

SUBJECT: INFORMING THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY OF THE SUBMITTAL OF A SAFE STREETS FOR ALL GRANT APPLICATION REQUESTING \$12,818,160.00 FOR TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS TO IMPROVE SAFETY AROUND SCHOOLS.

AGENDA OF: July 15, 2025

ASSEMBLY ACTION:

AGENDA ACTION REQUESTED: For information only.

Route To	Signatures
Originator	 Recoverable Signature X Pamela Graham Signed by: Pamela Graham
Department/Finance Director	 Recoverable Signature X Cheyenne Heindel Signed by: Cheyenne Heindel
Borough Attorney	6 / 3 0 / 2 0 2 5 X Nicholas Spiropoulos Signed by: Nicholas Spiropoulos
Borough Manager	6 / 3 0 / 2 0 2 5 X Michael Brown Signed by: Mike Brown
Borough Clerk	 Recoverable Signature X Lonnie McKechnie Signed by: Lonnie McKechnie

ATTACHMENT (S) : MSB-SS4A Grant Application Narrative (21 pages)

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough has submitted a grant under the United States Department of Transportation Safe Streets for All grant program, requesting \$12,818,160.00 in Federal Funding. If awarded the grant will be matched with \$3,204,540.00 in local funding.

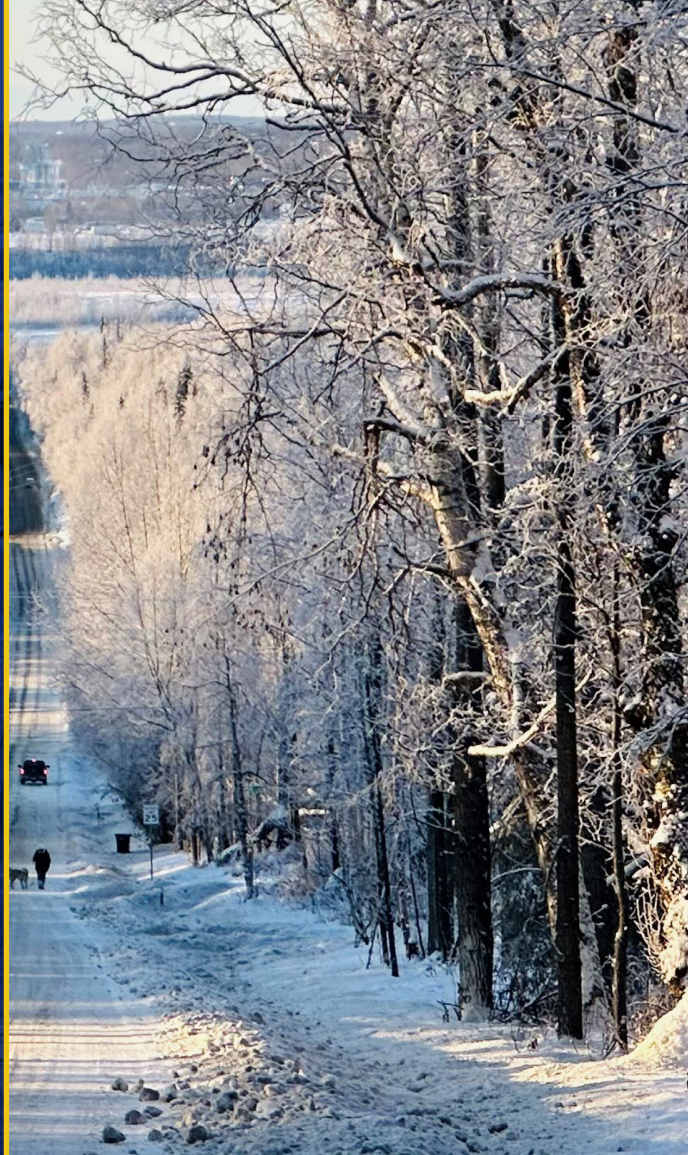
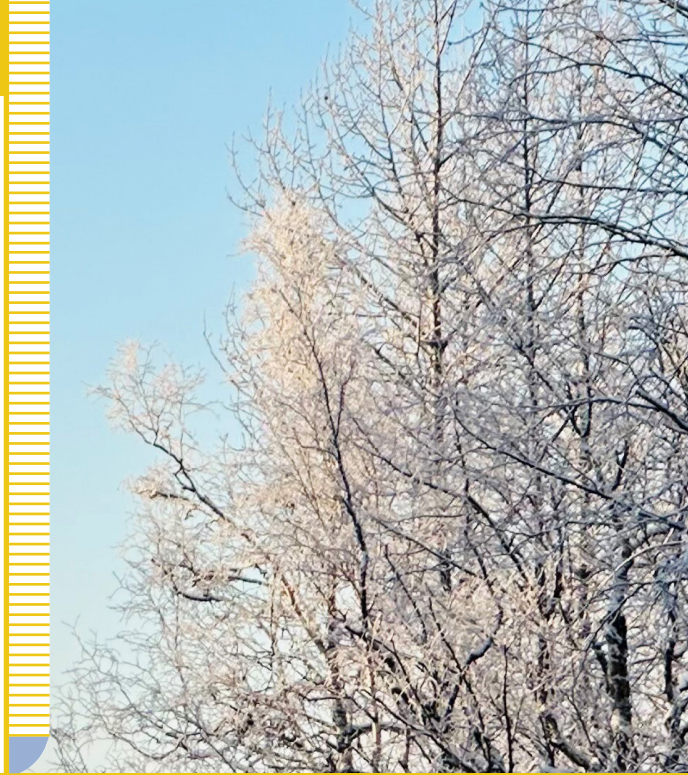
Additional legislation will be sent forward if the grant is awarded.



