



MY SCHOOL IN MOTION

**Spring-Ford Area School District
Concluding Report**



Table of Contents

My School in Motion Program Overview	3
Partnerships	4
Parent/Guardian Survey	5-6
Walking and Biking Audit.....	7-11
Education	12-14
Recommendations	15
Township Priorities	16
Program Manual	17
Resources	18

My School in Motion



Created in 1990, GVF, a not-for-profit organization, is dedicated to inspiring mobility choices for ALL. Through our 34+ years of expertise, GVF develops programs and initiatives that help educate and provide alternatives to driving alone, ultimately improving the quality of life for all.

Through PennDOT's Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Grant, GVF developed the "My School in Motion" program. GVF partnered with Spring-Ford Area School District to bring the program to middle schools in the district. The program started at the 5/6 Center but after analyzing the survey results and discussing with administration, they did not think they had a significant number of students who could safely walk or bike to school. Therefore, we moved to the 8th Grade Center which is located in a more walkable and bikeable location in the Borough of Royersford.

The My School in Motion program was developed to promote safety in walking and biking to school and educate the next generation of commuters on the benefits of walking and biking as an alternate mode of travel.

Biking and walking allow students to travel safely, emitting minimal CO2 emissions while enhancing physical and mental well-being. Schools provide the best opportunity to reach the most vulnerable adolescent population. It is our responsibility to encourage behavioral changes and protect the future safety and health of our children. The My School in Motion program not only improves physical and mental health, but students had an opportunity to participate in a biking/walking audit to look at the streets, sidewalks, and connections within their neighborhood to assess safety. This program is an opportunity for students to have fun, get energized, and build a sense of community.

Components of the program included:

- Parental/Guardian survey
- Walkability and bikeability audits
- Outreach and education



Partnerships



Through the My School in Motion program, GVF helps to form partnerships between school districts, townships, and counties to prioritize needed infrastructure improvements.

Spring-Ford Area School District represents four municipalities. GVF worked closely with Upper Providence Township, Limerick Township, and the Borough of Royersford, who are active partners of GVF.

GVF worked with several strategic partners throughout the My School in Motion Program:

- **Montgomery County Planning Commission** provided insight into infrastructure and transportation projects within the area and participated in a walking/biking audit of the area around Spring-Ford's 8th Grade Center.
- **The Borough of Royersford** provided insight into past and future infrastructure and transportation projects in the area around the 8th Grade Center and participated in the walking/biking audit of the area around the school.
- **Upper Providence Township** provided information on township priorities for multi-modal transportation projects, reviewed grant documents, and provided insight into the walking and biking audit completed by GVF.
- **Spring-Ford Area School District**, specifically the 5/6 Center and 8th Grade Center.

GVF looks forward to continuing to work with our partners to implement the My School in Motion Program within additional school districts and continue to improve and strengthen our transportation systems.



Parent/Guardian Survey



A parent survey was instituted as part of the 'My School in Motion' program administered by GVF in cooperation with the 5/6 Grade Center.

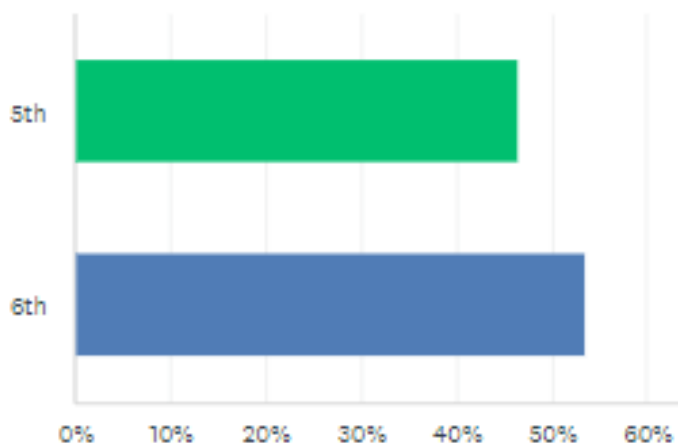
166 survey responses were received.

While the program's goal is to increase awareness and enthusiasm for walking and biking, the program should also lay the groundwork for serious conversations about investing in the infrastructure that will allow for the safety of students as they walk and bike to or from school.

