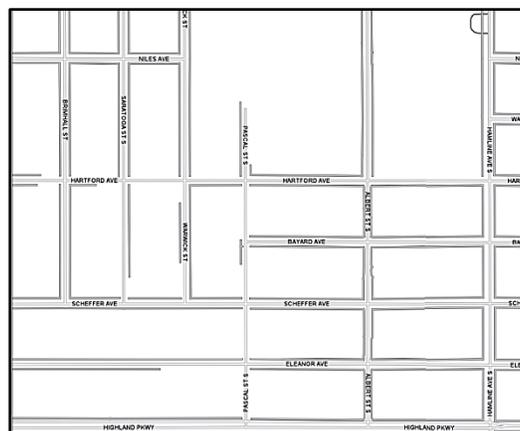
It was noted that the classic “basket weave” stop sign pattern used in Saint Paul was off along Hartford. Public Works staff and neighborhood residents discussed the pros and cons of correcting it. It was determined the sign change would cause additional accidents and not bring any true benefit to the neighborhood or schools.



While no final decisions have been made, Public Works discussed a number of other engineering and program options with school and neighborhood leaders, including:

- Having Expo parents drop students at the intersection of Hartford and Pascal, leading to less turning movements.
- Testing a reduced school speed zone of 20 MPH when school is in session. Currently there are only two of these zones in Saint Paul. This could act as a pilot program with increased enforcement and an agreed-upon plan.
- Consider additional striping. There was some pushback from Public Works on this because of the reduced maintenance budget they are facing, and the current practice of only marking 1 or 2 legs of an intersection with crosswalks in order to direct pedestrians to the same spots.
- Adding a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB). This was not recommended by Public Works because of the cost and the fact that students were crossing at several different intersections, not one designated one.
- Organizing a ‘Neighborhood Paint the Pavement event. This has had success in the Hamline-Midway neighborhood, but would require buy in from neighbors.
- Remove parking on Hartford to improve sightlines.

The most dire infrastructure need in the south section is filling in sidewalk gaps. This has occurred because historically neighbors could choose to opt out of having a sidewalk built when their street was reconstructed. Hence, the neighborhood has a patchwork sidewalk system.



Gray lines=built sidewalk infrastructure

The current policy in Saint Paul is to assess property owners 100% to build new sidewalks. This is financially restrictive and has allowed the gaps to remain. Many people, including students, opt to walk in the street or create “cow paths” along the street.



Looking east on Hartford

In July of 2016 Saint Paul Public Works applied for a Metropolitan Council Transportation Advisory Board Safe Routes the School grant in order to fill in the sidewalk gaps in that neighborhood. As of this writing, the City has not heard whether or not the funds have been secured. If they are not, Public Works will continue to seek grants and/or find a cost-sharing solution with the schools and neighbors.

North Infrastructure

Randolph Heights is located at the corner of two collector streets, Hamline Avenue and Jefferson Avenue. It is close to the Edgumbe Recreation center and is mostly surrounded by single-family residential properties.



To address parent pick-up, the administration released the following detailed instructions:

“Dear Parents and Families Who Pick up Children at Dismissal Time:

Any time we mix moving vehicles with about 200 children, and add in some snow and ice on a narrow city street, it’s a potentially dangerous and frustrating situation. We have given the system a lot of thought, and we ask you to help us keep the process easier and safer for everyone by following these procedures:

- ***Do not park your car on the south side of Wellesley during pickup time. This includes Discovery Club pickup.***
- ***When you turn onto Wellesley Ave from Hamline, pull to the curb line as soon as possible. Do not proceed further down and then try to pull in.***
- ***Pull all the way to the curb so that cars can still pass. Students will not be allowed to go between parked cars or cross the street without an adult to get to the vehicle.***
- ***If you are waiting for your child, please pull forward as cars leave to make room for others.***
- ***Please remain in your car so you can pull forward as necessary. If you need to help with seat belts, step out of the car only when your child is ready to get in.***
- ***If you wish to park or get out of your car, please park on the north side of Wellesley or on Syndicate.***
- ***If there is a teacher directing traffic, please follow their directions.***
- ***Once your child is seated and buckled, please pull away to make room for another vehicle.***
- ***Above all else, stay calm don’t get angry. In enforcing these rules, our staff members are only looking out for your child’s safety.’***

The instructions have seemed to work and no serious incidents have occurred. The majority of complaints that the City receives are about Jefferson Avenue. There are a number of small daycares located on Jefferson Avenue, and the City often gets requests from them about how Jefferson and specifically the intersection of Jefferson and Pascal can be safer for pedestrians. A number of Holy Spirit students cross there headed south.