Matanuska-Susitna Borough

ALASKA

Safe Streets for Schools



Safe Streets for All (SS4A)
2025 SS4A Grant

IM 25-152

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview	1
Location	2
Project 1: Wasilla Middle & High Schools Separated Path and Crossing	2
Project 2: Shaw Elementary School Safety Improvements	2
Project 3: Colony Middle & High Schools: 49th State St. Separated Path	2
Project 4: Palmer High School & Academy Charter Schools: Auklet and Arctic Avenue Sidewalks	2
Project 5: (Area-Wide) Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) Supplemental Planning Grant	2
Project 6: (Area-Wide) No Motor Vehicles Regulatory Signs	2
Response to Selection Criteria	4
Safety Need	4
Safety Impact	6
Engagement and Collaboration	8
Proposed Planning & Demonstration Activities	12
Project Readiness	14
Project 1: Wasilla Middle & High Schools Separated Path and Crossing	14
Project 2: Shaw Elementary School Safety Improvements	14
Project 3: Colony Middle & High Schools: 49th State St. Separated Path	14
Project 4: Palmer High School & Academy Charter Schools: Auklet and Arctic Avenue Sidewalks	14
Project 5: (Area-Wide) Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) Supplemental Planning Grant	14
Project 6: (Area-Wide) No Motor Vehicles Regulatory Signs	14

OVERVIEW

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) is a rural Alaskan community that experienced 209 severe injuries and 99 fatal crashes between 2018–2022 across 2,982 miles of road. Its alarming annual fatality rate of 18.49 per 100,000 highlights the need for safety improvements. A recently completed [SS4A Comprehensive Safety Action Plan](#) (CSAP) confirms this need, particularly in the non-motorized network around schools.

The countermeasures in this application aim to improve safety for more than **5,000 students plus thousands of other residents and visitors**. MSB proposes five implementation projects and one supplemental planning project to protect Vulnerable Road Users (VRUs) by adding or improving separated facilities and crossings on routes to schools and nearby destinations.

These projects have strong public support and initial engineering funded by voter-approved bonds, positioning MSB to complete them within the five-year timeframe. Robust partnerships have been critical to their advancement, reflecting strong community support and collaboration among agencies that share jurisdiction, including: Alaska DOT, the Alaska Railroad Corporation, MSB School District, MSB, the City of Palmer, and the City of Wasilla.

The projects align with the Safe System Approach (SSA) principles described below and the CSAP findings, which show that despite regional transportation investments, the current conditions have not been able to meet safety demands for a connected, multi-modal transportation network.

VRUs were seriously injured or killed 67% of the time when a crash happened on a roadway without a separated facility

58% of all VRU crashes occurred on roadways without separated paths

67%

Separated facilities for VRUs are a critical safety need

Speed is a significant factor in motor vehicle crashes, and a major concern shown in the community safety survey



Many schools in the most populated areas of the borough lack separated facilities immediately adjacent to the school property



Population doubled between 2000 - 2010

The MSB has the fastest growing population in Alaska

The following points address the principles of the SSA:

Death and Serious Injuries are Unacceptable. Bicyclist and pedestrian crashes accounted for 7% of serious crashes in the MSB between 2018-2022, despite representing only 1% of road users, highlighting a significant overrepresentation of VRUs. This proposed project bundle aims to reduce such disparities by separating VRUs from motorists on shared roadways.

Humans Make Mistakes and Humans are Vulnerable. These projects create separation between non-motorized users and vehicle traffic, reducing the chances of serious injury caused by driver error, especially in areas where children walk or bike near schools.

Responsibility is Shared. This bundle reflects a multi-jurisdictional effort among MSB, and the cities of Palmer and Wasilla, all of whom have agreed to match funding for the proposed improvements, including on Alaska DOT-owned facilities.

Safety is Proactive. While serious crashes are too frequent in MSB, not all proposed projects address high-crash routes. Some projects respond to rapid population and school growth by proactively building infrastructure that separates VRUs from conflicts with motor vehicle traffic, demonstrating the community's desire to prioritize safety before tragedy occurs.

LOCATION

Project 1: Wasilla Middle & High Schools Separated Path and Crossing

This project is in the City of Wasilla, near the middle and high schools which serve 1,355 students and function as a community hub. Proposed countermeasures include constructing a marked pedestrian crosswalk and sidewalk on Westpoint Drive, new sidewalks to the Wasilla Middle School entrances from Crusey Street and Bogard Road, and a new separated shared-use path along Bogard Road. It also involves reopening a pedestrian underpass beneath the Parks Highway and railroad tracks from Newcomb Park to Railroad Avenue by mitigating flooding and adding lighting. Together, these improvements aim to close critical VRU network gaps within 1/2 mile radius of the schools. *The proposed activities align with the recommendations outlined in the MSB's CSAP on pages 75-81.*

Project 2: Shaw Elementary School Safety Improvements

This project is near an existing elementary school and a planned charter school whose combined enrollments are estimated to be 883 students. Countermeasures proposed include a roundabout at the main intersection (Paradise Lane and Wasilla-Fishhook Road) near the school sites and a separated multi-use path on Paradise Lane. These countermeasures will significantly improve VRU safety near the school and improve overall traffic safety for all users at what is currently a two-way stop-controlled intersection. *The proposed projects align with the recommendations outlined in the MSB's CSAP on pages 60, 78-81 and D16.*

Project 3: Colony Middle & High Schools – 49th State Street Separated Path

This project is near a middle school and high school, which combined serve 1,790 students. Proposed countermeasures include a separated shared-use path along 49th State Street and a marked crosswalk with rectangular rapid flashing beacon near the south entrance of Colony High School, thereby addressing a 3/4 mile gap in the non-motorized network surrounding the schools. *The proposed project was recommended in MSB's CSAP, pages 104-105.*

Project 4: Palmer High School & Academy Charter Schools – Auklet and Arctic Avenue Sidewalks

This project is in the City of Palmer and located near Palmer High School, Academy Charter School, and the anticipated new Academy Charter High School, which together are expected to serve 1,064 students. It will close intermittent gaps in the non-motorized transportation network within 1/2 mile radius of these schools. Proposed improvements include the construction of sidewalks and marked crosswalks along Auklet Avenue, as well as a new sidewalk on Arctic Avenue. *Safe access to schools corridor improvements along Arctic Ave. are in the MSB's CSAP on pages 92-93.*

Project 5: (Area-Wide) Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) Supplemental Planning Grant

This planning initiative was recommended in MSB's CSAP on pages 78-81 and is described in the "Supplemental Planning and Demonstration Activities" section. This effort will identify and prioritize safety improvements for school routes across the borough.