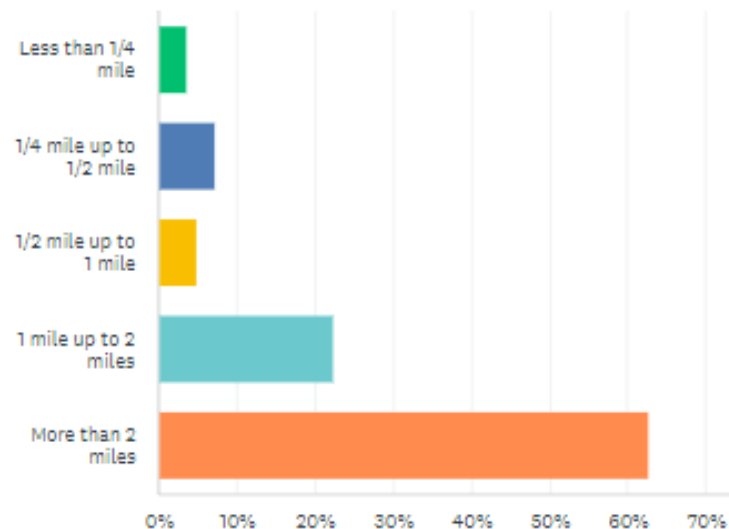
Key findings of the survey:

- 37% of respondents live less than 2 miles from the school, this number is significant as it shows there is a significant percentage of the student population who could potentially walk or bike to school, however, the location of the school does not allow for students within that full distance to walk or bike to school (see more on the next page).
- Only 4% of respondents stated they currently allow their child to walk or bike to school.
- The largest percentage (38%) of parent responses indicated that they would allow their children to walk or bike to or from school without adult supervision at 14 years old or older.
- When asked to name the issues that affected their decision to allow a child to bike or walk to school, the top two concerns were:
 - Sidewalks or pathways are unsafe or not connected - 71%
 - Distance is too far from school - 66%

Please indicate which grade your child is in:



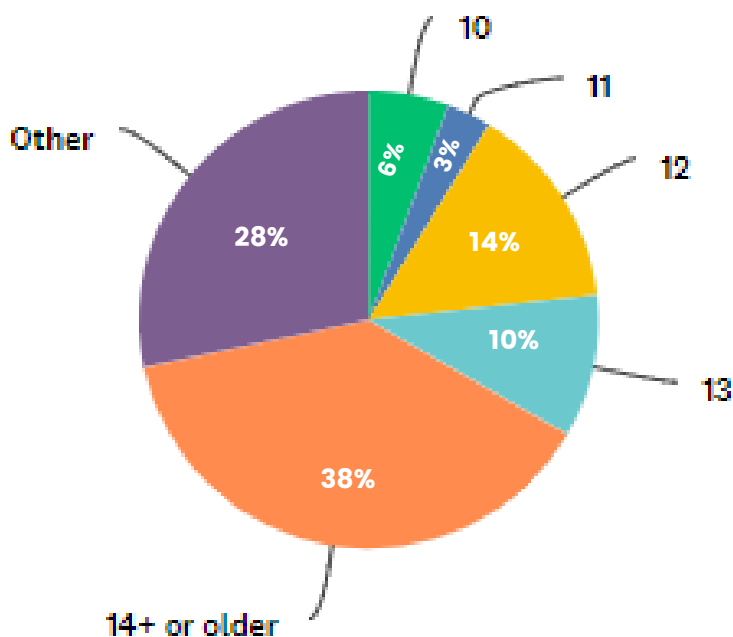
How far does your child live from school?



Parent/Guardian Survey

- 95% of respondents stated that their child owns their own bike, and 81% of respondents stated that they engage in family walks or bike rides within their neighborhood. This demonstrates that most students have some understanding of safety practices when biking or walking throughout their community.
- Through further analysis of the survey and discussions with Spring-Ford School District Administration, GVF decided to offer the My School in Motion Program at Spring-Ford School District's 8th Grade Center instead of at the 5/6 Center.
 - There are a limited number of neighborhoods with appropriate sidewalk connections within the walking radius of the 5/6 Center.
 - Almost 50% of survey respondents stated that the minimum age at which they would allow their children to walk or bike to school without adult supervision was 13, which better aligns with the age of students at the 8th Grade Center.
 - The 8th Grade Center is located in the Borough of Royersford, in an area with more walkability and bikeability than the location in Upper Providence Township where the 5/6 Center is located.
 - Only 4% of the respondents said that they currently allow their child to walk or bike to school.

