

THE VIRGINIA SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN

Belview Elementary School



By: New River Valley Planning District Commission
For: Montgomery County Planning Department



Safe Routes to School Travel Plan
Belview Elementary School

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Section 1 – Introduction

Belview Elementary School (a Title 1 School) is committed to ensuring that all our students can utilize *physically active transportation*, such as walking and bicycling, for a safe and enjoyable trip to school. This School Travel Plan aims to address the issues that impede active transportation and seeks to strategically solve these problems by implementing a Safe Routes to School program.

Our community is motivated to pursue Safe Routes to School because:

- We highly value student physical activity and health.
- We want to maintain the air quality and environment around our school.
- We wish to improve unsafe or insufficient walkways, bikeways, and crossings.
- We are committed to reducing speeding and reckless behaviors near the school.
- This project is one of the pilot projects for SRTS in the unincorporated area of Montgomery County. We hope to find success in this project, and to use them as an example of the positive effects of SRTS.



This Safe Routes to School Plan is supported by the Belview Village Plan and the Village Transportation Links Plan (VITL) which were both adopted by Montgomery County in 2007. The VITL Plan suggests that “Belview Elementary School is the heart of the Village of Belview, a place where the community gathers for events and programs, and where Belview’s children receive a quality education.” (*Belview Village Plan*, pg. 246)

Additionally, the following Land Use Policies were identified in the Belview area:

BVW 8.1.1 VITL Plan: Implement the Village Transportation Links (VITL) plan, which provides trails for biking and walking that serve to connect points within the Village of Belview, provide a safe means for pedestrian and bicycle travel, and would connect to surrounding localities via the Huckleberry Trail.

BVW 8.1.2 Safe Routes: Work with Belview Elementary School and the Montgomery County School Board to create “Safe Routes to School” facilities, including demand signals and center island pedestrian safety strips at the Peppers Ferry/Prices Fork Intersection.

The VITL Plan was funded by a grant received through the Virginia Department of Transportation. The VITL plan states that “The concept for Belview focuses on providing safe connections from existing and proposed residential areas to Belview Elementary. Buffered sidewalks along the north side of Peppers Ferry Road connect residential areas

to the school with median refuge and improved crossing that provides both traffic calming and safe access for school children”. (*Village Transportation Links Plan, Pg. 21*)

Although Belview Elementary School is the main focal point of the Village, access to the school is dangerous because of high travel speeds along Peppers Ferry Road (Rt. 114). The shoulders along the road are narrow and the nearby signalized intersection with Prices Fork Road is dangerous. Trail systems play a critical role in providing safe pedestrian access throughout the community. The VITL Plan suggests that “traffic calming measures in front of the school will be critical for connecting future residential development to the north of Belview Elementary to the school itself”. (*Village Transportation Links Plan, Pg. 21*)

Montgomery County and the Village of Belview hope that through implementing a Safe Routes to School program, which the goals outlined in the Belview Village Plan and VITL Plan, can be met.

Section 2 – Safe Routes to School Team

We believe that a diverse Safe Routes to School Team develops the most successful School Travel Plans. Our Team is comprised of a variety of stakeholders, each lending their own unique perspective and expertise in order to make walking and bicycling safe, accessible, and fun for our students. The members of our team include:

- Rhonda Baker, Principal, Belview Elementary School
- Lt. James Bowyer, Supervisor & Crime Prevention Specialist, Sheriff’s Office
- David Clarke, VDOT, Christiansburg Residency Office
- Gary Cook, Physical Education Teacher, Belview Elementary School
- John Holst, Traffic Engineer, Whitman, Requardt & Associates
- Brea Hopkins, Planning and Zoning Technician, Montgomery County
- Robin Hylton, School Nurse, Belview Elementary School
- Chris Lucas, DARE Instructor, Sheriff’s Office
- Jamie MacLean, Development Planner, Montgomery County
- Gretchen Ninestein, Early Literacy Aide, Belview Elementary School
- Wendy Phillips, Reading Specialist, Belview Elementary School
- Kay Preston, Kindergarten Teacher, Belview Elementary School
- Steven Sandy, Planning Director, Montgomery County
- Elijah Sharp, Regional Transportation Planner, NRV Planning District Commission
- Melanie Smith, Healthy Kids Campaign Organizer, Virginia Faith Center
- Laura Williams, Grant Writer/Research Proposals, Mont. Co. Public Schools

The primary contact person for our School Travel Plan is:

Steven Sandy, AICP, CZA
Montgomery County Planning Director
755 Roanoke Street, Suite 2A
(540)394-2148
sandysm@montgomerycountyva.gov

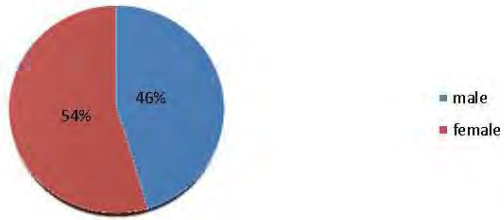
Section 3 – The Public Input Process

Our Team worked to include the entire community in developing our School Travel Plan. To accomplish this, we:

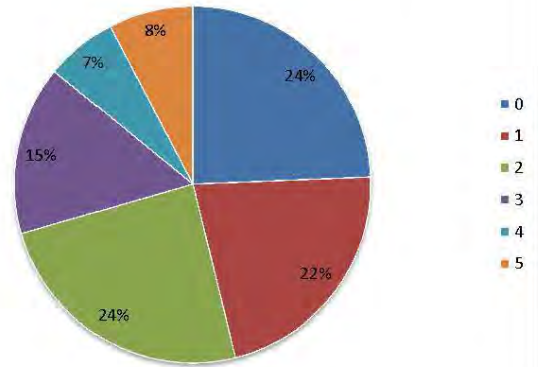
- ***Administered parent surveys***
Nearly 250 surveys were sent home with students in March 2012. 79 surveys were returned within the 4-day timeline (about 30%). The Parent Survey template provided by the federal SRTS online training program was utilized (shown on the following page). In general, over 50% of the survey respondents lived over 2-miles away from campus. In addition to distance, the speed of traffic and amount of traffic on Route 114 were the primary concerns. Roughly 38% of the survey respondents lived less than 10 minutes away from the school. Additional survey feedback is provided on page 5.
- ***Interviewed key stakeholders***
The key stakeholders were included as part of the SRTS Team which held various meetings to discuss issues, goals, and possible solutions.
- ***Incorporated existing bike or pedestrian plan recommendations***
The Montgomery County Planning Department and New River Valley Planning District Commission ensured that the School Travel Plan not only coordinated with the Belview Village Plan and the Village Transportation Plan, but also enhanced the existing plans and provided objectives that would clearly meet the goals of the pre-existing plans.
- ***Incorporated our School Wellness Policy objectives***
The School Travel Plan directly supports the objectives of Belview Elementary. The Wellness Plan is included with this travel plan, on page 36.
- ***Hosted a public meeting***
The public meeting was integrated into a school event, “Dr. Seuss Night”. The Safe Routes to School team set up displays and provided handouts (shown on page 6) at the sign-in table. Large maps depicting existing infrastructure and proposed improvements were on display for parents, school staff, and students to review as they entered the building. Over 100 people attended the event. In addition, the SRTS travel plan was discussed at several public meetings of the Montgomery County Planning Commission.
- ***Solicited student opinions***
A survey was distributed to Belview Elementary classrooms. Students were polled by Belview staff to determine their methods of arrival and departure from the school grounds.