Project 6: (Area-Wide) No Motor Vehicles Regulatory Signs

This project proposes systemic safety improvements throughout the MSB through the installation of regulatory signage reinforcing the prohibition of motor vehicles on pathways dedicated to bicyclists and pedestrians. "No Motor Vehicles" signs would be strategically placed at key entry points along dedicated pathways throughout the borough. Serving the entire population of over 107,000, this project would support both daily commutes and recreational use across more than 100 miles of non-motorized pathway network, including those that serve area schools. *This project aligns with recommendations outlined in the MSB's CSAP on pages 82-83.*

PROJECT LOCATIONS



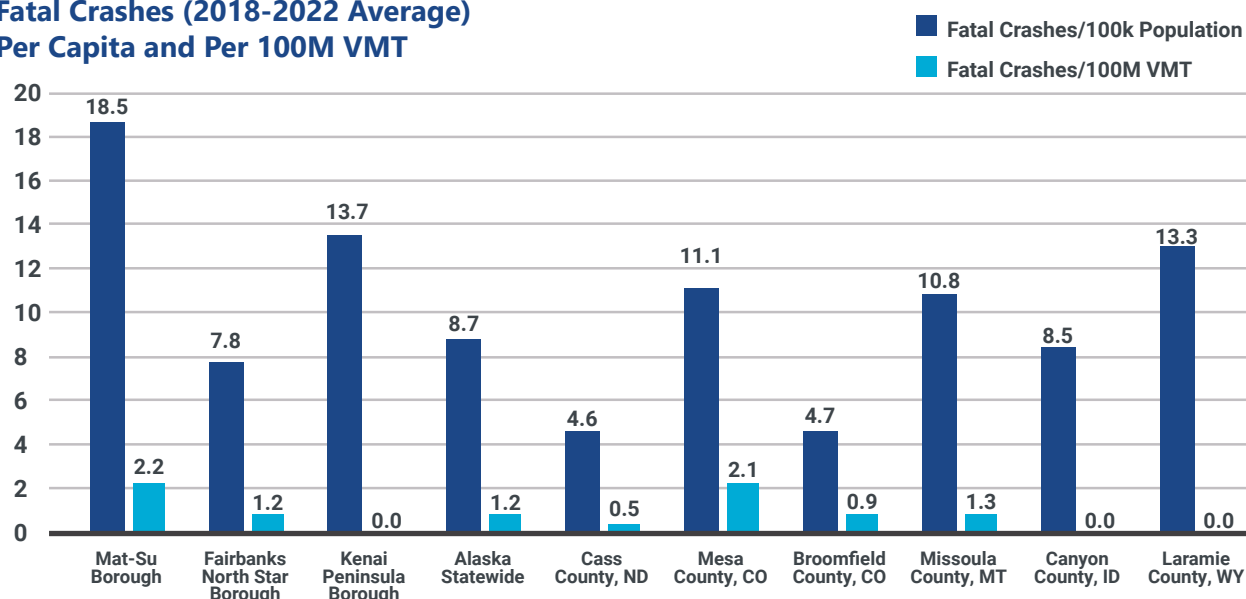
The MSB is located in southcentral Alaska, north of Anchorage. MSB encompasses nearly 25,000 square miles of land and is home to more than 107,000 residents as of the 2020 census. Two interstate highways (Parks and Glenn Highways) traverse through the MSB, both of which contain segments of the high injury network (HIN) identified in the CSAP. The map above shows the populated area studied as part of the CSAP. **Appendix A includes site maps for Projects 1-4.**

RESPONSE TO SELECTION CRITERIA

Safety Need

The MSB faces significant roadway safety challenges, as evidenced by crash data from 2018 to 2022. With a population of 107,081 (2020 Census), the borough experienced 99 motor-vehicle-related fatalities over five years, resulting in an **average annual fatality rate of 18.49 per 100,000 people**. Despite a slightly lower overall crash rate compared to similar communities, MSB's fatal crash rate is higher, underscoring the urgent need for targeted safety interventions.

Fatal Crashes (2018-2022 Average) Per Capita and Per 100M VMT



Notably, MSB exceeds the average rate of fatal crashes per capita and by VMT compared to other Alaska communities and northern U.S. cities with comparable population and winter climates.

In the study area of the CSAP (MSB Expanded Core Area), a total of 4,802 crashes were recorded during this period, including 216 fatal or serious injury crashes. In 2018 there were 935 crashes; this increased to 1,015 in 2022, indicating crash frequency is rising with the increasing population. High-risk areas are concentrated in the City of Wasilla, particularly around major corridors such as the Parks Highway and Palmer-Wasilla Highway. Notably, 40% of crashes occurred on high-speed, high-volume roads, and 70% of all crashes were intersection related—59% of which were serious.

Modal Trends Identified in the CSAP:



Motor vehicles: single vehicle run-off the road, head-on, and rear-end

Motorcycles: Angle and front-to-rear

Bicycles: motor vehicle turning right and vehicle hitting cyclist going straight

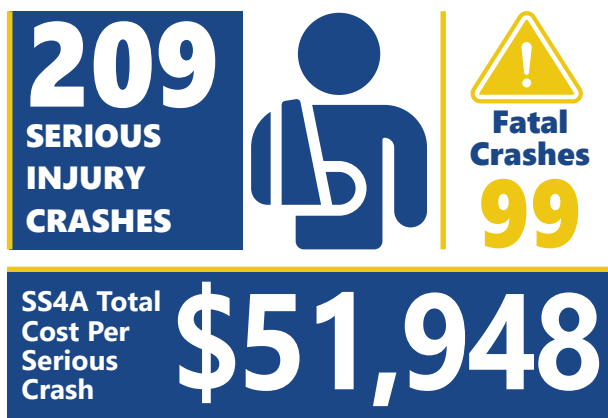
Pedestrians: motor vehicle turning right and vehicle hitting pedestrian going straight.

Substance use and seasonal conditions also contribute to the risk: 24% of serious crashes involved drugs or alcohol, and 71% of all crashes occurred during winter months. Young drivers (ages 25–34) were involved in 22% of serious crashes. VRUs such as pedestrians and cyclists face disproportionate risks, with 30% of pedestrian and 27% of bicycle crashes resulting in death or serious injury.

The safety analysis conducted during the CSAP identified the following risk profiles based on crashes analyzed between 2018-2022.