Jefferson Avenue is a Bike Boulevard and has an ADT of 4,100. No parking is allowed on the north side of the street beginning at Snelling Avenue going east, where it becomes a Minnesota State Aid (MSA) route. Jefferson Avenue has sharrows, bike signage along with dynamic speed signs located at Brimhall and Jefferson and at Edgcumbe and Jefferson in order to slow traffic.



The intersection of Pascal and Jefferson has been discussed and evaluated for several years. While studies do not show speeding along this stretch, the community believes it continues to remain unsafe for bikers and pedestrians. A 2014 speed study shows an average speed of 26 mph and an 85% speed of 31 mph compared to the April 2005 study which showed an average speed of 31 mph and an 85% speed of 35 mph. However, this was, prior to the implementation of the bike boulevard. An average speed

reduction of 5 mph and an 85% speed reduction of 4 mph is rare and points to the success of the bike boulevard traffic calming measures.

The summer months of 2015 and 2016 saw road construction on adjacent arterial routes which lead to increased traffic on Jefferson. In turn, this increased the number of complaints the city received. The data did not show a need for several of the options requested, including an all-way stop, speed bumps, and crosswalks. In June 2016 the City agreed to add additional striping (centerline and parking) to Jefferson in the hopes of making the road feel and act narrower. The future of Jefferson Avenue and the type of street it should function as continues to be an important neighborhood discussion.

Existing Issues and Challenges

In addition to the data collection and Walk/Bike to School Day completed as part of this project, a Safe Routes Working Group was established for the RanHam Schools that include representatives from each school (staff, parents and/or principals), the Saint Paul Police Department, Saint Paul Public Works Department, Councilmember Chris Tolbert's Office, Saint Paul Public Schools, Highland District Council, and Macalester Groveland District Council. The role of this group is to determine ways to overcome barriers to walking and biking to school.

The existing challenges to walking and biking to the Ran-Ham Schools are summarized in the following bullets:

- Speed and amount of traffic along routes
- Sidewalks or pathways
- Safety at intersections and crosswalks
- Crossing guards/school patrols

Other Planning Documents

In addition to the great work being done by the four schools, each district council in the City of Saint Paul has adopted a neighborhood plan. The following sections discuss the findings and recommendations of those plans as they relate to the Ran-Ham Safe Routes to School work.

Macalester Groveland Community Council (District 14) Master Plan

The Macalester-Groveland Community Council Plan, adopted in 2016, has a heavy focus on pedestrian safety. Their Transportation section states:

"Transportation is critical to our neighborhood's vitality and quality of life. In the planning process residents, students, business owners, and other stakeholders expressed a strong desire for all forms of transportation, walking, biking, public transit, and driving, that are both safe and accessible. Transportation must serve current as well as changing needs. **Safety when walking to school** or transit stops and bicycling to restaurants and shops is a high priority."

Highland District Council (District 15) Master Plan

The Highland District Council Plan, adopted in 2007, calls for a pedestrian-focused neighborhood and specifically sets the following goal:

“Ensure that **all streets have a sidewalk on at least one side of the street** and adequate lighting”

Recommendations and Action Steps

Each of the RanHam schools has crafted their own recommendations and action steps.