Parent Survey Results

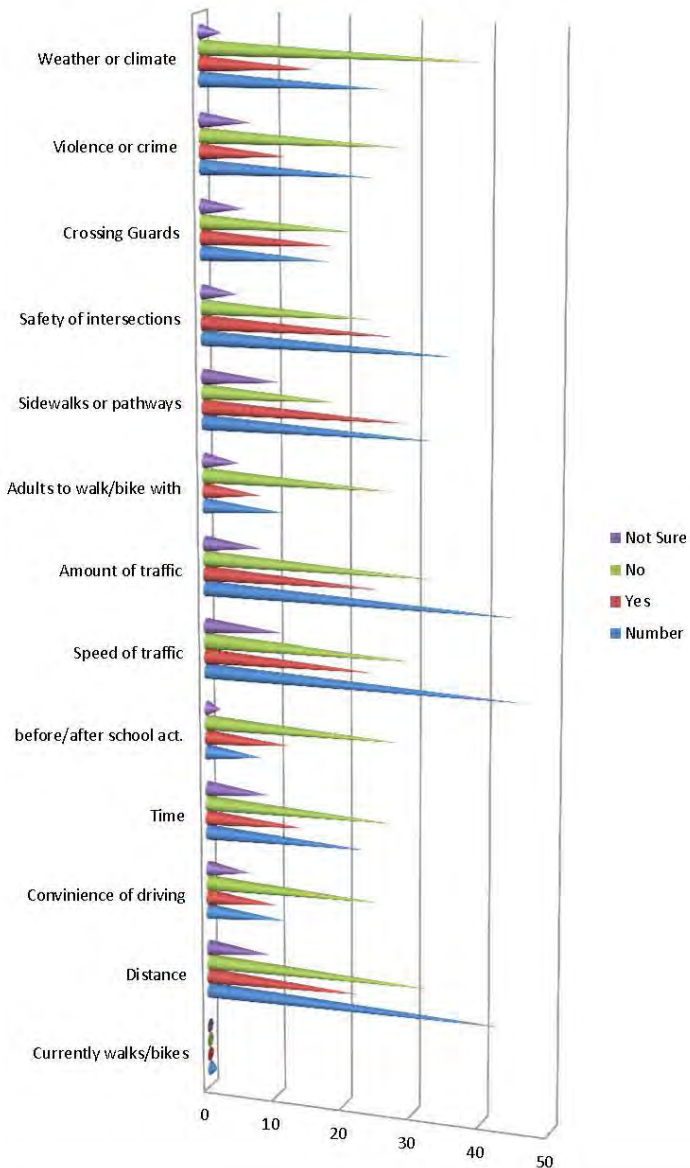
Response Demographics



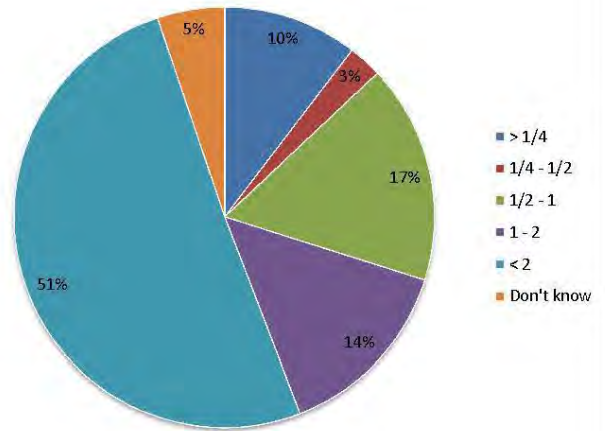
Grade of Student w/Survey



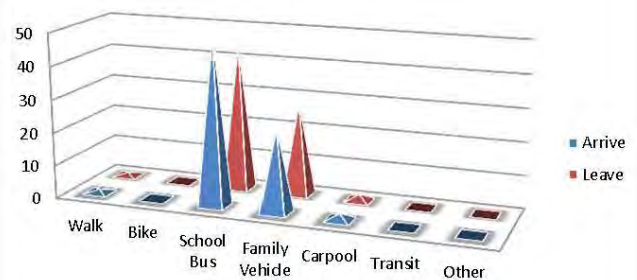
Issues - if changed or improved would you allow your child to walk/bike to school?



How far does your child live from school?



How does your child arrive and leave for school?



The following 1-sheet (front/back) handout was prepared to provide a quick overview of the Travel Plan draft:



www.saferoutesinfo.org
1-866-610-SRTS
news@saferoutesinfo.org

March 8, 2012

RE: Belview Elementary Safe Routes to School Draft Travel Plan

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Montgomery County is partnering with Belview Elementary to develop a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program. One of the most important components is to receive feedback from parents, students, and residents of the community.

The first step for developing a Safe Routes to School Program is for a school or community to develop a School Travel Plan. A Travel Plan puts in writing a school community's intentions for making travel to and from school an option. Furthermore, the plan is often the first step in a successful Safe Routes to School Program.

After the travel plan has been drafted, Montgomery County and Belview Elementary may pursue grant funding to provide infrastructure near the school to make walking and biking to school an option.

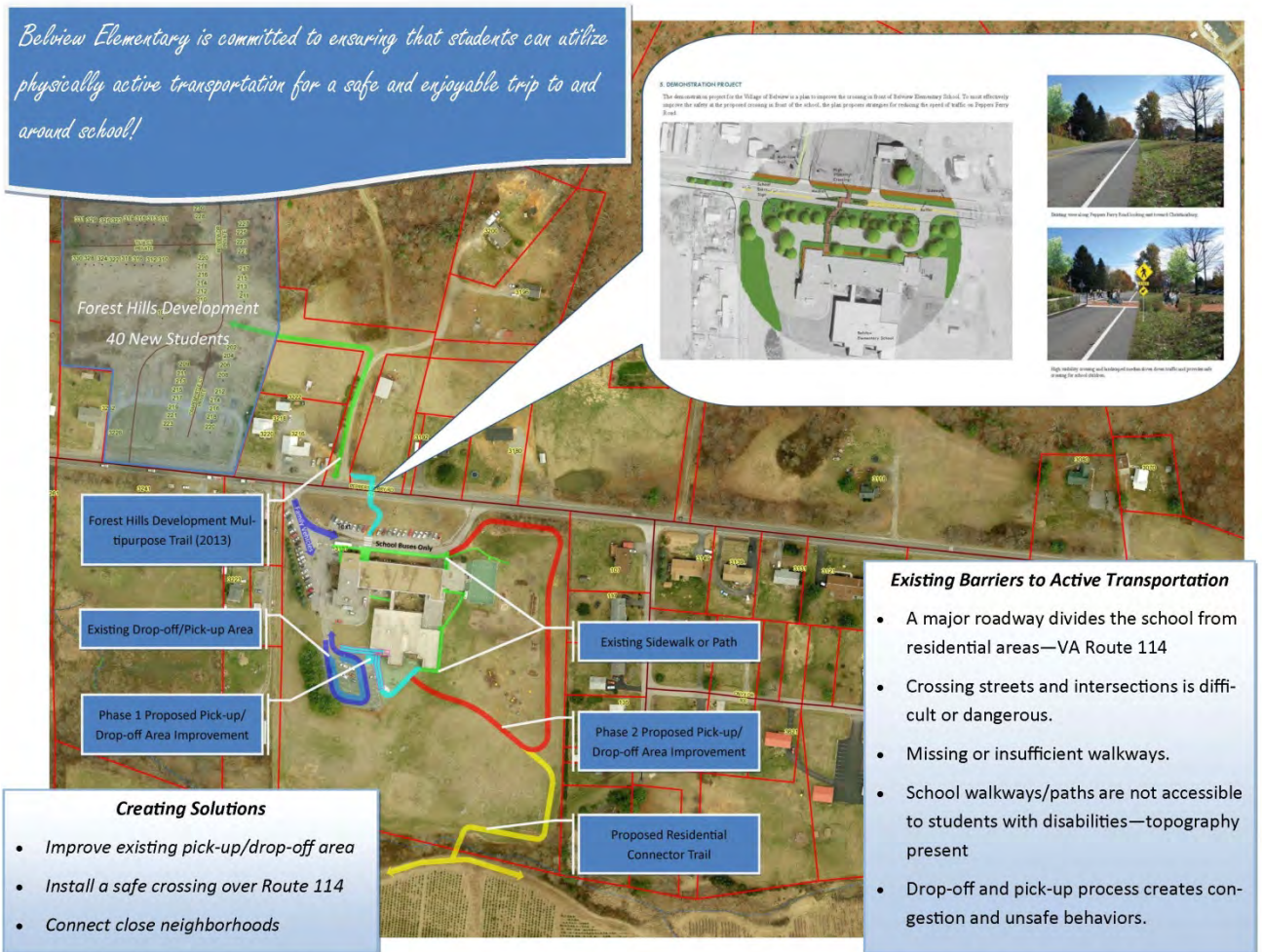
A draft of the SRTS infrastructure plan is shown on the opposite side of this sheet for your review and comment. Any feedback is welcome and appreciated.

If you have any questions; please contact me by phone (540) 394-2148 or by e-mail macleanjr@montgomerycountyva.gov.

Thank you in advance for your help with this important program.

Sincerely,

Jamie Rogers MacLean, CFM, CZO
Development Planner
Montgomery Co. Planning & GIS



Section 4 – Description of School

Our School Travel Plan addresses the needs of an individual school. The School's motto is "Good better best, never let it rest, until the good is better and the better is BEST" (Belview Elementary School Team).

Belview Elementary School
3187 Pepper's Ferry Road
Radford, Virginia 24141

Belview Elementary is located in Montgomery County along VA Primary Route 114, a local main thoroughfare that connects the Town of Christiansburg and the City of Radford. The school opened in 1954 and currently has 245 students. Over 50% of Belview's students qualify for the federal free and reduced price lunch program.



AM Traffic on Route 114

In February of 1971, a school bus was struck by a dump truck on Route 114. Two Belview students were killed and over 20 students were transported to local hospitals. This unfortunate incident exhibits the need for traffic calming in the area. We believe that with an increase in the number of students

walking to school, the need for traffic calming and other safety measures will be critical. Current weekday traffic exceeds 11,000 cars per day on Route 114.

Additionally, a new residential subdivision is currently under construction north of the school campus, Forest Hills at Belview. Once complete, the project will provide affordable housing to the Belview area. The Forest Hills plan includes 70 townhouses that will generate an estimated 40 new students at BES. The project is expected to be completed by May 2012.

Students attending Belview come from a variety of educational and economic backgrounds. Their parents work at the nearby Radford Army Ammunition Plant, in privately owned factories and businesses, at Virginia Tech and Radford Universities, and some are self-employed. A large number of Belview's students reside in large manufactured home parks located near the school.

Many parents and grandparents of Belview's current students attended the school during their elementary years. Belview has an active parent group that leads a classroom volunteer program, fund-raising efforts, and resources for families in need.



