CITY OF MARION

Taft Elementary School

School Travel Plan

September 15, 2011
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Section 1: Target School & Safe Routes To School Team

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Taft Elementary School
1000 Robinson Ave
Marion, Ohio 43302
Number of Students in K-5: 450

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<th>Program Area</th>
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City of Marion, SRTS Advisory Committee:
Jay Shoup - City Services Director
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Roger George - Marion City Schools
Sean Smith - Taft Elementary School, Principal
James Barney - Marion City Schools
Amy Gorenflo - Marion Public Health
Guen Janeczek - Marion Public Health
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Keith Cox - Marion Police Department

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Section 2: Introduction

This School Travel Plan (STP) encompasses Taft Elementary School within the Marion City School District. The proposed improvements to the school site and school attendance area will significantly enhance the walking and biking environment for students, staff, and community.

This School Travel Plan serves as a strategic planning tool for the entire City that improves children’s safety, enhances community life and protects community character. This plan is committed to the City of Marion’s goals to:

- Provide safe routes, sidewalks and trails that enable and encourage students to walk and bike to school. Implement strategies that are cost effective and impact the largest student population.

- Increase awareness of the benefits of active transportation. Educate students, parents and residents of pedestrian and bicycle safety, address barriers to walking and biking and promote the health and environmental benefits of active transportation.

- Build community interest and excitement for walking and biking by holding events that are fun and informative for both students and parents.

- Utilize the resources of law enforcement officers, adult crossing guards and student safety patrols to make it safer and easier to walk and bike to school. Also utilize officers to conduct various safety programs and seminars.

- Monitor and evaluate the Safe Routes to School program to ensure the goals and objectives are being met. Identify strategies to solve problems that will improve the short and long term development of the program.
Section 3: Public Input Process

The foundation of the School Travel Plan is based on community and stakeholder input. Insight, observations and recommendations from City & School officials, stakeholders, key individuals and the general public were gathered to help gain consensus on key issues and strategies. An advisory committee was established, consisting of key City departments, School officials, Health Department, PTA representatives, a law enforcement officer and invested citizens. Meetings with the committee provided insight into the current travel environment, community needs and safety issues. Also, public presentations were held to present information and gather feedback from the citizens at large. This community feedback was critical in determining the City residents’ feelings toward barriers and obstacles to active transportation.

Student opinions were taken and over 480 parent surveys were distributed and collected. The City and School also made the walkability and bikeability checklists available to the public.

Below are key meeting and submittal dates during the planning process.

• November 10, 2010  City and Floyd Browne Group met to discuss STP requirements and to identify potential advisory committee members.
• January 20, 2011      Held the STP kick-off meeting with advisory committee members. Discussed goals of the SRTS program, 5E’s, barriers to active transportation, and timeline for assembling STP sections 1-6.
• March 1, 2011        Held SRTS Advisory committee meeting to discuss barriers to active transportation.
• March 15, 2011        Taft Elementary School Public Open House to present STP background information and receive feedback on barriers to active transportation.
• May 3, 2011            Held SRTS Advisory Committee workshop- creating solutions, improvement mapping and action plan.
• May 4, 2011            Submitted preliminary STP to ODOT District 6 for review and comments
• May 19, 2011            Held Public Open House to present draft school travel Plan and proposed solutions and countermeasures.
• September 9, 2011    Received endorsement letters from the City, School, Health Department PTA and Police Department.
• September 15, 2011   Submitted final STP to ODOT District 6 for review and approval.
Programs Already in Place

Education: The City of Marion holds a Safety City Program that is designed to educate children on a variety of safety training topics including: biking, pedestrian, traffic and animal safety. In addition, the School's wellness policy emphasizes a lifelong healthy lifestyle and exercise habitats for its students. The Marion Public Health District has numerous programs that focus on healthy communities and childhood obesity prevention.

Enforcement: In recent years, the City has incorporated Neighborhood Watch Programs. However due to budget constraints, this program has been put on hold. The City plans to reinstate this program when appropriate.

Encouragement: The Marion Public Health District has several programs that work with school age children. This includes bicycle helmet give-aways, Creating Healthy Communities initiative, Pioneering Healthy Communities, and their partnership with the Marion Family YMCA childhood obesity prevention programs.

Parent Surveys

Surveys were sent home to parents of students in middle of the school year that sought to better understand issues and concerns that parents have for allowing their child to walk or bike to school. The survey contained questions about how their child typically arrives and departs from school, the distance the child travels to school, their interest in walking and biking, and sought additional parent comments. 196 surveys were returned. A summary of the results and sample of parent comments can be found in Section 5 of the School Travel Plan.