Expo Elementary

Action Item	Progress
Update Parent Manual to include more information about walking/biking to school	Complete
Create walking lines	Complete
Create an internal safety team with co-leaders to better handle turnover	In Progress
Speak at kindergarten welcome day about walking opportunities	Planned

Holy Spirit

Action Item	Progress
Establish a PTA safety committee to assist with ongoing efforts	In Progress
Continue having walking patrols trained by Saint Paul Police Department (SPPD)	On Going
Establish training opportunities through the SPPD for walkers and parents of walkers in the fall and spring of 2016-2017	In Progress
Request periodic police presence at drop off and pick up times to help monitor driver compliance	On Going
Request that the city monitor snow removal at the corners of Randolph/Albert and Hartford/Albert for pedestrian and patrol safety	Complete
Increase adult presence at patrol corner to positively influence traffic	On Going
Examine the feasibility of walking lines, or at a minimum, encourage students to walk in groups	In Progress
Provide training and on-going reminders for Holy Spirit drivers, including, but not limited to speed, distracted driving, children walking in between cars and safe crossing	In Progress
Continue to examine the feasibility of additional signage (i.e. school zone signs, reduced speed signs, four- way stops)	In Progress
Twice a year sponsor a “Walk/Bike to School Day” (Fall and Spring) Coordinate with other schools, if possible.	On Going
Examine the feasibility of lawn signs along routes to encourage awareness and safe driving.	Planned
Yellow or other brightly colored vests for K-2 walkers.	Planned

Cretin Derham Hall

Action Item	Progress
Include required “Parents Night” in Driver’s Education classes	Complete
Review driving skills weekly with students	On Going
Include safe driving reminders in school newsletters	On Going

Randolph Heights Elementary

Action Item	Progress
Continue growing "Green and Healthy" kids committee	On Going
Hold Bike Rodeo	Complete
Continue walking lines	On Going
Patrol parents dropping off and picking up students	On Going

Joint recommendations

In addition, the team crafted joint recommendations for the neighborhood. The short-term recommendations are actions that could be implemented prior to or during the 2016-2017 school year, while the long-term recommendations may require policy changes, additional discussion and coordination, or significant funding sources. In addition to the recommendations, the group that should take the lead in implementing the recommendations has also been identified.

Short-Term Recommendations

The short-term recommendations in this section primarily consist of low-cost improvements that can be implemented in six months, although some are depending on funding availability and volunteer capacity.

1. Establish a permanent Safe Routes committee between the four Ran-Ham Schools and the local district councils to provide on-going support and organization for Safe Routes activities, including regular Walk to School days.
2. Explore doing a "Paint the Pavement" project. This would be a community-led project to paint a mural at a chosen intersection(s) to slow traffic, build community, and further the conversation about safe driving, walking and biking.
3. Explore having CDH students help elementary school kids cross on late start days and/or as part of a community service project.
4. Explore recruiting neighborhood volunteers as walk line helpers.

Long-Term Recommendations

The long-term recommendations included in this section primarily consist of higher cost improvements which would be expected to take longer than six months to occur.

1. Fill in sidewalk gaps south of Expo/Holy Spirit/CDH.
2. Continue to encourage students to bike or walk to school when and if possible.
3. Continue to encourage neighbors and the general population to use alternative modes of transportation to get to work and/or local businesses.
4. District Councils and City work with local businesses to install bike racks and encourage participation in incentive programs for non-driving modes of transportation.
5. Continue to evaluate street infrastructure and traffic patterns for safety issues.

Funding and Implementation

Funding for the various recommended projects may come from a variety of sources depending on the type of project and who is implementing it. Some potential grants that currently exist and may be used to fund these recommendations include, but are not limited to:

- Federal Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds through the Metropolitan Council- (was due July 15, 2016 for 2020-2021 funding)
- Federal Safe Routes to School funds through the Minnesota Department of Transportation- due October 2016

Other funding opportunities include:

- Assessments: Current City policy is to assess property owners 100% for sidewalk infill unless it is part of a larger construction project, then the cost is spread across all property owners.
- Partnerships: Partnerships with public and private organizations to provide assistance with design, outreach, construction and maintenance. Potential partnership organizations, in addition to the City of Saint Paul and four Ran-Ham schools that participated in the development of this plan, may include Ramsey County, Ramsey County State Health Improvement Program, and area businesses.
- Donations: Private donations from individuals or area corporations.