Forest Hills Development

Section 5 – Current Travel Environment

A. How Students Regularly Travel to School

This is how all of our students (K-5) regularly travel to and from school:

Mode of Travel	Walk	Bike	Bus	Family Vehicle	Carpool	Public Transit	Other	Total
# of Students	1	0	171	73	0	0	0	245

Source: 2011 – 2012 BES Enrollment Data

B. Distances Students Live From School

These are the distances all of our students live from their school:

Distance from school	Less than 0.5 mile	.5 mile - 1 mile	1 - 2 miles	More than 2 miles
# of students	31	46	22	146

Source: Montgomery County Public Schools, February 2012

C. Activities in Place During Student Travel Times

We have the following supports or activities in place during student travel times:

- Police department support (part time)
- School flashing beacons
- Staff presence during drop-off/pick-up
- Neighborhood Watch program (limited)

D. Current Activities to Enhance Safe and Active Student Travel

The Belview area currently lacks supporting facilities to encourage student travel via walking and biking. However, there is no school policy to deter students from walking or biking to school. Currently, bus safety training is provided on an annual basis.

E. Current School Travel Policies

Belview Elementary doesn't currently have a policy depicting a preferred mode of transportation for students to utilize for arrival and departure from school. However, the majority of students arrive by bus or car each morning, and must follow the school procedures shown in section 5G. Students are permitted to walk or bike to school.

F. Existing Bus Service

Montgomery County and Belview Elementary do provide bus service to every student. Currently 70% of students utilize the existing bus service, 21% of students arrive in a family vehicle for personal reasons, and 9% of students arrive by a family vehicle for student activities that occur before or after normal school hours.

In general, students may not enter the school before 8:30 am and are dismissed at 3:25 pm. Additional information regarding arrival and dismissal procedures, derived from the Belview Elementary Handbook, is outlined below in section 5G.

G. Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Walking/Bicycling:

Belview Elementary Students are permitted to walk or bike to school. However, due to the challenges discussed in section 6 many parents do not feel comfortable allowing their children to walk or bicycle to school.

Bus Transportation:

Bus transportation is provided to every student in the Belview School District. No student may get off at a location other than the designated home bus stop unless a written request is made by the parent/guardian to the principal before 3:00 pm on the date of the requested change. Bus drivers are given appropriate notice when a request is approved.

Drop off/Pick up:

The school is open to students beginning at 8:30 am. Students arriving by car are dropped off at the back of the building, at which time they will enter through the door and will go through the school directly to assigned morning clubs or breakfast. Bus lanes at the school are closed to cars.

At 3:25 pm car dismissal begins. Parents come to the back of the school, creating a loop through the back parking lot, to pick up children. Parents must remain in their cars. A staff member calls the child's name on the walkie-talkie to exit the building, and then students are accompanied to each car for safe dismissal.

The photos to the right show a typical back up of parent pick up traffic, with cars encroaching into Route 114. The other photograph depicts the double lines of cars that must be formed during pick up and drop off times.



Section 6 – Barriers to Active Transportation

The taskforce has identified and prioritized the following barriers to walking /bicycling to school:

High Priority Barriers (HP):

1. A major roadway divides the school from residential areas
2. Crossing streets and intersections is difficult or dangerous
3. Missing or insufficient walkways
4. School walkways/paths are not accessible to students with disabilities
5. Drop-off and pick-up process creates congestion and unsafe behaviors

Medium Priority Barriers (MP):

1. Dangerous driving and speeding on streets
2. Significant traffic crashes within 2 miles of the school over last 3 years
3. No safe place to ride a bike to school

Low Priority Barriers (LP):

1. Distance to school is too far
2. Bike parking at school is missing
3. Public safety concerns

Details Regarding Specific Barriers and Situations:

During Task Force meetings, the three most critical barriers were identified: (1) Route 114, (2) Pick-up/Drop-off area, and (3) topography.

Route 114 is a major thoroughfare for local commuter traffic that has 11,000 – 24,000 AADT, limited shoulder/ROW, and a posted speed limit of 55 mph (25 mph limit in the school zone during specified times). Limited

resources inhibit the ability of local law enforcement agencies to enforce the speed limit within the school zone on a regular basis. (HP: 1, 2, 3; MP: 1, 2, 3; LP: 1, 2, 3)

The pick-up/drop-off area for family vehicles often backs-up into Route 114 and blocks private driveways; creating safety concerns that are difficult to manage (see photos above). On occasion, the School Principal tries to direct traffic. Currently, there are no sidewalks or trails to support the arrival and dismissal procedures.

(HP: 4, 5; MP: 3; LP: 2)



In addition, the existing undulated terrain creates major barriers for ADA accessibility; even around school property. The parking, pick-up/drop-off, and bus stop areas need proper bicycle and pedestrian markings and infrastructure to safely move around campus. (HP: 3, 4, 5; MP: 3; LP: 1)

Section 7 – Creating Solutions

Our primary goals for active transportation are: (1) increasing the number of students walking and bicycling to school, (2) improving the safety of walking and bicycling students.

We have identified strategies involving the 5 “E’s” of Safe Routes to School to address the identified barriers to walking and bicycling in our school community and to achieve our stated goals. **We have selected at least one strategy from each of the categories of Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Evaluation**, in addition to any Engineering strategies that are indicated. The strategies are outlined in sections 7A – 7E below.

A. Education Strategies

Educational strategies for the Belview School include:

- Teach pedestrian and bicycle safety skills to students and parents
- Organize a Bicycle Rodeo or training course to teach on-bike skills
- Create educational materials
- Teach personal safety skills to students and parents

BES currently integrates bicycle and pedestrian safety skills training into Physical Education class. In addition, a Bicycle Rodeo is organized each year to promote health, fitness, and bicycle safety. Incorporating educational articles about bicycling and walking can also be included in the school newsletter and coursework. Personal safety skills are also integrated into existing classes and organized events.

B. Encouragement Strategies

Encouragement strategies for the Belview School include:

- Initiate a walking/biking mileage club or other contest

BES has dedicated staff that leads walking/mileage contests annually. A major barrier for the event is the lack of infrastructure on campus to safely allow and encourage children to participate. Once infrastructure is in place, BES has the resources to start and lead a successful walking/biking club on campus.

C. Enforcement Strategies

Enforcement strategies for the Belview School include:

- Create a parent or student patrol program
- Lower speed limits in School vicinity

BES would benefit from addition of adult crossing guards along Route 114 and an increase in local traffic patrol to enforce the speed limit. In addition, BES is interested in training 5th graders as safety patrols to assist with pick-up/drop-off procedures and other school functions. Belview Elementary and Montgomery County are also interested in working together to provide the information needed to the Virginia Department of Transportation to reduce the speed limit within the Village of Belview.

D. Evaluation Strategies

Evaluation strategies for the Belview School include:

- Counting the number of students who walk and bicycle to and from school.

BES currently keeps track of how students arrive and depart the school on a daily basis. Student travel will continue to be documented to help plan potential improvements.

E. Engineering Strategies

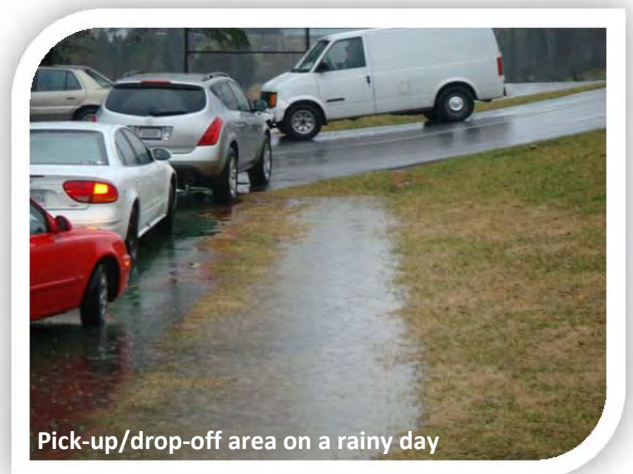
Engineering strategies for the Belview School include:

- Construct, replace, improve or repair sidewalks
- Install traffic calming measures (curb extensions, raised crosswalks, etc.)
- Build off-street walking/bicycling paths
- Install, enhance or repair crosswalks (covered walkway, ADA ramps, etc.)
- Install new or improved signage (school zone, speed limits, crosswalk, etc.)
- Install new or improved pavement markings or legends
- Make existing walkways accessible to disabled students
- Install bicycle parking near school (bike racks)
- Install median refuges for street crossings
- Install traffic control devices (pedestrian signals, flashing beacons, etc.)
- Increase safety and access for students walking and biking to school by redesigning pick-up and drop-off areas

BES lacks infrastructure for students to safely travel without the supervision of adults. New pavement markings and signage is needed to provide guidance to vehicles, buses, and active transportation users safely around campus. In addition, a crosswalk over Route 114 would require a pedestrian refuge area, traffic calming measures, new sidewalk, traffic control devices, and new pavement markings/signage.

Constructing ADA accessible sidewalks and a covered walkway in the pick-up/drop-off area will improve the accessibility around campus. Furthermore, improving the pick-up/drop-off location would increase the safety for students arriving and departing campus.

Additional residential connection opportunities may be available to the south of the campus; however, a limited number of students would be affected by the improvements at this time.