Stakeholder Interview Results

Thirty stakeholder interview sheets were distributed to Taft Elementary School teachers, administrators, school aids, PTA representatives and City staff. Comments received from the interviews provide important insight into drop-off and pick-up procedures, arrival and dismissal policies, student travel modes and problems that students encounter.

Existing bike or Pedestrian Recommendations

The City of Marion promotes walking, biking and active lifestyles through local sidewalk ordinances requiring sidewalks be installed and maintained in new developments, implementing bike paths and routes within the City and through the Recreation Department's programs that provide fun, safe, and affordable recreational opportunities for all citizens of the community.

School Wellness Policy

Marion City Schools has established a wellness policy that recognizes that good nutrition and regular physical activity affect the health and well being of the District's students. The District is committed to establishing and promoting healthy nutrition habits and physical activity in and out of school for its students. The District has set goals for three primary areas: nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities. These goals are implemented through various strategies including: health and physical education curriculum, nutrition education, physical education classes and activities, and daily recess periods to name a few.
Section 4: School Demographics

Taft Elementary School Demographics
Serves grades K-5, 450 Students

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<tr>
<th>Ethnic Make-up</th>
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<th>State Average</th>
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<tr>
<td>White, not Hispanic</td>
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<td>76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black, not Hispanic</td>
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<td>16%</td>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Student Subgroups</th>
<th>This School</th>
<th>State Average</th>
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<tr>
<td>Economically disadvantaged Students</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disabled Students</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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Source: www.greatschools.org

Taft Elementary School
Section 5: Current School Travel Environment

Project Location Map
Summary of in-Class and Parent Survey Results

The following summary illustrates parents perceptions and attitudes towards allowing their child to walk or bike to school.

Based upon the response from the parents surveys, the primary issues that affect parents allowing or not allowing their child to walk or bike to school were:

- Violence and Crime
- Weather or climate
- Distance
- Traffic volume along the route
- Safety of intersections & crossings
- Speed of traffic along the route

Travel Environment:
- 13% of parents felt students are encouraged or strongly encouraged to use active transportation
- 83% were neutral
- 5% felt students were discouraged or strongly discouraged

Fun Level:
- 36% of parents felt walking or biking to school was fun or very fun for their child
- 46% neutral
- 7% boring or very boring

How healthy is walking or biking:
- 76% parents felt it is healthy or very healthy
- 22% neutral
- 3% unhealthy or very unhealthy
Sample of parent comments:
The vast majority of written comments from parent surveys pertained to their concerns for sexual predators, violence, and crime along the route. Below is a sample of the comments provided.

- “There are a large amount of sex offenders in our neighborhoods. This is one of the main reasons I do not let my kids walk.”
- “Unfortunately we now live in a time where it is not safe for a child to walk to school. Therefore I take and have my daughter picked up from school.”
- “Concern for sex offenders in the area and kids out unsupervised.”
- “I would let my child walk or bike home from school after she learned the path to get home.”
- “If the weather is nice they walk.”
- “I don’t like the thought of my kids walking and with work, the bus makes it better. I know my kids will make it to school.”
- “My child and myself enjoy the time we get to spend walking to school when we can (weather permitting) and its a healthy way for both of us to exercise without her really knowing.”
- “If there are more kids (group) I would let him walk.”
- “I live too far away from the school for my kids to walk and they are too young to walk alone.”
- “He does ok walking home because I am out there waiting on him.”
- “Not a lot of areas for walkers and residents don’t clean their sidewalks so kids are walking in the roads.”
- “I have walked my daughter to school when the weather has been nice. She likes riding the bus.”
- “I would only let my child walk if I was walking with him.”
- “There are no sidewalks around my area.”
- “Have crossing guards and plow sidewalks to and around the school.”
- “I wouldn’t feel comfortable with her being in elementary school, riding or walking. Maybe when she gets older.”
- “One side of Bermuda Dr. sidewalk ends by the bridge. Children have to cross the street to have access to full length sidewalk.”
- “Not safe for a young child to travel alone. I do approve, if walking or biking in pairs or groups, but not alone.”
- “Children need to know the safety of riding and walking to school. The traffic is awful. Children just don’t pay attention.”
- “If we did not live so far away from school, I would not have an issue with my children riding a bike or walking to school.”
Source: City of Marion School, on-line arrival and dismissal procedures page for Taft Elementary School

**Arrival/ Dismissal Procedures:**

School Arrival and Departure Hours:
Arrival:  8:15 - 8:45 am  
Departure:  3:15 - 3:30 pm  

Procedures:
A.M. – Students who walk to school or are transported by their parents may not arrive at school before 8:15 a.m. The school day begins at 8:45 a.m., and students arriving between 8:30 a.m. and 8:45 a.m. have sufficient time to be in their class and prepare to begin the school day.

