

Section 2A – Problem Identification

Gainesville City Schools has five schools (Centennial, Gainesville Middle, New Holland, Enota and Fair Street) within a two mile radius of each other. They are community schools that have many children and families that utilize sidewalks to travel from one place to another. Many of the areas surrounding these schools do not have sidewalk access for students to bike or walk to school. Often, there are sidewalks that turn into a grass, dirt or gravel pathway or just no sidewalk. In the morning or in the afternoon, it is not uncommon to see students walking on grass, dirt, gravel or even in the roadway.

Safety - Each school has a low number of students participating in walking/biking more than once a week to school because of the limited sidewalk access. Centennial has 6 that either walk/bike but because of the significant number of car riders, it makes it unsafe for students to walk/bike because of the cars -Gainesville Middle School has 110 that either walk/bike at their current location but will be moving to a new building in 2009 where they estimate that the number will increase to 150 - New Holland has no students that walk/bike because of the lack of sidewalk access - Enota has nine students that walk/bike to school but have the potential for 75 or more but, again, because of the lack of sidewalk access, students either ride the bus or are driven to school - Fair Street has approximately 45 students that walk/bike but face similar issues like New Holland.

Health - Each school believes that if there is an opportunity to provide safe passage for students via walking/biking then it would reduce the number of car riders and associated amount of emissions.

Traffic - During 2007, traffic accident data was collected that effect the schools in this project (See S1 thru S12). Data corresponding to the maps revealed the following: Prior St. to 1020 Jesse Jewell 16 accidents with an average daily traffic count of 26,063 - Hamilton Place to Sherwood Park Dr. 5 accidents with an average daily traffic count of 17,342 - Jesse Jewell to College Ave. 14 accidents with an average daily traffic count of 954 - 1095 Hazel Street to Central Ave 0 accidents with an average daily traffic count of 844 - Auburn Ave. to Central Ave. 3 accidents with an average daily traffic count of 669 - S. Enota Dr. to Roper Hill 27 accidents with an average daily traffic count of 14,850 - 819 Park St. to Park St. Place 0 accidents with an average daily traffic count of 2,589 - Park St. to Sherwood Plaza 0 accidents with an average daily traffic count of 2,589 - Prior St. to Forston St. 1 accident with an average daily traffic count of 1,074 - 471 Woodsmill to Elephant Trail 0 accidents with an average daily traffic count of 2,457- 743 Ridgewood Ave. to Wilshire Road 0 accidents with an average daily traffic count of 1,457 -Jesse Jewell to Washington St. 49 accidents with an average daily traffic count of 26,815. This data indicates that in one year, 115 accidents occurred in an area where our students travel with 30 of them resulting in injury. The exact number of students living within a two mile radius of the school is difficult to ascertain, so consequently the number of students within this radius who ride buses versus ride in cars or walk/bike is likewise difficult to determine. However, based on totals for the system, a close approximation can be established using the percentage of total bus riders to total students in the system as a whole, then aggregated by the percentage of student population at each school in comparison to total student population for the system. It is important to note that Gainesville City Schools offers 'Programs of Choice'. Students can attend any school in our system regardless of where they live in our city and their proximity to any school. The following data is an approximation only. Centennial has 856 students enrolled with 421 bus riders and 435 car/bike/walk. Enota has 744 students enrolled with 366 bus riders and 378 car/bike/walk. Fair Street has 627 enrolled with 308 bus riders and 319 car/bike/walk. New Holland has 615 students enrolled with 302 bus riders and 313 car/bike/walk. Gainesville Middle School has 900 enrolled with 442 bus riders and 364 car/bike/walk.

Section 3 – Proposed Project - B

Walking is the most basic form of transportation. Every trip we make, even by car, we begin and end as a pedestrian. In most of the world, motor vehicles have replaced horses and wagons. Motor vehicles are more abundant and faster than horses were, creating life threatening challenges for pedestrians. Now more than ever, the importance of sidewalks are a function of the speed and volume of traffic on our roads. Many people do not have access to automobiles or even bicycles and must use sidewalks to reach their destinations. Additionally, walking is a pleasant way to exercise, relax and interact with others in the community. The safety and convenience of travel for pedestrians is an important factor in our quality of life. Our infrastructure project includes providing safe sidewalks for our students and families to use to get from one location to the next in a safe manner. We believe that by adding sidewalks, we are reducing the amount of emissions in the air caused by students being driven to school. Additionally, we are increasing the number of students walking/biking which will assist with decreasing the obesity rates in our community. Georgia is facing difficult issues with the rise of childhood obesity. Twenty-four percent of all third grade children are obese with 16% in the middle school. Seventy-one percent of middle school students and 61% of high school students in Georgia get enough vigorous physical activity with only 18% of all high school students in Georgia consuming 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily. With the rise of childhood health risks to include hypertension, asthma, sleep apnea, diabetes and decreased well being, schools are being required to find innovative ways to increase physical and mental wellness. Providing sidewalks can certainly aid in the increase of individuals walking in our community. Maps and diagrams are attached that indicate street names, locations, city names, sidewalks and crosswalk, traffic signals and signs (S1 - S12).