- **Roads with posted speed limits of 45 miles per hour (mph) or higher.** Of all VRU crashes, 58% occurred on roads with higher posted speed limits.
- **Roads with no separated facilities.** VRU crashes occurred 58% of the time on roads with no separated path, and 67% of serious VRU crashes occurred on roads with no separated path.
- **Intersections.** 80% of all VRU crashes occurred near an intersection, and 66% of all serious and fatal crashes occurred at an intersection.
- **Collector and arterial roads.** 60% of all VRU crashes occurred on roads with this functional class.
- **Proximity to public facilities.** Underscoring this risk is the fact that 61% of all VRU crashes occurred within a 3/4 mile radius of a school.
- **All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs).** Concerns with unsafe operation of ATVs came up repeatedly through CSAP public outreach. Crash data for ATVs was limited for the analysis period, but one of the six recorded crashes resulted in a fatality. A third of all ATV crashes involved a rider who was aged 20 or younger.

Crash data from 2018 to 2022 for the entire borough revealed 209 serious injury crashes and 99 fatal crashes. With a total project budget of \$16 million to address these safety concerns, the cost per serious crash averages out to approximately \$51,948 per crash. This figure highlights the scale of investment proposed to improve roadway safety and underscores the importance of strategic, data-driven interventions to ensure that every dollar contributes to saving lives and preventing injuries.



Wasilla Middle School Entrance from Bogard Road (note lack of pathway access for walkers and bikers)

Project Safety Summary Table

Project #	Crash History	High Injury Network	Context	Key Concern
#1	1 serious, 7 suspected injury (2 VRUs)	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At-grade railroad crossing and six lane highway crossing due to closed pedestrian underpass Encompasses interstate, arterial, and collector routes 	Unsafe crossings and incomplete non-motorized network between schools and key destinations
#2	No fatalities/injuries	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No separated facilities near school Area population growth of 24% from 2020-2024 School capacity doubling by 2027 School approach is two-way stop-controlled at intersection of high volume collector routes 	Proactive safety countermeasures needed for fast-growing area near school.
#3	1 fatality, 1 serious injury (VRUs), total of 15 fatalities and 56 serious injury crashes within 50' of a path	Partially	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No separated facilities near schools Lack of marked crossing at south school entrance from residential areas High-speed (45mph) collector 	Student and residential commuter risk due to lack of separation and crossing, gap in non-motorized network on collector between two arterials.
#4	1 serious injury, 7 suspected injuries (1 ped)	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local + arterial Connects across interstate Frequent injuries near schools 	Frequent injuries, lacks safe pedestrian infrastructure
#5	Not applicable (planning grant)	N/A	See Planning & Demonstration Activities section (page 12)	Planning for SRTS improvements
#6	1 fatality, 1 serious (VRUs)	Partially	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VRU conflicts with ATVs including fatal 2024 incident 32% of survey respondents concerned with ATVs on paths 	Off-road vehicle conflicts on non-motorized paths

Safety Impact

Proactive safety measures to keep serious crashes low are critical for this fast growing area. The data supporting safety need shows increasing crashes and a high crash fatality rate of 18.49 per 100,000 people. This is driven by crashes on high-speed and high-capacity roads, high-risk intersections, and the vulnerability of non-motorized road users such as school-aged children, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The projects outlined in this application represent a suite of low-cost, high-impact strategies that will significantly reduce or eliminate roadway fatalities and serious injuries. These projects are designed not only to address current safety concerns but also to support long-term improvements in land use, community connectivity, and the built environment. Each project contributes to a safer, more accessible transportation network that aligns with MSB's goals for a safe community.

MSB's proposed safety projects are not only responsive to local crash data and community concerns, they also align with evidence-based countermeasures identified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The following project descriptions highlight how each addresses critical safety needs within the MSB and aligns with nationally recognized, research-backed countermeasures.

Project 1: Wasilla Middle & High Schools Separated Path & Crossing (\$2,535,360 requested)

Alignment with Proven Countermeasures

Pedestrian Infrastructure Enhancements: NHTSA identifies the construction of sidewalks, pedestrian paths, and improved crossings as highly effective in reducing pedestrian crashes. FHWA acknowledges walkways as one of its [proven safety countermeasures](#), reducing pedestrian crashes by 65-89% when installed on a roadway without one.

Lighting Improvements: Enhancing lighting in pedestrian underpasses is a recommended strategy to improve visibility and reduce nighttime crashes.

Benefits

This project enhances bicycle and pedestrian safety by reducing exposure to high-speed traffic and improving visibility. It will connect schools to nearby neighborhoods, parks, a library, retail areas, and restaurants - making it safer and easier for students and residents to walk or bike. The Wasilla Middle and High School campuses, which also serve as recreational destinations with an ice arena, sports fields, and a pool, will benefit from these improvements. Installing a sidewalk can reduce pedestrian crashes by over 40%.¹

Project 2: Shaw Elementary School Safety Improvements (\$5,417,600 requested)

Alignment with Proven Countermeasures

Roundabouts: NHTSA recognizes roundabouts as one of the most effective intersection safety treatments, significantly reducing fatal and injury crashes. FHWA also identifies them as a proven [countermeasure](#), reducing serious crashes at two-way stop-controlled intersections by up to 82%.

Safe Routes to School Infrastructure: Separated paths and improved crossings are key components of Safe Routes to School programs, which are supported by NHTSA as effective for reducing child pedestrian injuries.

Benefits

This project will be coordinated with an existing, separately funded borough effort to improve parking lot circulation and roadway connections. It will enhance safety in a rapidly growing school zone by reducing crash severity and improving walkability for students and families.

Did You Know? None of the 8 roundabouts built in MSB since 2010 have had serious injury or fatal crashes, or any crash involving bikes, pedestrians, or motorcycles!



Project 3: Colony Middle & High Schools - 49th State Street Separated Path (\$1,890,000 requested)

Alignment with Proven Countermeasures

Separated Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities: NHTSA and FHWA support the development of separated paths to reduce conflicts between vehicles and non-motorized users.

Speed Management: Evaluating and potentially lowering speed limits aligns with NHTSA's recommendations for reducing crash severity and improving safety for all users.

Crosswalk enhancements: RRFBs are an FHWA-proven [countermeasure](#) that improve driver yield rates and reduce pedestrian crashes by up to 47%.

Benefits

The proposed project will address a gap in the non-motorized transportation network directly adjacent to two secondary schools and within a rapidly expanding community. The proposed path will be immediately adjacent to the growing multi-family development and provide a safer and more convenient crossing to the school campuses to the west.