At what age would you allow your child to walk or bike to/from school without an adult?



Walking and Biking Audit



GVF conducted a walking and biking audit of the area around Spring-Ford Area School District's 8th Grade Center in the Spring of 2024. The area audit also includes Spring-Ford Senior High School, the 9th Grade Center, and sports fields, including the football stadium.

Since the initial Parent/Guardian survey was conducted at the 5/6 Center, GVF surveyed parents again to determine areas of concern within the walking radius of the 8th Grade Center. Parents, students, and staff identified the following roads/intersections as areas of concern:

- S Lewis Road (missing sidewalk connections)
- Vaughn Road between S Lewis Road and S 5th Ave
- Washington Street between S Lewis Road and S 5th Ave

The audit also looked at routes to places that students may walk or bike to upon school dismissal, including Dunkin' Donuts, Handel's Homemade Ice Cream, and Royersford Public Library.



Walking and Biking Audit



Walking and Biking Audit Participants Included:

- Maureen Farrell, Deputy Executive Director, GVF
- Kaitlin Valliere, TDM Manager, GVF
- Donna Ziegler, Manger, Borough of Royersford
- Joe Natale, Senior Project Implementation Engineer, DVRPC
- Andrew Turner, Transportation Planner II, Montgomery County Planning Commission
- Mike Hays, Representative Joe Ciresi's Office
- Parents of 8th Grade Center Students

Audit participants discussed locations of concern and then analyzed the roads around the school using the walking and biking audit document before returning to the 8th Grade Center to discuss the results.

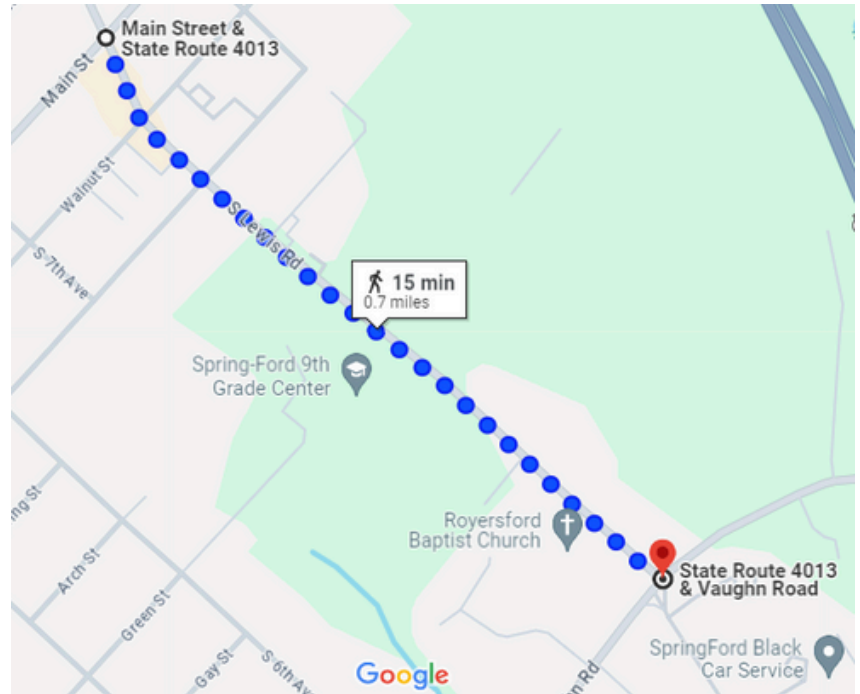


S. Lewis Road



S. Lewis Road is a PennDOT owned road, State Route 4013. Sections of S Lewis Road between Main Street and Vaughn Road are located in Royersford Borough, Limerick Township, and Upper Providence Township.

Current construction projects, including future townhomes at 461 S. Lewis Road will construct some of the missing connections, and Upper Providence Township has the potential to go back and get right-of-way to complete the connections.