Map A
Belview Elementary School
1/2 and 2 Mile Radius

Legend

- Corporate Line
- State Roads
- Interstate Highway
- Planned Highway
- Private Roads (Named)
- Railroad
- Hydrology
- Belview Elementary Property
- 1/2 Mile Radius
- Two Mile Radius
- Elementary School Zones**
- Belview Elementary School Zone

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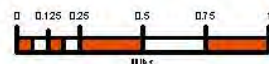
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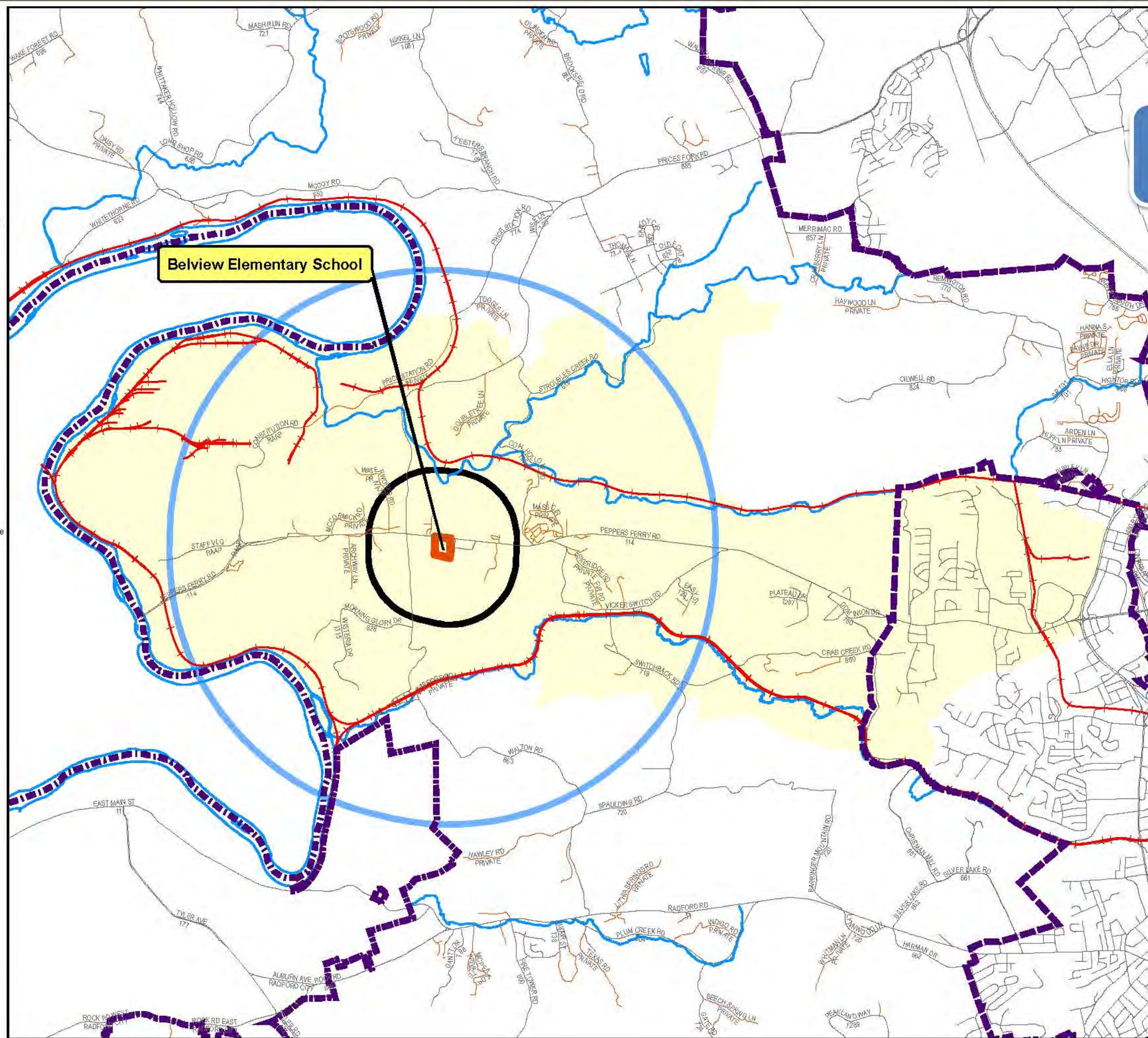
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Prepared by Montgomery County, Va
Planning & GIS Services, 12/14/2011

Section 8 – Mapping

A. School Overview Map





Legend

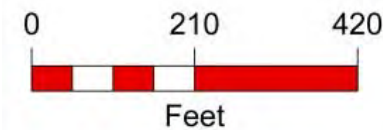
- Corporate Boundary
- Rural Communities
- State Roads
- Interstate
- Planned Highway
- Private
- Bburg Roads
- Cburg Roads
- Railroads
- Unnamed Roads Paths Trails
- Major Rivers Streams
- Streams Creeks
- Tax Parcels
- MontVa Addresses

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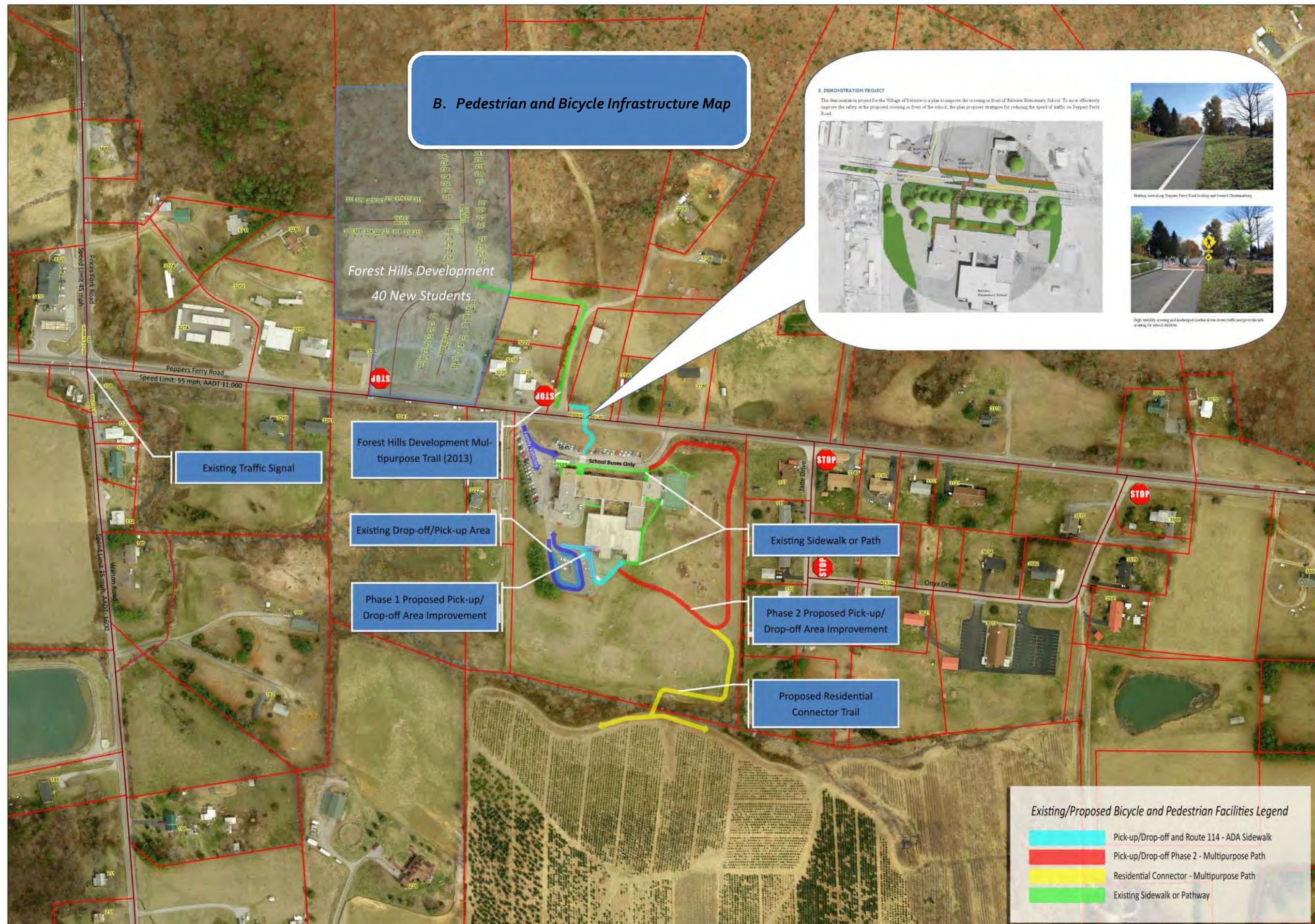
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B. Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure Map