¹ Abou-Senna et.al, 2022, CMF Clearinghouse

Project 4: Palmer High School & Academy Charter Schools – Auklet and Arctic Avenue Sidewalks (\$1,843,200 requested)

Alignment with Proven Countermeasures

Sidewalk Installation and Crosswalk Markings: These are core NHTSA-recommended strategies for improving pedestrian safety, especially near schools.

Access Management: Connecting users to safe, grade-separated access (via existing underpass) aligns with best practices for reducing pedestrian exposure to traffic.

Benefits

The proposed project will address gaps in the non-motorized network between Palmer High School and north Arctic Avenue neighborhoods and connect them to Academy Charter School. The proposed project adds sidewalks and crosswalks where none currently exist and eliminates non-motorized network gaps. Increased traffic is anticipated with the planned Academy Charter High School near Auklet and Arctic Avenue, reinforcing the need to create safe non-motorized access in the vicinity. Auklet Avenue offers a direct route to the Glenn Highway pedestrian underpass, allowing non-motorized users to avoid crossing the at-grade, high intersection of Glenn Highway and Arctic Avenue when traveling to or from Palmer High School.

Project 5: Area-Wide Safe Routes to Schools Supplemental Planning Grant

This planning initiative, described in the “Supplemental Planning and Demonstration Activities” section, will identify and prioritize safety improvements for school routes across the borough.

Project 6: Area-Wide – No Motor Vehicles Regulatory Signs (\$852,000 requested)

Alignment with Proven Countermeasures

Enforcement and Public Awareness: NHTSA supports the use of signage and enforcement to deter illegal behaviors, such as unauthorized ATV use on pedestrian paths. The CSAP’s steering committee included law enforcement officers, who noted that especially younger ATV riders lack awareness of the law that prohibits ATVs on paths.

Benefits

This low-cost intervention promotes compliance with traffic laws, reduces conflicts between motorized and non-motorized users, and enhances safety for pedestrians and cyclists. It reinforces state law [13 AAC 02.455\(g\)](#), which prohibits ATVs in locations intended for pedestrians or other non-motorized traffic. This project benefits pedestrians and cyclists, including children and elderly residents, and reinforces the principle that safety is a shared responsibility. The project also supports the integrity of the borough’s non-motorized network and encourages safe, lawful use of public infrastructure.

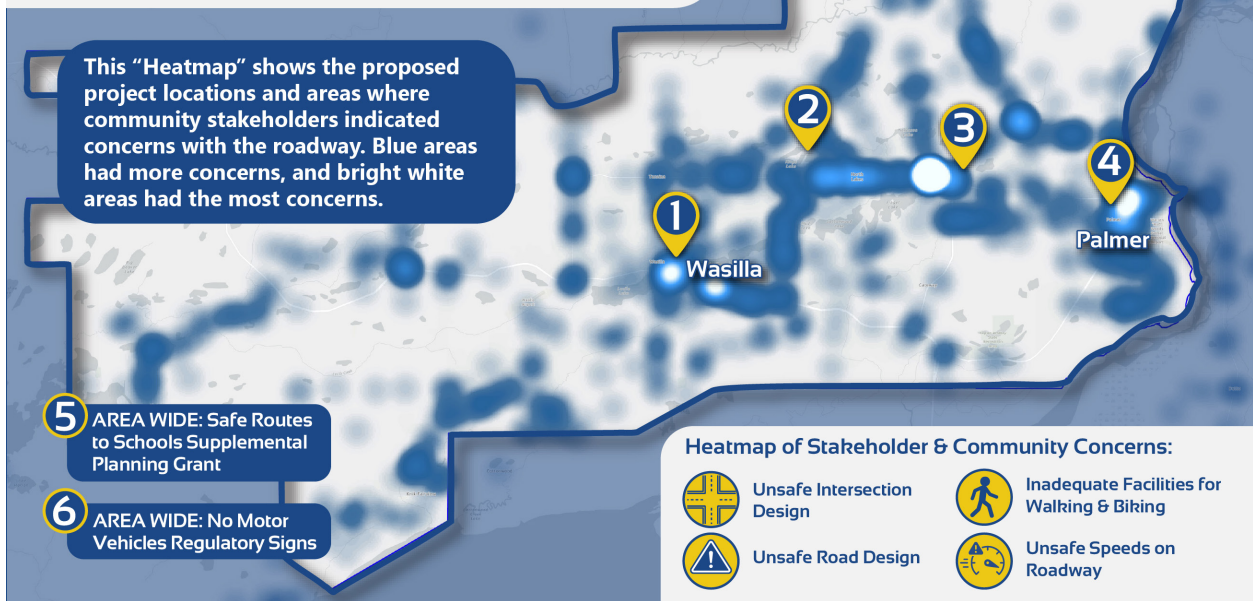
Engagement and Collaboration

The MSB CSAP gathered and documented a robust level of engagement input and built critical partnerships during plan development. These efforts and relationships informed the selection of implementation activities and will continue to guide public involvement as projects move into the design phase.

The proposed projects align with this feedback by constructing non-motorized routes to remove network gaps. The proposed projects include improving underpass conditions that are currently impassable due to poor design and maintenance, and improving signage for enforcement of current laws.

Community members also identified specific areas of concern using an interactive map, and the projects in this proposal closely relate to these top areas of concern. The following map indicates the highest priority locations of concern based on survey results.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS RAISED DURING STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



Top Road Safety Concerns	Survey Results
Poor Maintenance of Roads & Pathways	66%
Lack of Separated Walking & Biking Infrastructure	65%
Unsafe Driving Behaviors	64%

When asked what would improve safety, 78% of respondents supported road designs with features like separated paths, crosswalks, and bike lanes, while 59% favored stronger traffic enforcement, including for ATVs on paths.

Demographics and Stakeholder Engagement through Construction

The selected projects prioritize investment in school-aged children who are disproportionately affected by unsafe pedestrian environments. Nearly all of this group cannot drive, which limits their independence and poses daily safety risks. Nearly 27% of MSB's students - over 5,000 - attend schools in the project areas and will directly benefit from SS4A-funded safety improvements. As a rural community, MSB faces the challenge of maintaining a broad mobility network with limited population density to support it, making external funding like SS4A essential for building safe, accessible infrastructure.