The school does not provide supervision of children before and after school.

P.M. – Students who walk home or to a sitter's house, are expected to go directly to their destination. Adults who come to pick up their child are asked to wait outside the building where their child is dismissed. Parents and persons picking up students should make arrangements, in advance, to meet the child at one of the designated pickup points. Adults are directed to not pick up students before dismissal time or from their classroom. Adults picking up students early are to report to the office. The school day ends for the students at 3:15. The school does not provide supervision of any student beyond this time on the playground.
**Parent/ Visitor Entering the Building:**
All persons entering the building or on school grounds are required by law to report to the office to sign in and get a visitor’s pass. The School asks that visitors do not disturb classes and interrupt the education of the children. Students are not to bring friends or visiting relatives to school.

**Support During Travel Times:**
The school principal and teachers at the end of the day assist children in loading into their parent or guardian cars. Cones are set up to delineate space for student to enter cars and to prevent vehicles from driving around cars that are being loaded. Signage is also in place that directs parents to “use inside curb lane to drop-off and pick-up students”.

**Location and times of crossing guards, adult or student:**
Currently crossing guards are not provided during arrival and dismissal times.

**School Travel Policies:**
Only fourth and fifth grade students are permitted to ride their bikes to school. Bikes should be parked and locked in the bike rack.

Parking at the school is allowed in marked parking spaces on school grounds. For safety, parking is not allowed in school driveways.

Safety City is provided for kindergartners.

**Community Sidewalk Maintenance Policy & Local Ordinances:**
Sidewalk maintenance is primarily the responsibility of property owners. City Code section 660.05 requires that owners and occupants abutting sidewalks keep them in good repair and free of snow, ice or any nuisances. The City inspects damaged areas and recommends repairs upon request. If repairs are not made by the property owner, the City will do the necessary work at the property owners expense.

The City also has several ordinances pertaining to pedestrians, bicyclists and sidewalks. Section 331.38 prohibits vehicles from driving upon sidewalks, street lawns and curbs, thus reducing the potential for sidewalk obstructions. Section 371 allows bicyclists to ride on sidewalks with the exception of the downtown business district or where signs are posted prohibiting such operation. In addition, bicycles are prohibited from parking on a sidewalk in such a manner so as to unduly interfere with pedestrian traffic. To encourage bicycle use, a 10-mile recreational bike route is planned that provides a continuous loop route connecting to four major parks. And lastly, City Code Section 903.09 requires that concrete sidewalks be included in all future development of streets and subdivisions.
Section 6: Barriers to Active Transportation

Traffic Related Dangers
Parent Surveys, Stakeholder interviews, and walkability & bikeability checklists indicate a high percentage of residents who are concerned about the large volume of traffic and speed of vehicles in the City. The significant thoroughfares within the school attendance area include: Fairgrounds Avenue, Main Street and State Street. In addition, the Stakeholder Interview sheets consistently noted the amount of traffic congestion during student drop-off and pick-up times as being a problem encountered during arrival and dismissal times.

The issue of safety at intersections also had a large number of parent survey respondents listing it as having an affect on whether to allow or not allow their child to walk to school. Based on Police Records, intersections within the area that have had an increased risk of accidents are E. Fairgrounds Road & Richmond and E. Fairgrounds Road & State Street.

Distance to School
Due to the reduction in elementary schools in Marion, the distance many children travel to school has increased. While Taft Elementary School is located in a residential area, the expanded attendance area makes it more difficult for some children to walk or bike to school. This concern by parents was apparent by the large number of respondents listing it as having an affect on whether to allow or not allow their child to walk to school.

Public Safety Issues
Parent survey comments indicate a considerable concern for the amount of Sexual predators and fear of violence and crime in the school attendance area. Many parent commented that they would not allow their children to walk alone without the supervision of a known parent or without a group of children. This fear of kidnapping or assault, whether real or perceived, greatly impacts the likelihood of a parent to allow or not allow their child to walk or bike to school.