Belview Elementary – Safe Routes to School Travel Plan

C. Potential Lot Restriping Plan

Install pork-chop and directional arrows

Install stop sign with instructions:
Do not block the box

Restripe lower lot to provide 2-lanes

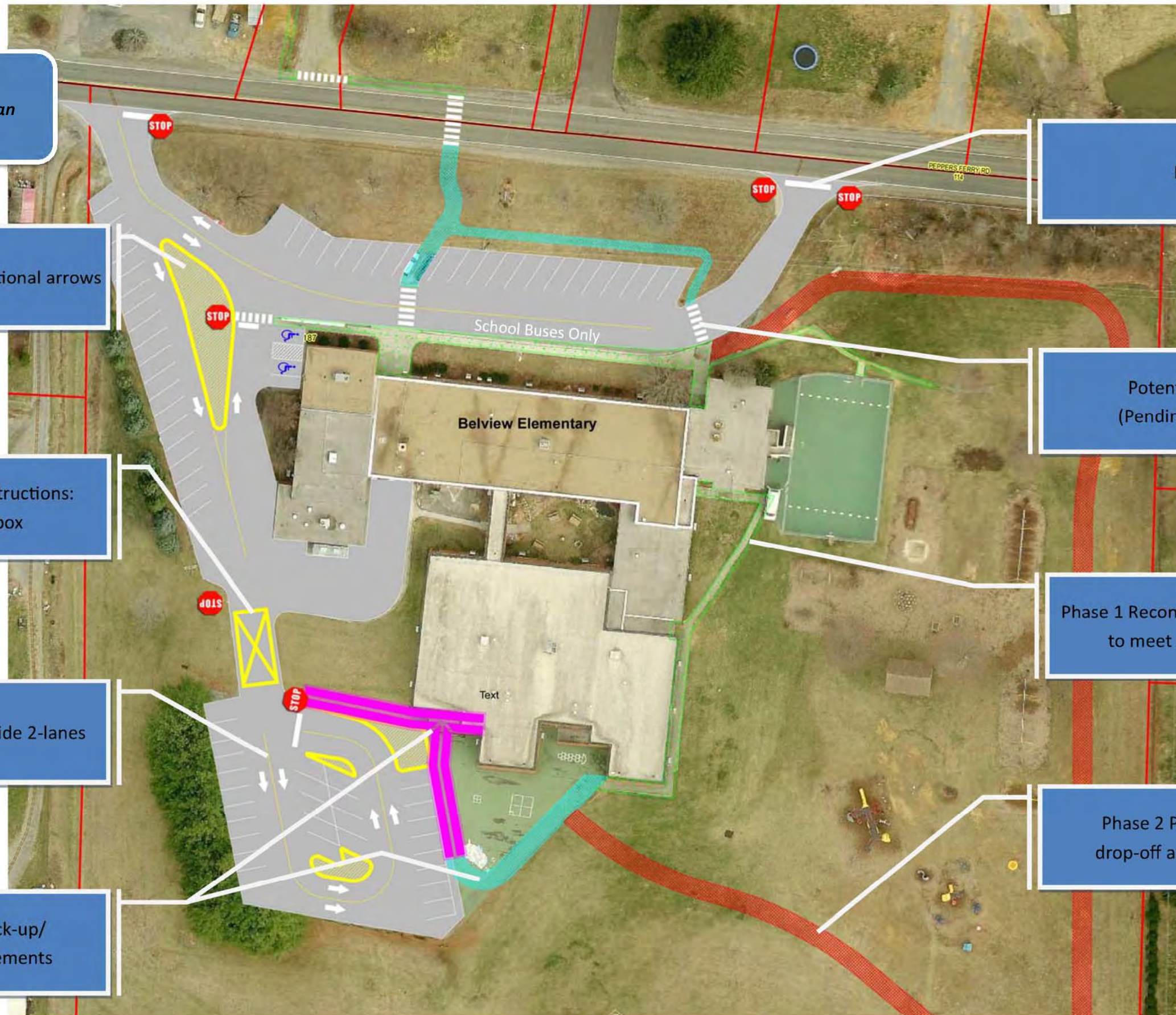
Phase 1 Proposed pick-up/
drop-off area improvements

Exit only

Potential Crosswalks
(Pending 114 Crossing)

Phase 1 Reconstruct existing sidewalks
to meet ADA requirements

Phase 2 Proposed pick-up/
drop-off area improvements



Section 9 – The Action Plan

The Safe Routes to School Team is committed to realizing our vision for a safe, enjoyable and accessible walking and bicycling environment for our students. We will utilize the following Action Plan to keep our efforts focused and on track:

Belview Elementary Safe Routes to School - Action Plan								
Strategies	Strategy Name	Strategy Detail	Time-frame	Responsible Party	Status	% of Students Affected	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Educational	Teach Pedestrian and bicycle safety skills to students and parents. Potentially built into "Back to School Night" or during a general assembly.	Local Sheriff's department staff and/or bicycle organization safety training staff will be invited to a school-wide assembly.	Annual	BES, MCSO, Local Organizations	Not yet begun	70% - 100%	\$100	BES, PTA, SRTS, MCSO
	Organize a Bicycle Rodeo or training course to teach on-bike skills. Potentially built into the health fair which currently promotes safe walking.	Event to be held at BES and local Sheriff's department and/or bicycle organization volunteers will inspect bikes for safety, and set up obstacle courses to improve skills.	Annual	BES, MCSO, Local Organizations, Local Business	Active	25% - 30%	\$2,000	SRTS, Local Organizations
	Create educational materials	BES will work with VDOT to include materials in the monthly newsletter; currently distributed throughout the school year.	Monthly	BES, VDOT	Underway	100%	\$500	SRTS, BES, PTA, Local Business
	Teach personal safety skills to students and parents	BES will work with local Police Department staff to organize personal safety skills training events on campus.	Less than 6 months	BES, MCSO, Local Organizations	Ongoing	100%	\$500	SRTS, BES, MCSO, Local Organizations
	Teach health and nutrition education to children.	Create materials for the monthly newsletter, provide classroom presentations, incorporate into existing physical education and guidance counselor programs.	Monthly	BES	Active	100%	\$500	BES, SRTS
Encouragement	Initiate a walking/biking mileage club or other contest	BES would like to start a club or contest to increase and maintain participation in walking and bicycling to/at school. BES would work with VDOT to develop incentives and rewards for the program.	Year round, twice weekly	BES, VDOT	Not yet begun	10% - 20%	\$1,000	SRTS, BES, Local Business
	Jump Rope for Heart and Walkathon event	National event led by the American Heart Association.	Annual	BES	Active	100%	\$0	BES

Belview Elementary Safe Routes to School - Action Plan (Continued)								
Strategies	Strategy Name	Strategy Detail	Time-frame	Responsible Party	Status	% of Students Affected	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Enforcement	Supply equipment for new adult crossing guards.	Purchase equipment such as: reflective white gloves and vests for crossing guards.	48 months	BES, MCSO	Not yet begun	16%	\$1,000	SRTS, MCSO
	Create a parent or student patrol program	BES will initiate a student safety patrol program. 5th graders will be trained by local Sheriff's department officers to serve as safety patrols with equipment provided by SRTS funds.	24 months	BES, MCPS, MCSO	Not yet begun	100%	\$1,000	SRTS, BES, PTA
	Lower speed limits in School vicinity	Montgomery County will continue ongoing correspondence with VDOT to lower the speed limit within School Zone and Village Area.	12 months	VDOT, Mont. County	Negotiation Underway	100%	\$0	VDOT
	Increase local traffic patrol	Montgomery County Sheriff's office will work with BES to increase traffic patrol during school hours.	12 months	BES, MCSO	Not yet begun	100%	\$0	MCSO
Evaluation	Counting the number of students who walk and bicycle to and from school.	BES will continue to maintain records on student arrival and departure.	Ongoing	BES	Active	100%	\$0	BES
Engineering	Construct Pick-up / Drop-off Area Phase 1	Construct a covered walkway around the pick-up/drop-off area, and an ADA accessible ramp into the school's southwest entrance.	36 months	BES, MCPS, Mont. County	Not yet begun	30% - 50%	\$125,000	SRTS, MCPS, PTA
	Construct Pick-up / Drop-off Area Phase 2	Construct an ADA accessible multipurpose trail connecting the pick-up/drop-off area to entrances on the east and north-east side of the school.	48 months	BES, MCPS, Mont. County	Not yet begun	30% - 50%	\$300,000	SRTS, MCPS, PTA, Private
	Construct a pedestrian crossing over Route 114	Construct ADA accessible concrete multipurpose trail, construct a pedestrian refuge area, install pedestrian activated traffic control devices, construct a left turn-turn lane to the school, install reflective pavement, install new or improved signage/pavement markings.	48 months	BES, MCPS, Mont. County	Not yet begun	15% - 30%	\$300,000	SRTS, VDOT, Private
	Construct the Residential Connector Trail	Construct a ADA accessible multipurpose trail connecting neighborhoods located to the east and west of the school campus. Install a small foot bridge, and construct a new fence along trail easement.	60 months	BES, MCPS, Mont. County	Not yet begun	10% - 20%	\$250,000	SRTS, MCPS, PTA, Private
	Implement the Lot Restriping Plan	Install new retrorreflective pavement markings, and signs within the existing school lot.	24 months	BES, MCPS, Mont. County	Not yet begun	100%	\$2,500	SRTS, MCPS, PTA

Section 10 – Plan Approval

We believe that building a strong partnership between schools, local governments, local organizations/businesses, and the surrounding community is fundamental to the success of a School Travel Plan. We have included endorsements from the following:

- Belview Elementary School Principal, Rhonda Baker
- Montgomery County Public Schools Superintendent, Brenda Blackburn
- Montgomery County Administrator, Craig Meadows
- Montgomery County Planning Commission
- Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Executive Director, Dan Brugh
- New River Valley Planning District Commission Executive Director, Kevin Byrd

Belview Elementary School

"Where Students are Leaders and Learners"

3187 Peppers Ferry Road
Radford, Virginia 24141
(540) 633-3200
FAX (540) 639-5235

March 16, 2012

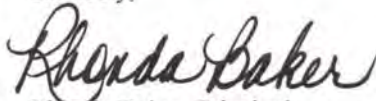
Robert J. Williams
Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator
Transportation and Mobility Planning Division
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 E. Broad St.
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Mr. Williams,

I am pleased to offer the support of Belview Elementary School for the attached SRTS School Travel Plan. This plan was developed through an active needs assessment process, with the involvement of teachers, staff members, parents, and other community members, as well as the Montgomery County Planning Department, the Planning District Commission, and representatives from local law enforcement. We feel this plan will be the first step in addressing barriers to safe walking/biking to school for Belview students. We look forward to being a part of future projects and activities that make walking/biking to school a safer option for those students who live within walking/biking distance of our school.