METRIC	VALUE
Total Population (2024) ²	117,600 residents
Annual Growth Rate	2.01% since 2010
Under Age 18	25.3%
Age 65 and Older	14.2%
Average Household Size	2.73
Household Type	Mix of family & non-family households
Below Poverty Line	9.7%
Median Household Income	\$90,625
Households Without a Vehicle	~3%

These demographic trends and socioeconomic indicators will be critical in shaping equitable and efficient outreach, design, and implementation strategies in the next phase of these projects

Looking Ahead: Building on Robust Community Engagement for Design and Implementation

CSAP engagement resulted in over 2,500 meaningful touchpoints and over 15,000 social media views. Outreach included a public-facing project website, a safety survey, five stakeholder meetings, three focus group meetings, two virtual public workshops, three open house events, six pop-up events, fifteen MSB agency presentations, and targeted social media and email campaigns.

As the project transitions into the design and implementation phase, these engagement efforts provide a strong foundation. The community has already adopted a vision, ensuring that proposed safety improvements align with the lived experiences and priorities of those most affected. CSAP engagement will streamline the design and implementation phases by:

- Reducing the need for rework through early identification of community concerns and preferences.
- Accelerating design decisions with a clear understanding of stakeholder expectations.
- Enhancing public trust and buy-in, which will support smoother implementation and reduce potential resistance.
- Providing a ready network of engaged stakeholders to support continued collaboration, feedback, and communication.

To maintain this momentum, the project team will continue to engage the schools and families about the project progress, as well as conduct outreach and meetings to ensure the concepts and detailed designs align with the community needs.

Leveraging Partnerships

This work will include a broad range of established partners and stakeholders that were involved during the CSAP development. The robust group of stakeholders includes: residents, local advocacy groups, community councils, disability and family services, tribal

governments, education and youth services, senior services, emergency responders, local road service areas, recreation organizations, employment services, local businesses, housing, healthcare, transit, MSB Transportation Advisory Board, and MSB Government. Efforts will be coordinated with these agencies to ensure seamless alignment with the safety vision for the borough, ensuring context-appropriate solutions are complementary, synchronized, and effective.

Project-Area Specific Ongoing Engagement

Each of these projects has been informed by extensive stakeholder engagement. MSB will continue to engage with the community, schools, and other stakeholders through the design and construction phase. Input received during CSAP development provides the foundation for these projects as demonstrated below. Established partnerships with stakeholders will be reactivated, and community engagement will include public meetings, project websites, open houses, and coordination with Wasilla and Palmer city governments.



Ideas and concerns of community members were gathered throughout the project area, and helped inform and prioritize which projects would have the most value and impact

Project 1: Wasilla Middle & High Schools – Separated Path and Crossing

"No sidewalk for kids or staff to use for Wasilla Middle." Resident CSAP Comment

Community feedback has emphasized the need for safer routes, with comments from the safety survey such as: "Have you ever tried to walk somewhere from Wasilla High School after school gets out?" The project is a collaborative effort, with matching funds from the City of Wasilla and written support from the Alaska Railroad.

Project 2: Shaw Elementary School – Safety Improvements

"There needs to be some major traffic adjustments for this 4-way intersection. A roundabout, or a traffic light would benefit everyone involved." Resident CSAP Comment

Community feedback has emphasized the need for safer infrastructure, such as the comment: "No walkable area around the school property to use when in the area." The project is a collaborative effort, with written support from the MSB School District, Alaska DOT, and cost match backed by MSB voter-approved bond funding.

Project 3: Colony Middle & High Schools - 49th State Street Separated Path

You have to walk or bike on the shoulder of 49th State Street, and people drive extremely fast and do not move over for walkers. I would love to be able to walk to places from my house but feel VERY unsafe doing so." Resident CSAP Comment

The project is a collaborative effort, initiated by MSB through a voter-approved bond in 2021, with Alaska DOT owning and maintaining the roadway and MSB agreeing to maintain the new path once built.

Project 4: Palmer High School & Academy Charter Schools - Auklet and Arctic Avenue Sidewalks

Community feedback and crash data underscore the need for these improvements, with the area seeing multiple VRU injury crashes and with three schools in close proximity to Arctic Avenue. The project is supported by the City of Palmer's match funding.

Project 6: Area-Wide – No Motor Vehicles Regulatory Signs

This project responds directly to widespread and urgent community concern, with 72 survey comments citing ATV-related safety issues.

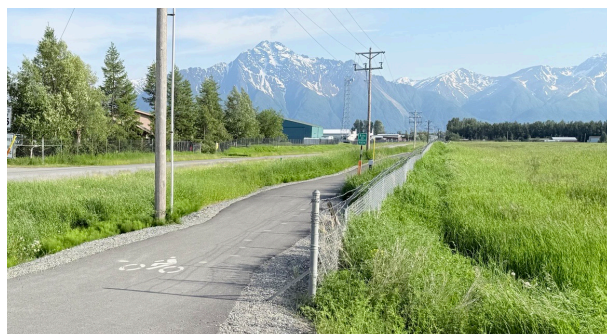
One resident shared:

"I have almost been seriously hurt 6 times this summer as ATVs and dirt bikes travel at high speeds on the bike path... I no longer feel safe and had to give up cycling." MSB Safety Survey Comment

The project is a collaborative effort supported by Alaska DOT, Alaska State Troopers, and the Wasilla and Palmer Police Departments, with MSB funding all matching costs, regardless of path ownership.

