



Safe Routes to School Letter of Support for HF 1108

February 22, 2021

RE: Support for House File 1108

To: Representative Fue Lee, Chair, Capital Investment Committee, Minnesota House of Representatives

I am writing on behalf of the City of Jackson in strong support of HF 1108 and the Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS). This program has made a positive, lasting impact in the city of Jackson.

Specifically, SRTS has brought together a coalition of groups that have worked together to provide safe, walking and bicycle paths to school for students. These entities include the Friends of the Jackson County Trails, Jackson County, the City of Jackson, and the Jackson County Central School District. Together, these entities have come together to make two major SRTS infrastructure projects in the past decade:

- Springfield Parkway Sidewalk/Trail Extension
- Dewey St. Trail Connector

Both of these projects provided a safe route to get students off busy highways and onto a wide, safe sidewalk. While primary purpose of the projects was to improve safety, these sidewalks have also provided recreational trails for the general public to enjoy year around. Without STRTS these projects would not have happened and the safety of our students and drivers would be in jeopardy every day throughout the school year. Moreover, these projects have helped foster an environment promoting active, healthy living for all.

In addition to the aforementioned major infrastructure projects, the SRTS program has resulted in a number of non-infrastructure related initiatives as well:

- Improving intersection crossings for not just students, but for community residents.
- Creating safer school zones for alternative transportation users and motorists.
- Enhancing busing efficiency to promote a more active lifestyle.
- Develop creative encouragement activities for schools at school, including "Moving to School Days."
- Helping reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and complete streets.
- A revitalized bicycling and walking culture that has helped create healthy lifestyles and behavioral changes for all ages.

- Creating a sense of independence for youth to walk and bike to school, which helps get them to reach the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity daily.
- Create opportunities for students, regardless of ethnicity and disability, to learn and participate in Walk/Bike/Fun Education programming.
- Building a community where individuals want to live, learn, work, play, and age in place.

The SRTS is a multi-faceted program that has many benefits, involves partners at all levels of the government and the community, and benefits all reaches of the community. There are very few state or federal government programs that have as far-reaching impact as STRS. I strongly urge you and your Committee to support continued funding for the SRTS program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Skaret". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Matt Skaret
City Administrator

Cc: House Capital Investment Committee