Thank you for your review and consideration of our School Travel Plan. We are excited about the prospect of ongoing participation in the Safe Routes to School Program. If I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Rhonda Baker, Principal
Belview Elementary School



Montgomery County
Public Schools

March 12, 2012

Robert J. Williams
Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator
Transportation and Mobility Planning Division
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 E. Broad St.
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Mr. Williams:

I am pleased to offer support from Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) for Belview Elementary School's Safe Routes to School Travel Plan. This plan was developed through an active needs assessment process with the involvement of teachers, staff members, parents, and other community members as well as the Montgomery County Planning Department, the Planning District Commission, and representatives from local law enforcement. MCPS feels that this plan will be the first step in helping to address barriers to safe walking/biking to school for BES students. We know that the BES school community is looking forward to being a part of future projects and activities that make walking/biking to school a safer option for those students who live within walking/biking distance of the school.

Thank you for your review and consideration of Belview's School Travel Plan. We hope the Virginia Department of Transportation will look favorably on the plan, and we look forward to supporting BES's efforts as part of this project.

Sincerely,

Brenda B. Blackburn
Superintendent

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR: THEIR LIVES, THE COMMUNITY, THE WORLD.

200 Junkin Street | Christiansburg, Virginia 24073 | PHONE: 540-382-5100 | FAX: 540-381-6127 | WEB: www.mcps.org



OFFICE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATION
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

F. CRAIG MEADOWS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

755 ROANOKE STREET, SUITE 2E, CHRISTIANSBURG, VIRGINIA 24073-3181

April 20, 2012

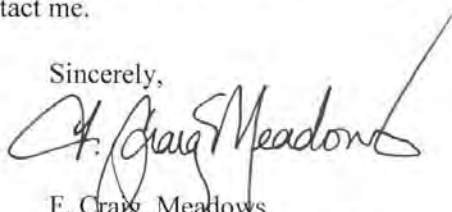
Robert J. Williams
Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator
Transportation and Mobility Planning Division
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 E. Broad St.
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Mr. Williams:

I am pleased to support Belview Elementary School in their endeavor to submit the attached SRTS School Travel Plan. This plan was developed through an active needs assessment process with the involvement of teachers, staff members, parents, and other community members, as well as the Montgomery County Planning Department, the Planning District Commission, and representatives from local law enforcement. We feel this plan will be the first step in addressing barriers to safe walking/biking to school for Belview Elementary School students. We hope that this plan represents the beginning of future projects and activities that make walking/biking to school a safer option for those students who live within walking/biking distance of our schools.

Thank you for your review and consideration of our School Travel Plan. We are excited about the prospect of ongoing participation in the Safe Routes to School Program. If I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



F. Craig Meadows
Montgomery County Administrator

FCM/jk

Attachment

cc: The Honorable Board of Supervisors

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION HELD ON THE 18TH DAY OF APRIL 2012 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE BOARD CHAMBERS, MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER, CHRISTIANBURG, VA:

On a motion by Mr. Donahue, seconded Mr. Tuttle and carried unanimously,

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING A
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN
FOR BELVIEW ELEMENTARY

WHEREAS, there is a need to provide options that allow children to walk and bicycle to school safely, and Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs can address these challenges through a coordinated action plan;

WHEREAS, Congress has designated funding to develop the National Safe Routes to School Program;

WHEREAS, Safe Routes to Schools programs use a variety of education, engineering and enforcement strategies that help make routes safer for children to walk and bicycle to school and encouragement strategies to entice more children to walk and bicycle;

WHEREAS, the Safe Routes to School program has provided localities with an annual grant opportunity for up to \$500,000 to support engineering (infrastructure) projects that will increase the number of children who bike and walk to school based upon a School Travel Plan;

WHEREAS, the Safe Routes to School program is fully supported by federal funds and requires no local match;

WHEREAS, the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan, Belview Village Plan, and Village Transportation Links (VITL) Plan adopted by Montgomery County supports and provides guidance for this initiative;

WHEREAS, a coordinated effort has taken place over the last year in which the County, the New River Valley Planning District Commission, Montgomery County Public Schools, the Belview Elementary School staff, and the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office developed a proposal to initiate the Safe Routes to School program in 2012 at Belview Elementary School;


WHEREAS, the School Travel Plan has been developed and submitted by Montgomery County and the New River Valley Planning District Commission, with a signature of support from the Montgomery County Public School Superintendent;

WHEREAS, the approved School Travel Plan, allows Montgomery County Public Schools to submit an infrastructure grant application to fund engineering solutions in support of the School Travel Plan; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Montgomery County Planning Commission supports the Safe Routes to School Travel Plan developed for implementation at Belview Elementary School.

The vote on the foregoing resolution was as follows:

Ayes: Donahue, Lau, Miller, Rice, Seitz, Thum, Tuttle
Nays: None

Attest: 
Dari Jenkins, Planning & Zoning Administrator

**Blacksburg/Christiansburg/Montgomery Area
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

755 Roanoke Street, Suite 2I
Christiansburg, VA 24073

March 26, 2012

ROBERT J. WILLIAMS
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL COORDINATOR
VDOT Central Office
1401 E BROAD STREET
RICHMOND VA 23219-2052

RE: Safe Routes to School Program – Auburn Elementary and Middle, Belview
Elementary – Montgomery County

Robert,

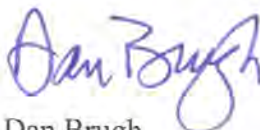
The Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Montgomery Area MPO supports the Safe Routes to
School Program administered by VDOT. This program is included in our 2035 Long
Range Plan.

Montgomery County has developed Travel Plans for the schools listed above. The MPO
Policy Board will be meeting May 3, 2012 and will provide an official resolution of
support for these plans at that time.

This letter is to convey the MPO's support of the program in general and Montgomery
County's efforts specifically to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety around schools and,
in this case, Auburn Elementary, Auburn Middle, and Belview Elementary. Upon
acceptance of the Travel Plans, grants to implement the plans could be pursued. These
efforts will enhance bicycle and pedestrian safety around these schools.

If there are any questions, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Dan Brugh
Executive Director

JDB

NEW RIVER VALLEY PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

6580 Valley Center Drive, Suite 124
Radford, Virginia 24141

Phone: (540) 639-9313

Fax: (540) 831-6093

E-Mail: nrvpdc@nrvpdc.org

Website: www.nrvpdc.org



Kevin R. Byrd, AICP
Executive Director

March 23, 2012

Robert J. Williams
Safe Routes to School Program Coordinator
Transportation and Mobility Planning Division
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 E. Broad St.
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Mr. Williams,

I would like to extend my support for the Belview Elementary School SRTS School Travel Plan. The Planning District Commission was pleased to work with Montgomery County and a variety of local stakeholders including teachers, law enforcement, VDOT representatives, and local engineers to prepare the plan.

Transportation priorities for the New River Valley region include projects that connect residential areas to schools and projects that educate the use of bikeways and walkways.

Thank you for your review and consideration of the Belview Elementary School Travel Plan. Many of our regional partners are excited about the prospect of ongoing participation in the Safe Routes to School Program. If I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Kevin R. Byrd, AICP
Executive Director

Counties:
Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski

Towns:
Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Floyd
Pulaski, Narrows, Pearisburg, Rich Creek

Universities:
Radford University
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University

City:
Radford

Section 11 – Supporting Documents

The following supporting documents are included in Section 11 of the Plan:

- A. 2007 Village Transportation Links Plan – Belview Village Area
- B. 2007 Belview Village Plan (applicable sections)
- C. 2004 Montgomery County 2025 Comprehensive Plan
- D. 2011 Regional Bikeway, Walkway, Blueway Plan—Regional Priorities
- E. 2011 – 2012 Belview Elementary School Wellness Policy

A. Village Transportation Links Plan – Belview Village Area

BELVIEW

1. VILLAGE PROFILE

Belview is located west of Christiansburg along Peppers Ferry Road, and lies between Prices Fork to the north and Plum Creek to the south. The main focal point of the community is Belview Elementary School, which is located on the high speed Peppers Ferry Road. Opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian facilities along the major thoroughfares are limited at present due to the high speeds, narrow shoulders, and the dangerous signalized intersection on Peppers Ferry Road. Traffic calming measures in front of the school will be critical for connecting future residential development to the north of Belview Elementary with the school itself. Although opportunities for on-road connections are limited at present, there is significant off-road potential, including a trail system along the gas pipeline that runs east-west just south of the village boundaries. This trail system could also serve as a piece of the proposed trail connecting the New River Trail to the Huckleberry Trail.