Sidewalks and Crosswalks

- The sidewalks along S. Lewis Road are complete along the southern side. On the northern side of the road, there are missing connections, particularly west of Spring-Ford High School.
- There are crosswalks at the following intersections:
 - Main Street and S. Lewis Road (4-Way, Pedestrian Signals, Push-to-Walk)
 - Walnut Street and S. Lewis Road (4-Way, Pedestrian Signals, Push-to-Walk)
 - Washington Street and S. Lewis Road (4-Way, no striping)
 - High School/9th Grade Center Main Entrance and S. Lewis Road (4-Way, Pedestrian Signals, Push-to-Walk)
 - West School Entrance and S Lewis Road (single crosswalk with signage)

Biking

- There are no protected bike lanes.
- There are no bike lane markings.
- Bikers are expected to bike on the roadway.

Summary

S. Lewis Road is particularly busy during school drop-off and dismissal times. Sidewalk connectivity has been studied multiple times but it has been difficult to get full buy-in from the School District and has been challenging because the less than one-mile stretch spans three municipalities.

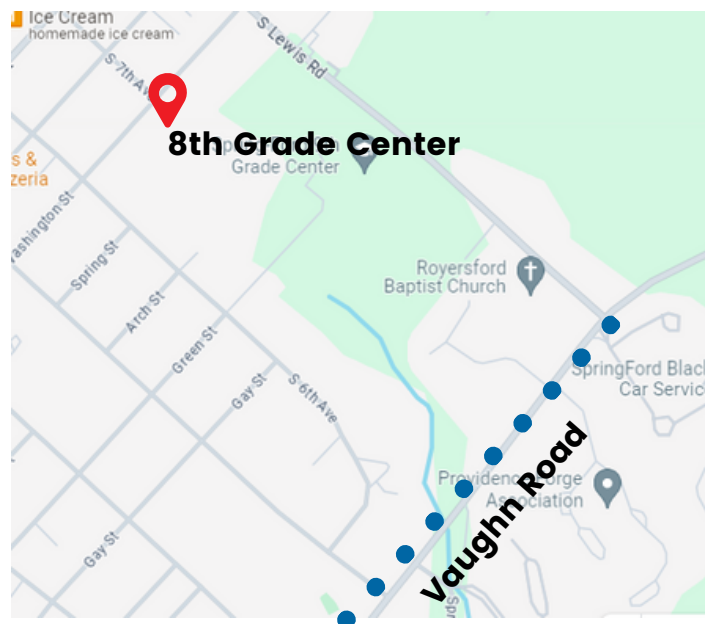
Vaughn Road



Vaughn Road is perpendicular to S. Lewis Road. There are neighborhoods east of Vaughn Road within the walking radius of the 8th Grade Center. These students have to cross Vaughn Road, but the speed and lack of infrastructure is a concern.

Sidewalks and Crosswalks

- The sidewalks are inconsistent on both sides of the road.
- There is one crosswalk south of the intersection of S. Lewis Road and Vaughn Road. This crosswalk does not have flashing lights.

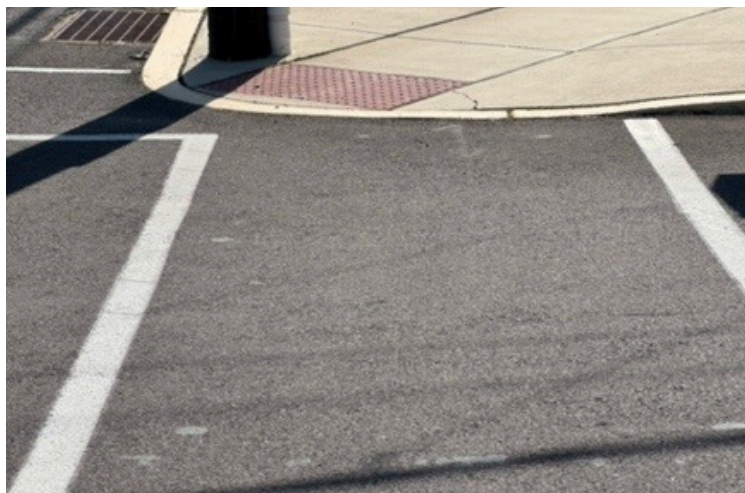


Biking

- There are no protected bike lanes.
- There are no bike lane markings.
- Bikers are expected to bike on the roadway.

Summary

Vaughn Road is the road near the 8th Grade Center that would most benefit from improved infrastructure. The sidewalk does not connect on both sides, and the speed of cars on the roadway, along with the lack of crosswalks, make it dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross the street. There is an approved townhome development on the corner of Vaughn Road and S. Lewis Road that is adding a dedicated right turn lane from Lewis to Vaughn and, in a meeting with Upper Providence Township, we learned of the potential for an offset signalized intersection in the future.