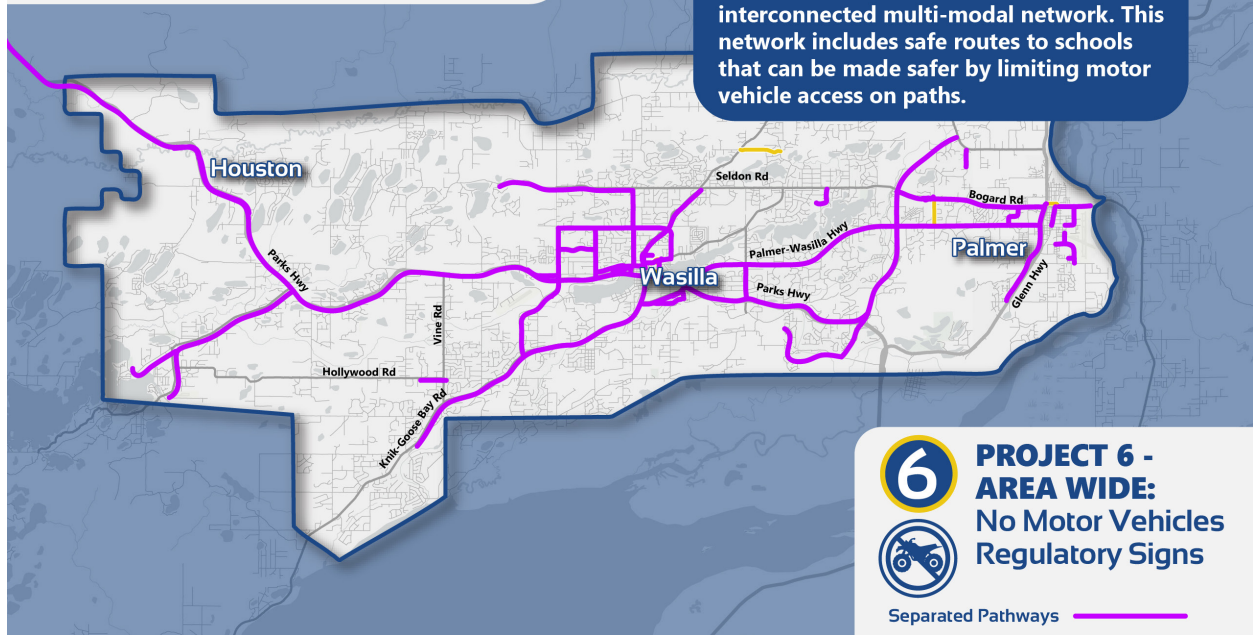


Lack of pathway signage restricting non-motorized use increases injury risks for walker and bikers



Designating multi-use pathways with 'No Motor Vehicles' signage would increase safety along the school access routes

MSB SEPARATED PATHWAYS



PROPOSED PLANNING & DEMONSTRATION ACTIVITIES

Project 5: Area-Wide – Safe Routes to Schools Supplemental Planning Grant

Overview:

Included in MSB's SS4A Implementation Grant application is a proposal for supplemental planning activity for the development of a comprehensive Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan. This initiative aligns with the borough's CSAP goal of providing "Safe, Equitable Walking Routes to School", which can be found on page 78 of MSB's CSAP. Student or school related safety was mentioned over 100 times throughout the CSAP document and was reiterated as a priority throughout the development of that plan. The proposed planning effort will serve as a critical next step to CSAP updates and implementation. Specifically, it will focus on identifying and prioritizing safety improvements around schools throughout the MSB. This work will build upon and accelerate the ongoing efforts of the MSB and MSB School District's SRTS planning, further advancing borough-wide strategies to ensure safer, more accessible routes for students.

The borough is requesting \$280,000 (\$350,000 total budget) to benefit 19,159 students across 49 schools. This expenditure equates to \$18.27 per student to better understand safety needs and provide detailed information that will help shape safer trips to and from school each day. The impact of this supplemental activity is vast, benefiting residents across over 25,000 square miles of the MSB, an area the size of the State of West Virginia.



Children using new path near Machetan Elementary School in Wasilla. This project was generated from the work of the MSB SRTS team, and the requested funding will allow this work to continue.

Background and Progress to Date:

The MSB developed its first SRTS Plan in 2014, and updated it in 2017 to account for school relocations and new subdivision development. In 2024 the workgroup, comprised of MSB Public Works and Planning, the MSB School District, and Alaska DOT completed a borough-wide school assessment, producing detailed, public-facing maps that identified recommended and non-recommended walking and crossing locations.

Unlike many other Alaska boroughs experiencing population decline, MSB gained approximately 22,750 residents between 2010 and 2022 and is projected to continue growing through at least 2050. This growth brings increased demand for new schools and safe, accessible routes for students who use active transportation. It also requires an updated SRTS plan to accurately reflect these conditions, continue to prioritize safety, and prepare for the future.

Proposed Supplemental Planning Activities:

To update the outdated plan and incorporate site-specific school safety measures into future planning, MSB seeks funding to engage a consultant team to:

Update Walking Route Assessments, reflecting population growth and new subdivision development near schools.

Support Community Engagement, including surveys, workshops, and pilot demonstration projects to gather input and build support with a wide variety of stakeholders.

Maintain and Expand Priority Maps and Lists, including cost estimates and bundling strategies for small-scale projects.

Enhance Project Readiness, identifying logical groupings of improvements that can be flexibly implemented within available funding.

Address Gaps in the Safe Routes to Schools 6 E's (Engineering, Education, Equity, Enforcement, Encouragement, and Evaluation). Develop strategies and materials for engineering, education, equity, enforcement, encouragement, and evaluation

- areas currently under-resourced within the existing workgroup.

Expected Outcomes:

- A refreshed and expanded SRTS Plan that reflects current conditions and community needs throughout the borough.
- A prioritized list of implementable projects with cost estimates and bundling strategies.
- Increased capacity for the MSB SRTS Team to deliver data-driven, community-supported safety improvements.
- Significant reduction or elimination of roadway fatalities and serious injuries involving VRUs, particularly children, in high-risk areas throughout the borough.
- A stronger pipeline of capital improvement projects aligned with SS4A goals.

Duration and Budget:

The \$280,000 requested will support consultant services over a three-year period, enabling a comprehensive, borough-wide planning effort that includes assessments, mapping, outreach, and project development support across dozens of school sites. This sustained support will ensure continued progress and integration of SRTS priorities into the MSB's capital improvement planning process.



PROJECT READINESS

MSB will use established borough and Alaska DOT design standards, which include ADA compliance. MSB is well-versed in successfully delivering federal grant funds for construction projects, having worked closely with DOT on numerous projects across the borough. The milestones and status for each of the projects are detailed below. All will be completed within the five-year implementation timeline, assuming a grant award by mid-2026.



Project 1:

Wasilla Middle & High Schools – Separated Path and Crossing

No preliminary design has been conducted. However, with the exception of the sidewalk on Westpoint Drive, it is believed all proposed improvements can be constructed within existing right of way. A NEPA document will be required.



Project 2:

Shaw Elementary School – Safety Improvements

A design consultant is under contract for this work. Design is estimated at 25% complete for the path and 10% complete for the roundabout. A NEPA document will be required.



Project 3:

Colony Middle & High Schools – 49th State Street Separated Path

A design consultant is under contract for this project. Design is 95% complete and right of way and utility relocation work has been initiated. A NEPA document will be required.