2. CONNECTIVITY ISSUES

The following issues were expressed in the community workshops:

- Identify a safe crossing point on Peppers Ferry Road
- Connect Belview Elementary to existing and future residential areas
- Slow traffic on Peppers Ferry Road
- Connections to Prices Fork and Radford through Walton Meadow
- Connect to Huckleberry Trail
- Need secondary access to connect school and neighborhoods
- Look into trail along gas pipeline easement

3. VITL CONCEPT

The concept for Belview focuses on providing safe connections from existing and proposed residential areas to Belview Elementary. Buffered sidewalks along the north side of Peppers Ferry Road connect residential areas to the school with median refuge and improved crossing that provides both traffic calming and safe access for school children. While paved shoulders provide additional room for cyclists within the core. This system transitions to paved shoulders and shared lanes as one travels outside of the village center. Parallel multi-use trail systems (see standard J) to the north and south of Peppers Ferry Road are created to connect the residential areas to avoid accessing the high speed, high traffic Peppers Ferry Road. These local connections feed into the regional trail network, including a connection to the Huckleberry Trail, the Town of Christiansburg and the villages of Plum Creek and Prices Fork.

4. IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

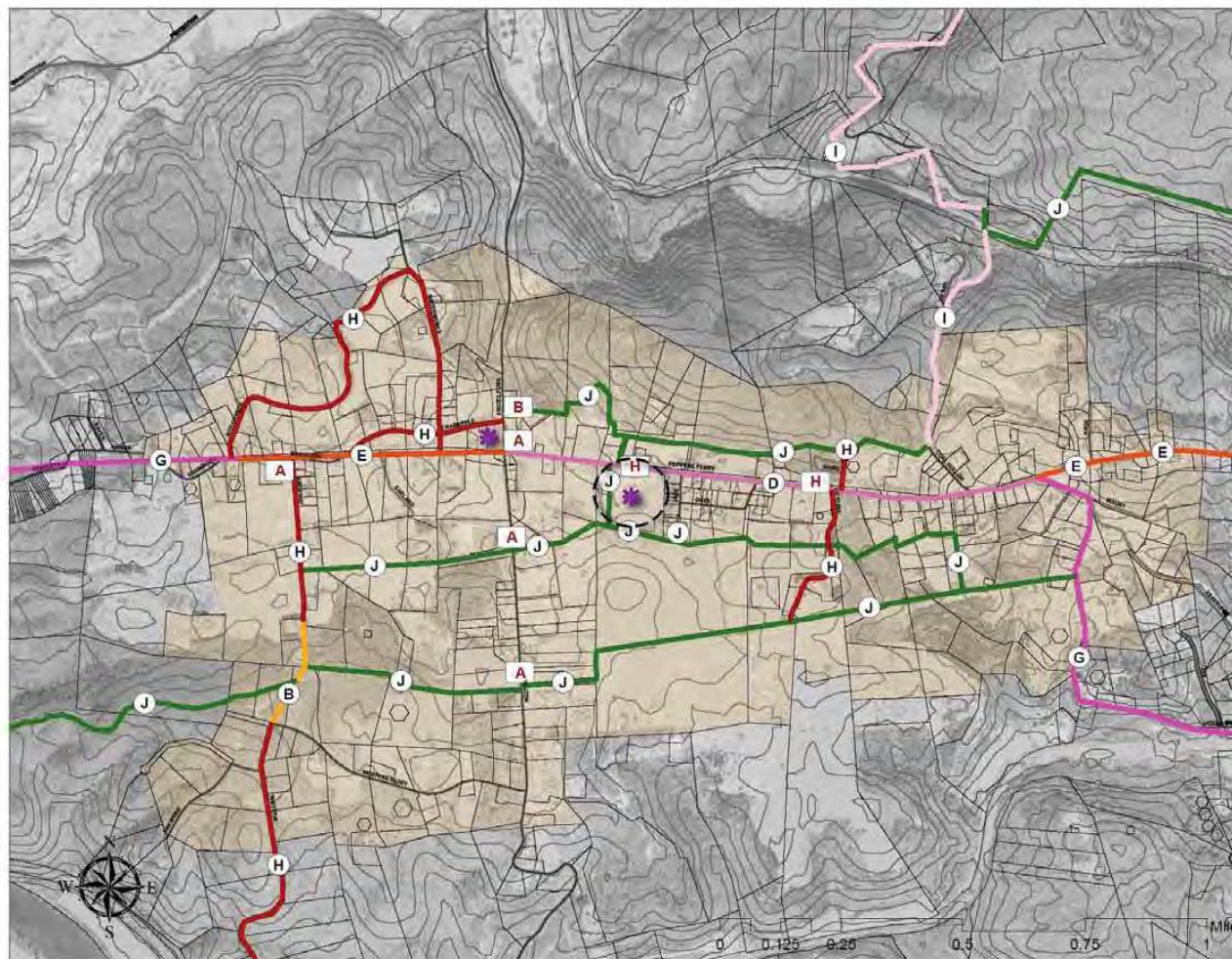
Community members identified the following implementation priorities during the public workshops for the plan:

1. Demonstration project: Improve the crossing in front of Belview Elementary School
2. Construct a sidewalk from Prices Fork Road to Massie's Mobile Home Park (extend D standard to Massie's Mobile Home Park).
3. Construct a trail from Coal Hollow to Prices Mountain
4. Connect the neighborhood behind Belview Elementary from Archway to Victoria
5. Construct facilities in neighborhoods north of Route 114 (i.e. the Shires, proposed Forest Hills) and connect them from Prices Fork Road to Coal Hollow
6. Connect to Radford Trail System

Important considerations for implementation include: availability of Safe Routes to School Funding, potential to coordinate future development proposals, potential to coordinate with the New River Valley Planning District Commission and the City of Radford, and availability of trail use along the utility corridor.

To most effectively improve the safety at the proposed crossing in front of Belview Elementary School, strategies should be pursued to reduce the speed of traffic on Peppers Ferry Road through the Village. One possibility is to install gateway treatments such as a narrow median that would slow traffic as it enters Belview to the east around Coal Hollow Road and west of the traffic signal at the intersection of Peppers Ferry Road and Prices Fork Road. Medians, chokers, or other traffic calming features could be used between these gateways to reduce traffic speeds along Peppers Ferry Road through the Village. An additional consideration as development and redevelopment is proposed along Peppers Ferry Road is to design these developments to emphasize Peppers Ferry Road as the Village's Main Street. By locating buildings close to Peppers Ferry Road and oriented towards a public sidewalk along the road, this pedestrian-oriented design will help to emphasize Peppers Ferry Road as a road that will be used by many different types of users at slower travel speeds for vehicles.

In addition to the traditional funding sources indicated in the Implementation Section of this report, crossings and sidewalks within two miles of Belview Elementary School are eligible for Safe Routes to Schools grants, a new funding source dedicated towards improving walking and biking conditions around elementary and middle schools. Proposals for development along Peppers Ferry Road provide an opportunity for recommended projects to be constructed by the developer to achieve consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.



BELVIEW **VITL FINAL DRAFT** Includes public input from all community workshops

Legend

Trail Typology

- (B)
 - (D)
 - (E)
 - (G)
 - (H)
 - (I)
 - (J)
 - B Potential Crossing Point*
 - ★ Public Facilities or Activity Centers
 - J Demonstration Plan Location
- * Letter denotes crossing type.

Village Transportation Links Plans **Montgomery County, VA**

Herd Planning and Design
 RENAISSANCE PLANNING GROUP

5. DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

The demonstration project for the Village of Belview is a plan to improve the crossing in front of Belview Elementary School. To most effectively improve the safety at the proposed crossing in front of the school, the plan proposes strategies for reducing the speed of traffic on Peppers Ferry Road.



Existing view along Peppers Ferry Road looking east toward Christiansburg



High visibility crossing and landscaped median slows down traffic and provides safe crossing for school children.