Washington Street and Cross Streets



The front of the Spring-Ford 8th Grade Center is on Washington Street. Washington Street is a wide street with parking on both sides. Many cars stop here during drop-off and pick-up times, and speed is a concern during high traffic areas. In the Summer of 2024, the Borough of Royersford added pedestrian push buttons, flashing lights, and signage to the crosswalks on Washington Street in front of the school.



Sidewalks and Crosswalks

- This area has complete sidewalk connections on both sides of the streets within the Borough of Royersford, however, some of the sidewalks are uneven and cracked.
- There are two crosswalks in front of the school with pedestrian push buttons, flashing lights and signage.

Biking

- There are no protected bike lanes.
- There are no bike lane markings.
- Bikers are expected to bike on the roadway.

Summary

The pedestrian connections around the school are complete and the Borough is actively working to make it safer for students to walk around the school area. In comparison, the biking infrastructure is almost non-existent, although the Borough is working on a potential low-stress bike route.





Email Communications

GVF worked with Dr. Rogers, Principal of the 8th Grade Center, to develop email communications about the My School in Motion program to be sent to parents and guardians that introduced the program, detailed the survey results, and cited the benefits of biking or walking to school.

Below are portions of the email communications.



Key Takeaways from the My School in Motion Program

- Awareness of the academic and health benefits of physical activity.
- Understanding of the importance of safe streets, sidewalks, and connections in facilitating walking and biking to school.
- Small changes make a big difference! You do not have to walk or bike every day to see benefits.
- Habits won't change overnight—many people are used to driving everywhere.

Benefits of Walking/Biking to School

- Kids who are more physically active have better academic performance and concentration throughout the day ([Neuroscience](#) and [Nordic Science](#))
- Exposure to nature and free outdoor play can improve mental health, reduce stress, and relieve ADHD symptoms ([NIH](#))
- Air quality around the school improves when there are fewer vehicles idling on campus, relieving asthma symptoms ([CDC](#))

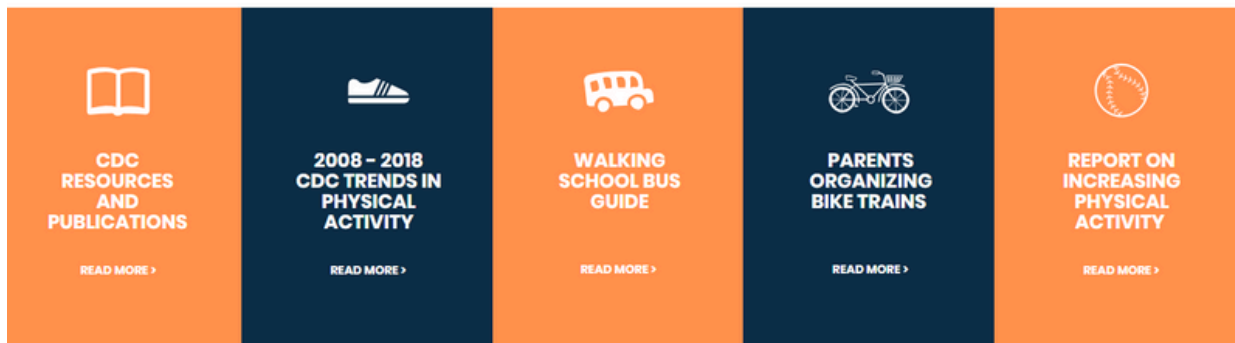
About the Walking / Biking Audit

In the Spring, we will be inviting students (and parents if interested) to participate in a walking / biking audit around the school. As the principal of the 8th Grade Center, I believe it is important to get out in the community more and look forward to conducting this audit with fellow students. GVF will lead these efforts, and we will have an opportunity to critically assess the streets, sidewalks, and connections around Spring-Ford's 8th Grade Center. Members of Royersford Borough, the Montgomery County Planning Commission, and other stakeholders will also be invited to participate to help identify the gaps in connectivity for biking and/or walking to school. Stay tuned for an official date and information on how to sign up to participate!