In addition, a low rating for “Was your walk pleasant” was often given in the Walkability Survey. Problems such as: needs more grass, flowers or trees, and presence of scary dogs, scary people, not well lighted and lots of litter were checked.

Weather and Climate
Adverse weather was cited by many parents as a reason for not allowing their child to walk or bike to school. Snow covered sidewalks, rainy weather and dark mornings act as a barrier on many days during the school year. In addition, the relative ease of dropping off their child using a vehicle was noted by several parents.
**Parent Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures**

There is significant traffic congestion within the school site and on Robinson Street during student arrival and dismissal times. Cars are stacked from the school entrance out onto Robinson Ave. The School has made attempts to organize the drop-off and pick-up procedure by allowing two children to be picked up at a time and installing directional signs and parking cones. This makes for a safer environment and eliminates students crossing in front of parked cars. However, it is a slow process and is difficult to keep children loading in an orderly, efficient manner.

**Bike Parking**

A convenient bicycle parking area is provided on the northeast side of the building. However, due to its location in an unsupervised area and risk of theft, the bike rack has been relocated to the front yard playground area. The existing bike racks are the single post style that can potentially cause damage to the bike wheel and/or frame.

Students are required to walk their bikes on school property and currently only forth and fifth graders are permitted to ride their bikes to school.
**Walkway Obstacles**

There are instances where debris, vehicles and plant material block the sidewalk. These situations prevent the entire width of the sidewalk from being used, force pedestrians and bicyclist to potentially walk/ride closer to the roadway and may prohibit wheelchair users from passing. In addition, many of the sidewalks are only four feet wide, which is one to two feet narrower than the preferred minimum width recommended in the Safe Routes to School Guide.

**ADA Accessible Ramps**

The primary pedestrian crossing at Robinson Street is well striped and signed. However, it lacks ADA compliant curb ramps with detectable warning mats and the deteriorated curb likely causes this crossings to be inaccessible for wheelchair users. On street parking is allowed and a stop bar is in place to indicate the crossing. However, due to the stop bar’s close proximity to the crosswalk, there is limited visibility for pedestrians to see on-coming traffic and viser versa.

Throughout the school attendance area there are intersections that lack ADA compliant curb ramps with appropriate slopes, landings, detectable warning mats and flush transition onto the roadway.
Missing or Disconnected Sidewalks
Various streets have missing or disconnected sidewalks. The sidewalk along East Fairgrounds Street is missing from Richmond Avenue to Robinson Street. Just north of the school grounds, a section of Richmond Avenue was never constructed and therefore a sidewalk is missing.

Sidewalk Condition
There are intermittent sections of sidewalks that are damaged, buckled or cracked which could cause someone to fall and may be impassible for wheelchair users.
Major Arterials and Difficult Intersections
Occasionally there are sidewalks with minimal or no tree lawn buffers. The lack of adequate buffer zone, particularly on high volume roads, puts children uncomfortably close to vehicular traffic. In addition, there are instances where there is minimal space for pedestrians to stack while waiting for the pedestrian traffic signal.

Dangerous Driving and Distance to School
Fairgrounds Avenue is a major barrier for students who live to the south. Its high volume and high speed traffic greatly impacts the safety of walking or biking to school. In addition, the distance to school that children would need to travel acts as a barrier for children walking or biking.
Section 7: Creating Solutions

Goals:
The goals of the following Solutions and Countermeasures are to implement strategies that enhance children’s safety, have the ability to be implemented in a timely and cost effective manner and that impact the greatest student population. Through the use of strategies from all five countermeasure categories (5 “E’s: Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Evaluation and Engineering), the plan addresses specific issues affecting student’s ability to safely walk to school. Upon implementation of these strategies, the SRTS Advisory Committee hopes for an increased number of students walking and biking to school, improved student physical health, and greater community awareness of the benefits of active transportation.

Non Infrastructure Projects:

Education:
Bicycle Safety Training: The City, Police Department and School District will start a bicycle safety program to teach children about safely riding their bike to school. The program will instruct participants on hand signals, the proper places to ride their bikes, as well as the proper safety equipment that should be worn while riding, including bike helmets. This event will also provide an opportunity to inspect children’s bicycles to ensure that they are in good repair and to distribute bike helmets to students who do not have one.

Community Newsletter: Each year the City will include in its community newsletter important information about the SRTS program. Among the items that may be included in the newsletter are: dates of special events, location of the safe route, and the City’s sidewalk policies.