6. COST ESTIMATES PROPOSED PROJECTS

Village	Route Description	Short-term Trail Type	Long-term Trail Type	Length (feet)	Cost
Belview	114/ Belview Village	D		5886	\$822,702
Belview	114/ Eskeridge to east village boundary	E		924	\$78,750
Belview	114/ Prices Fork to McCormick	E		2863	\$244,006
Belview	Archway Road	H	B	1768	\$804
Belview	Coal Hollow to Slate Branch	I	J	2617	\$83,640
Belview	Crabapple Trail	H		1778	\$808
Belview	Jade extended	J		230	\$7,351
Belview	Jade to Belview Elem	J		909	\$29,052
Belview	McCormick/ Waterworks Loop	H		5713	\$2,597
Belview	Multiuse Trail from Walton to Archway	J		2293	\$73,285
Belview	Off Road from Peppers Ferry to Regional Trail	J		639	\$20,423
Belview	Off Road trail to Belview Elem	J		3276	\$104,702
Belview	Regional Off Road	J		5291	\$169,102
Belview	Shire Road	H		418	\$190
Belview	The Shires Connector	J		3458	\$110,518
Belview	Trail from Peppers Ferry to Belview Elem	J		666	\$21,286
Belview	Trail Network in Forest Hills	J		2374	\$75,874
Belview	Victoria Lane	H		1692	\$769
Belview	Walton to Belview Elem	J		959	\$30,650

DEMO PROJECT

Village	Route Description	Short-term Trail Type	Long-term Trail Type	Length (feet)	Cost
Belview	Crosswalk				\$4,000
Belview	Split pedestrian cross-over				\$50,000
Belview	Sidewalk (Peppers Ferry Rd to School)			75	\$2,000
				Total cost	\$56,000

CROSSINGS

Village	Description	Crossing Type A	Crossing Type B	COST
Belview	Southern Crossing at Walton	A		2,000
Belview	Northern Crossing at Walton	A		2,000
Belview	114/ Victoria	H		50,000
Belview	114/ Belview Elementary School	H	F	75,000
Belview	114 at Prices Fork	A	A	4,000
Belview	114 at Archway	A	A	4,000
Belview	Prices Fork Road/ Crabapple	B		3,000

B. Belview Village Plan

In June 2007, Montgomery County Board of Supervisors adopted the Belview Village Plan. The purpose of the village plan is to guide development in the village, while maintaining the village's distinct identity. The following sections from the Belview Village Plan have been included to show that a Safe Routes to School Plan can enhance the existing plans and help the County to clearly meet the goals of the pre-existing plans.

The "Transportation" section of the Belview Village Plan states that "The Village of Belview is bisected by Route 114, which carries between 12,000 and 18,000 cars per day. Approximately 9,000 of these trips involve travelers on Prices Fork Road, which means a significant portion of the traffic is generated by commuters moving between Radford and Blacksburg. Residents noted the lack of turning lanes at the Peppers Ferry Prices Fork intersection, where traffic frequently backs up during rush hours. The high volume of traffic along Route 114 and Prices Fork Road in the Village means that traffic safety is an on-going issue for local residents. In particular they are concerned about children traveling to and from Belview Elementary for school or recreation". (Belview Village Plan, Pg.241)

The "Public Facilities and Services" section of the plan calls Belview Elementary School "the most important public facility located in the village" and goes on to say that the "school serves as the focal point for community activities, including recreational sports, student events and shows, and village meetings. Limited parking is an issue during larger events, and visitors must park along Peppers Ferry Road". (Belview Village Plan, Pg. 241) Therefore, providing connections for pedestrian and bicycle travel to Belview Elementary School would be a valuable first step in creating a system of trails throughout the village.

The following policies were developed in meetings with village citizens. These policies are to guide the actions of the County, State Agencies, and private landowners to achieve the preservation and development of Belview in accord with the Vision of this Plan.

- **BVW 2.3 Work Closely with VDOT to Achieve the People's Vision.** The County will work closely VDOT to ensure that the urban design, mobility, and public safety policies of this plan are implemented. Cooperation between the County, VDOT, and private developers will be critical to the success of this plan. (BVW, Government and Planning, Pg. 250).
- **BVW 8.1 Greenway Park and Trail System.** Create and maintain a village-wide bikeway, walkway, and trail network that provides pedestrian access throughout Belview and connects to the countywide trail network. (BVW Parks and Recreation, Pg. 252)

- **BVW 8.1.1 VITL Plan.** Implement the Village Transportation Links (VITL) plan, which provides trails for biking and walking that serve to connect points within the Village of Belview, provide a safe means for pedestrian and bicycle travel, and would connect to surrounding localities via the Huckleberry Trail. (BVW Parks and Recreation, Pg. 252)
- **BVW 8.1.2 Safe Routes.** Work with Belview Elementary School and the Montgomery County School Board to create "Safe Routes to School" facilities, including demand signals and center island pedestrian safety strips at the Peppers Ferry Prices Fork intersection. (BVW Parks and Recreation, Pg. 252)
- **BVW10. 1. Peppers Ferry Road/ Rt. 114.** The use of traffic calming devices is a priority for the major roadways through the village, especially on Peppers Ferry Road/114. (BVW 10.0 Transportation Resources, Pg. 252)
- **BVW 10.1.1 Streetscape Plan.** Design a detailed streetscape plan for the Peppers Ferry Road/114 corridor and seek funding for streetscape enhancements and traffic calming measures, such as parking islands, streetlights, and landscaping. (BVW 10.0 Transportation Resources, Pg. 252)
- **BVW 10.1.2 Traffic Calming.** Coordinate with the County and the Virginia Department of Transportation to implement "traffic calming" elements within and around the village, especially along Peppers Ferry Road/114. (BVW 10.0 Transportation Resources, Pg. 252)

C. Montgomery County 2025 Comprehensive Plan

The Montgomery County 2025 Comprehensive Plan also includes guidance relating to encouraging alternative modes of transportation. The “Transportation” Chapter specifically guides the County to work towards pedestrian oriented facilities, and the alleviation of traffic congestion.

The following policies were developed in meetings with Montgomery County citizens. These policies are to guide the actions of the County, State Agencies, and private landowners to achieve the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

- **TRN 1.3.5 Pedestrian Oriented Facilities.** Require the provision of pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, walkways, trails, etc.) in new developments in the Village, Village Expansion, Residential Transition, and Urban Expansion Areas. (Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan, Transportation, Pg. 221)
- **TRN 2.3 Alleviating Traffic Congestion and Accidents.** Identify congestion and accident prone routes and intersections and adopt policies to alleviate congestion, increase safety, and decrease car trips. (Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan, Transportation, Pg. 221)

D. Regional Bikeway, Walkway, Blueway Plan – Regional Priorities

Regional

2011 Plan Objectives

The 2011 Plan provided the PDC an opportunity to work closely with local and regional partners. Because of this close partnership and interaction, the plan has a higher level of detail than previous plans. The final product provides the flexible framework needed to develop facilities based on local needs – while being aware of adjacent jurisdictions plans. Common interests may create opportunities for multiple stakeholders to work collaboratively on similar efforts.

This information sharing resource is intended to provide better communication with local, state, regional, and federal partners. The Plan simply adds to the framework that has been ongoing for over 40 years in the New River Valley, and will continue to improve with each plan update.



New River Valley
Bikeway, Walkway, Blueway Plan

55

Tables and Maps



Photo by: B. Mayo

Hierarchical priorities for the Region include:

1. Projects that connect towns, villages, and community centers to existing Regional Assets (listed on pages 3-5).
2. Projects that connect more than 1 community or region.
3. Projects that provide connections to other modes of transportation (public transit, park and ride lots, public parking areas, etc.)
4. Projects that connect residential areas to a school, library, or historical place of interest.
5. Projects that connect residential areas to community assets (grocery store, employment center, etc.)
6. Projects that utilize local resources and environmental friendly practices.
7. Projects that provide access to waterways – partner with VDOT to provide access near bridges.
8. Projects that establish attractive wayfinding signage for existing and proposed assets.
9. Projects that promote the education of bikeways, walkways, and blueways.

Belview Elementary School Wellness Policy

Belview Elementary School is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects staff members and children's health, well being, and ability to learn through 1) Nutrition education 2) Physical activity 3) School related activities to promote student wellness, 4) Nutrition guidelines 5) Mental well being of staff and students.

Wellness Policy Goals:

1) Nutrition Education -

Nutrition information will be provided through the monthly newsletter, the school website, and morning announcements.

A school garden has been established with plans to increase its size and the number of classes participating in working with it.

The school nurse will teach lessons in each grade level about nutrition.

2) Physical Activity -

Belview Elementary will provide daily opportunities for physical activities.

The staff will work toward increasing the Walking Club step total and adding more staff members.

The after school (Adventure Club) encourages physical activity.

3)School related activities to promote student wellness –

Opportunities for health nutrition enrichment will be encouraged, such as, a Health and Safety Fair, Bike Rodeo, Field Day, and/or 4-H extension activities.

After School program (Adventure Club) encourages healthy snacks.

The school nurse will teach health /safety classes monthly.

School parties and school related activities will have snacks that follow the Nutrition Guidelines.

4) Nutrition Guidelines -

Belview will follow the Scorecard for the Governor's Nutrition and Physical Activity Award standards for all foods available to students during the school day:

- Beverages – 100% fruit drinks, water and low-fat or non-fat milk.
- Snacks – fewer than 300 calories per item
- Snacks – no more than 30% of calories from fat (except nuts and seeds)
- Snacks – no more than 10% if calories from saturated fat per serving
- Snacks – no more than 35% by weight sugar per serving

When possible, snacks will include fresh vegetables from the school garden.

Staff will share healthy recipes for some pot-luck lunches.

5) Mental Wellness -

Opportunities for mental well being of staff/students will be encouraged.

- "Drop in your bucket" morale booster

- Seminars at PTA/Faculty meetings to provide education about mental health and stress reduction
- Social Committee recognition for special days throughout the year
- Pot-luck lunches for staff on Early Release days
- Catered meals near holiday breaks
- Secret Pal program
- Announcements about students displaying good citizenship
- Feedback forums several times a year to express concerns

Soft drinks and Fast Food lunches are prohibited.