Project 4:

Palmer High School & Academy Charter School – Auklet Avenue Sidewalk

The proposed project area includes a portion of roads proposed for pavement resurfacing as part of City of Palmer's [gravel to pavement project](#) priority list in 2025. The proposed project will ensure dedicated non-motorized facilities are included as part of these projects and designed into roadway work. Design work has not been initiated, and a NEPA document needs to be completed.



Project 6:

Area-Wide – No Motor Vehicles Regulatory Signs

The project design is estimated at 25% complete given that MSB already has a GIS inventory of all existing separated paths mapped against intersecting roadways, allowing an accurate initial estimate of sign quantities. Sign panels and single post installations are established standard details MSB can quickly apply after a ground-truthing of sign needs and site conditions. All signs would be placed within the existing right of way and are not anticipated to introduce utility conflicts. The NEPA document is not complete, but due to the limited scope and ground disturbing activities is anticipated to be a straightforward effort.

Thank you for considering our application. We appreciate DOT's commitment to improving road safety throughout the U.S.

Project Milestone Schedule

		Public Involvement	Preliminary Design/NEPA	ROW & Utilities	Final Design	Construction
#1	Wasilla Middle & High School	2026	2027	2028	2028	2028
#2	Shaw Elementary	2026-2027	2028	2029	2030	2030
#3	49th State Street Path	2026	2027	2027	2027	2027
#4	Palmer High & Academy Charter	2026	2027	2028	2028	2029
#5	Safe Routes to School (Supplemental Plan)	2026	2026	N/A	N/A	N/A
#6	No Motor Vehicle Signs	2026	2027	N/A	2027	2028

APPENDIX A: SITE CONDITIONS PHOTO REPORT

1 Project 1: Wasilla Middle & High Schools – Separated Path and Crossing

New sidewalk and shared use path installation as well as crosswalk enhancements near Wasilla Middle School and Wasilla High School along Bogard and Crusey, and marked crosswalk and sidewalk on Westpoint Drive.



Reopening of the pedestrian underpass beneath the Parks Highway and railroad tracks, including lighting and flood mitigation enhancements.



APPENDIX A: SITE CONDITIONS PHOTO REPORT

2 Project 2: Shaw Elementary Safety Improvements

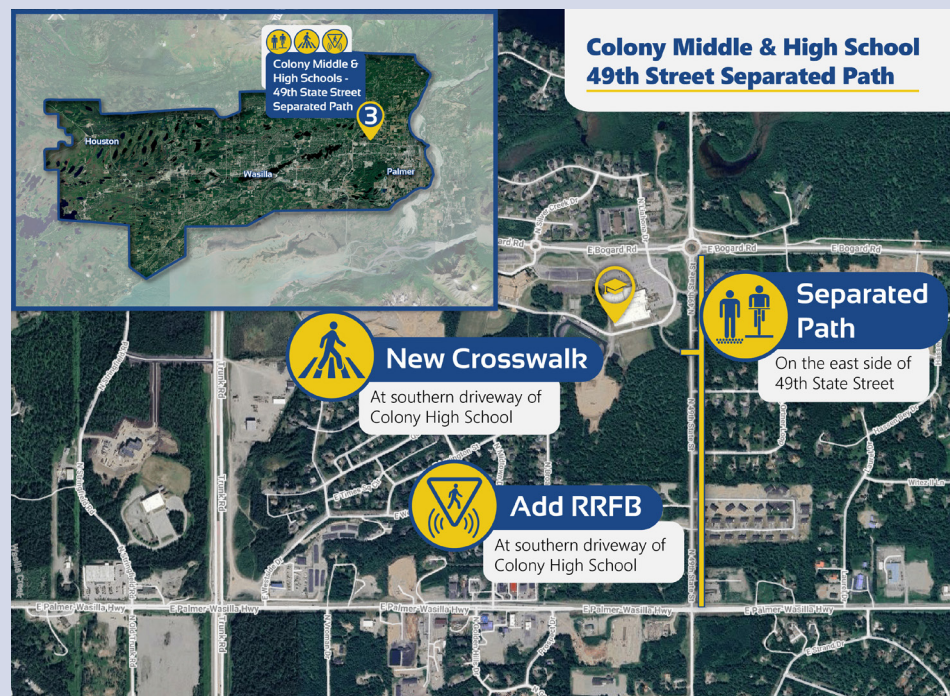
Proposed roundabout at school intersection of Paradise Lane and Wasilla-Fishhook Road and a separated multi-use path along Paradise Lane.



APPENDIX A: SITE CONDITIONS PHOTO REPORT

3 Project 3: Colony Middle & High Schools - 49th State Street Separated Path

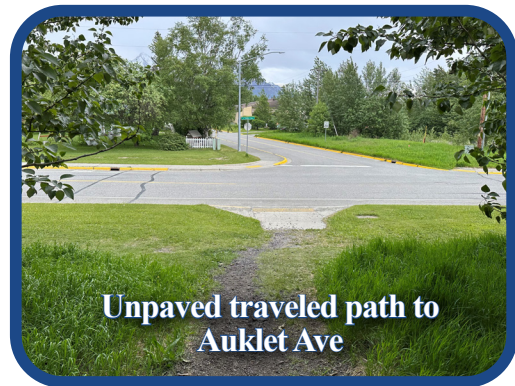
Separated shared use path along 49th State Street and RRFB near Colony High School, which will both help address a non-motorized network gap surrounding two schools.



APPENDIX A: SITE CONDITIONS PHOTO REPORT

4 Project 4: Palmer High School & Academy Charter- Auklet and Arctic Sidewalks

New sidewalk and marked crosswalks along Auklet Avenue, and a new sidewalk along Arctic Avenue.



APPENDIX A: SITE CONDITIONS PHOTO REPORT

5 Project 5: (Areawide) Safe Routes to Schools Supplemental Planning Grant

Continue work of MSB, MSB School District and Alaska DOT&PF Safe Routes to School Team with consultant support to continue borough-wide SRTS improvements and needs.



Bike path on Nelson near
Machetanz Elementary

6 Project 6: (Areawide) No Motor Vehicles Regulatory Signs

“No Motor Vehicles” regulatory signs along separated pathways throughout the borough.



Regulatory sign example -
systemic to all separated pathways



Example of ATV damage to
separated path