Section 3 – Proposed Project

(1) Improve bike/pedestrian safety

(2) Increase the number of students and students with disabilities walking to school

(3) Improve the environment within the school vicinity

These funds will be used to add sidewalks to high pedestrian areas in the communities surrounding these five schools (Centennial, Enota, Fair Street, New Holland & the new Gainesville Middle School). The sidewalks will encourage more students and students with disabilities to walk/bike to school whereby decreasing the number of car riders on the roadway. If we can decrease the number of car riders at our schools, we can decrease the amount of emissions from each car and limit the number of cars traveling in and around our school campus. According to Air Quality Management Division of Hamilton County, they report that because large quantities of air are required to burn gasoline, large amounts of CO₂ are produced. If you're a typical motorist who drives 13 000 miles each year, you're emitting about four and a half tonnes of CO₂ per year – that's three times the weight of your car. We cannot encourage our students to bike/walk to school until there are safe routes for them to travel. By adding the sidewalks and more bike racks at each school, we can promote a healthy and active habit that can turn into a lifestyle choice. Activities that we would develop to encourage biking/walking include bike safety assemblies, increased adult safety patrol and safety monitors, increase the number of 'Walk to School' days and Safe Bike Driving classes.

Section 4 – Program Information

Each of the five schools uniquely address Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Engineering and Evaluation differently. **Centennial** - Students receive instruction in safety through the regular, physical education and Literary Arts class. They host a Safe Kids Day sponsored by Safe Kids of Northeast Georgia Medical Center. Students rotate through stations such as Bike Safety, Walking Safety, Swimming Safety, Fire Safety and Electricity Safety. Each station is manned by Emergency Medical Technicians, police officers and health workers and personnel. The Resource Officer also visits the school and classrooms on a regular basis and is available for classroom discussion of safety issues. He has met with students one-on-one to address specific safety issues as well as small and whole groups. Centennial has received two bike racks from the City of Gainesville to encourage students to ride their bikes to school with parent permission. Teachers survey students to determine who does not have a bike helmet. The numbers are given to Safe Kids and students receive a brand new helmet. Students who are Centennial Safety Patrol Officers assist students in the morning and afternoon with departing and arriving cars and buses and assist students walking home to stay on the school sidewalk until they come to the road. There are 60 fifth grade students involved in Safety Patrol. Their assignments include bus safety, car safety, sidewalk safety, as well as the building and grounds supervision. Centennial does not have a Crossing Guard to assist students, although they have a Traffic Control Officer to assist with cars entering the car lanes in front of the school. Teachers help students and adults cross the busy car lane to access the school. Centennial has a coordinator for the Safety Program and a Safety Patrol Program. **Enota** - Enota has an annual Walk to School Day. Families congregate at two locations along with community members and the media. Enota has two crossing guards and volunteers that assist with directing traffic. The physical education and health teachers teach safety lessons to all students. There is a bike rack being installed on campus with the hope of adding more in the future. The assistant principal is on the district-wide safety committee and the school has a safety committee comprised of teachers, students and parents. **Fair Street** - Fair Street teaches specific units of inquiry on health and wellness to students. There are crossing guards at two intersections and an escort takes students to their homes if they live in the adjacent apartment complex. Two traffic calming speed bumps are located at two crossing areas. Students keep a journal of their exercise activity and they participate in the President's Physical Fitness Program. The assistant principal is in charge of managing the safety plan at the school. **New Holland** - Students participate in the Safe Kids Bike Safety Program each year with all students learning about safety in physical education. The fire department visits the pre- and kindergarten class to teach about safety. New Holland has a student parliament which includes a school safety patrol. They have one crossing guard and the school resource officer works with staff and students regarding safety. The assistant principal is in charge of managing the safety plan for the school. **Gainesville Middle School** - Gainesville Middle School currently has a wellness program and during health class students learn about safety. Character Education is a significant program within the school and all students are exposed to these classes. The assistant principal is in charge of managing the safety plan for the school. The YMCA and Falcon's Fitness are active partners within the school, working with students on fitness and wellness. Each school has a safety plan that is updated each year to include addressing the issues of safe passage to and from school.