My School in Motion Website

GVF developed and maintained the website schoolinmotion.com to serve as a resource with information about the My School in Motion program, as well as national examples of biking and walking resources





Bike Month Resources

May is Bike Month and corresponds to both the Spring weather and end of the school year, when more students are biking to school and around their neighborhoods. GVF provided resources (below) for the Spring-Ford 8th Grade Center to share to encourage safe biking behaviors.

DID YOU KNOW: May is Bike Month!


Although the school year is quickly coming to an end, we want to remind our students to be safe while they are riding throughout the community, as well as when they are riding to school for the remaining weeks.

There are many benefits of riding a bike to school, including:


- Building a sense of community with other bikers and classmates
- Getting exercise to start your day, which can enhance focus and concentration in the classroom
- Improves mental well being
- Reducing traffic and using less gas, which improves our environment

Bicycle Safety Flyer

Created by GVF and sent to the 8th Grade Center to distribute.

MY SCHOOL IN MOTION **SPRING-FORD 8TH GRADE CENTER** 

MAY IS BIKE MONTH!

SHARE THE ROAD WITH 3 SIMPLE STEPS FOR **BICYCLE SAFETY** 

01 PROTECT YOUR HEAD
Always wear a helmet.

02 OBEY ALL TRAFFIC LAWS & LIGHTS
Bicycles must follow the rules of the road like other vehicles.

03 ACT LIKE A CAR
Drivers are used to the patterns of other drivers. Don't weave in and out of traffic. The more predictably you ride, the safer you are. Check for traffic. Be aware of traffic around you.

Recommendations



Bike Racks

The Spring-Ford 8th Grade Center has one bike rack in front of the school. There is a parking lot to the right of the front entrance which would be an ideal location for the school to expand its bike parking with additional bike racks and to add a bike fix-it station.



Education Opportunities

School administration should use Back to School communications to help educate families who live within walking/biking distance to the 8th Grade Center about the opportunity for students to walk and/or bike.

Additionally, biking and walking safety tips could be included in regular school email communications as well as under the transportation section of the school website as a way to get to school.

Bike Fix-It Station and Air Pump Kit

To further encourage students to bike to school, GVF recommends that The 8th Grade Center install a bike fix-it station and air pump kit, which includes all the tools necessary to perform basic bike repairs and maintenance, such as changing a flat or adjusting brakes and derailleurs.





Low-Stress Bicycle Network

In 2022, the Borough of Royersford completed an [Active Transportation Plan](#). GVF recommends that the Borough develop a branded low stress bicycle network near the 8th Grade Center. According to [DVRPC's Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress \(LTS\) and Connectivity Analysis](#), there are numerous LTS 1 routes near the 8th Grade Center, including roads that connect the 8th Grade Center to neighborhoods in the walking and biking radius of the school.

LTS Analysis	Connectivity Analysis
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LTS 1 (lowest stress)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LTS 2 (suitable for most adults)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LTS 3 (moderate traffic stress)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LTS 4 (high traffic stress)	

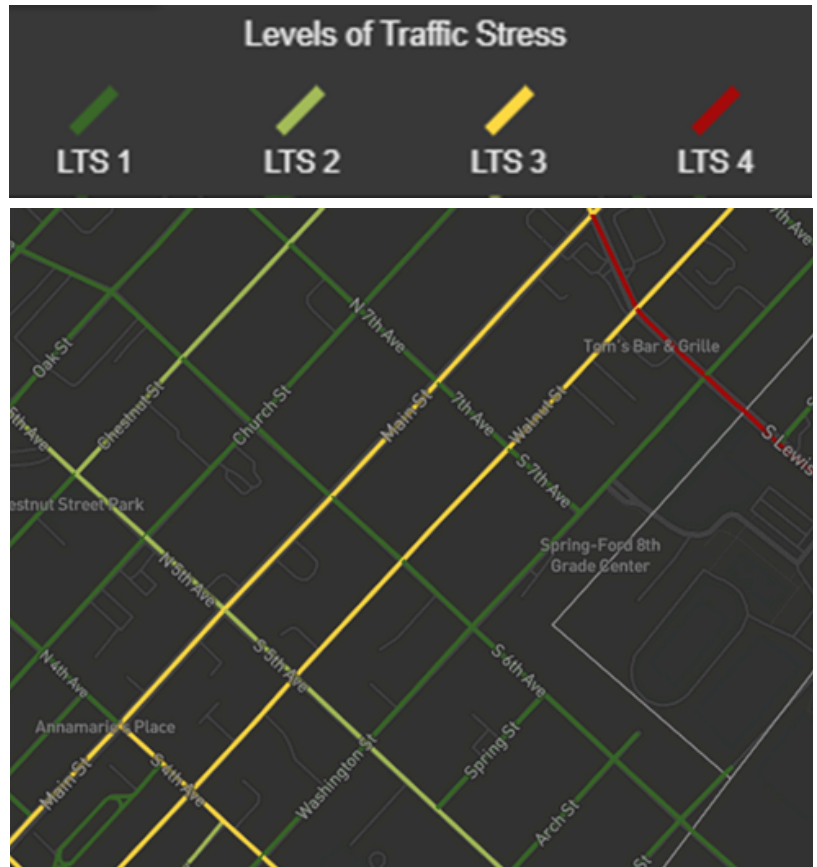
LTS, Level of Traffic Stress, is a road classification scheme based on the estimated comfort of the bicyclists in the traffic stream. DVRPC's LTS assignment (from LTS 1 to LTS 4) is based on the number of lanes, effective vehicle speed, and the presence and type of bicycle facility on the road segment.

The routes near the 8th Grade Center that are classified as LTS 1 include Washington Street (location of the 8th Grade Center), 7th Avenue, 6th Avenue and Church Street. It is not a surprise that Main Street and Walnut Street are LTS 3, which are for more confident cyclists, due to the moderate level of stress (vehicles) on the roadway.

A branded low-stress bike route throughout the Borough complements GVF's recommendations to expand bicycle infrastructure at the 8th Grade Center and continue bike safety education to students. This multi-faceted approach would help students (and parents) feel safer biking to school.

Education

GVF also recommends that the Borough include bicycle safety tips and education, including alternatives to driving alone and tips for sharing the road with cyclists, on their website and in communication (emails, newsletters, and social media). GVF can help provide resources, content, and graphics to the Borough



Program Manual



At the end of the grant, GVF provided the Spring-Ford 8th Grade Center with a program manual to continue the program.

The program manual is 12 pages long and includes information on the following program components:

- Parental/Guardian survey
- National recognition for the school through The League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly America Program
- Club member participation in walking and biking audits
- Communications
- Education and Marketing
- Events

GVF plans to utilize the program manual to bring the My School in Motion program to other schools within the region. GVF will continue to expand this program and offer it to other school districts in our region. The program manual and lessons learned from this program will be very valuable.

GVF has encouraged continued partnership with the 8th Grade Center and the Spring-Ford Area School District to help strengthening and further the My School in Motion program and components outlined in the manual.



Resources



Below are resources GVF recommends that the 8th Grade Center make available to students to assist students with biking and walking to school:

RUTI

Ruti is a text-message-based, trip planning tool that finds the bike route with the least amount of car traffic or traffic stress.

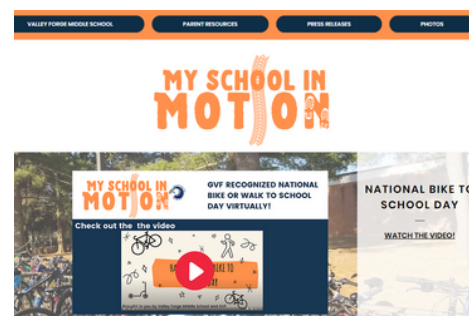
rutiapp.bike



SCHOOL IN MOTION WEBSITE

GVF developed the website schoolinmotion.com to provide resources and information about the My School in Motion program.

schoolinmotion.com



WALKING/BIKING POOL GUIDE

This guide outlines the benefits of starting a walking or biking pool and points to consider before launching it.

schoolinmotion.com/parents-resources



CIRCUIT TRAILS

The Circuit trails connect our local communities. Visit the website to help plan your trip.

circuittrails.org



WEARETDM

Information on alternatives to driving alone & for the latest TDM news.

wearetdm.com





MY SCHOOL IN MOTION

SCHOOLINMOTION.COM



Grant report prepared by the GVF Team:

- Rob Henry, Executive Director
- Maureen Farrell, Deputy Executive Director
- Kaitlin Valliere, TDM Manager

www.gvftma.com | info@gvftma.com