City and School Web site: The City of Marion and Marion City School’s will include any important information concerning the SRTS Project on their web sites, and update this information as needed.

Drop-off & Pick-up Procedures: The Marion City Schools will continue to communicate with parents the correct drop-off and pick-up process.

Encouragement:
Walk to School Day: The administration of Marion City Schools is planning a Walk to School Day event during the school year. The event will be discussed with the student body and information will be sent home to inform parents. The administration will track the number of students who walk or bike each Walk to School Day event and will recognize those students who take part in the event.
Encouragement Cont.:
Safe Businesses: Safe Businesses are intended to be designated locations (Fire Station, Churches, Banks, etc) where students can go during any type of emergency while coming and going to school and during the summer months. Examples of emergencies that would require the use of a safe business may include a stranger following them, an aggressive dog, or a storm event. Property owners/Store Managers will be instructed to contact the Police Department so they can respond and deal with the problem accordingly.

Enforcement:
Active Speed Monitors: Active speed monitors will be used along specific streets of concern. This will increase the awareness of the speed limit and call attention to the vehicles current speed as they enter the school zone, thus helping to reduce the risk of accidents in and around the school zone.

Progressive Ticketing: The City of Marion Police Department is committed to the safety and well being of every student and visitor to the school. The Department plans to aggressively educate, warn and issue citations to all violators of the speed limit in and around the school zone on a daily basis.

Neighborhood Watch Program: The City of Marion Police Department plans to coordinate a neighborhood watch program for the Taft Elementary School attendance area. This program is intended to encourage parents and citizens of the neighborhood to take an active role in improving the safety of the area. These “Citizen Patrols” will monitor the school travel route, report traffic related violations to the Police Department, and make neighbors aware to the communities commitment to student safety.
Evaluation:
Tallies and Counts: Marion City Schools plans to keep track of the number of kids who walk or bike to school twice a year. Homeroom teachers will assist with this task. Classrooms with the highest percentage of walkers/bikers may be recognized.

Surveys: Parent and student surveys will be conducted by the school annually to gather information important for the success of this program as well as gathering opinions and additional insight.

Interviews: The school will interview parents and students annually to gather their thoughts about this program as well as to consider their suggestions for improvement.
Infrastructure Projects:

Engineering:

**Richmond Avenue Sidewalk:** Richmond Ave is located just north of the school grounds. The street was built to the east and west of the school site but was never completed as a through street. Therefore a sidewalk that connects the two streets was never constructed. Currently this route is heavily used by students as indicated by the worn path. It is recommended that a sidewalk or path be provided on the south side of Richmond Avenue from the existing sidewalk terminus just west of Barbados Ave to the School's existing sidewalks. Due to an existing drainage swale that bisects the route, a pedestrian bridge or culvert will be needed in order for the trail to be accessible year-round. This additional 300’ section of sidewalk is a critical piece of the walking route to school from the northeast. The sidewalk will be universally accessible, be seperated form vehicle traffic, provide direct connectivity to the adjacent neighborhood and provide a safer route for students.

**Robinson Avenue Crossing:** The pedestrian crossing just south of the school entrance drive is a primary crossing for students traveling from the south to Taft Elementary School. Due to the large volume of traffic and wide street, the following improvements should be considered at this crossing.

- Improve visibility of the crosswalk for both drives and pedestrians by restricting parking at the crosswalk.
- Relocate the stop bar 30 feet back from the crossing.
- Install a raised crosswalk to alert drivers of this often used pedestrian crossing and to calm traffic
- Provide curb paint to identify no parking within the crosswalk area
- Consider the use of Adult Crossing Guard
Richmond Avenue and Fairgrounds Avenue Crossing: For the students who live south of Fairgrounds Avenue, there are two direct and convenient routes to the school. One is along Richmond Avenue and the other is along Richmond Street. Richmond Avenue is a signalized intersection with crosswalks and curb ramps. It is recommended that this intersection be improved with:
- Waiting/Stand-back line area on the SE corner or the intersection
- Reflective crosswalk marking
- Crosswalk Signs
- Consider the use of pedestrian push buttons to the existing signal

In addition, consider reducing the number of curb cuts/driveways to adjacent businesses. By reducing the number of curb cuts, sidewalks and planting strips can be added to create a buffer between pedestrians and vehicles and improve the overall aesthetics and function of the intersection.

Robinson Street and Fairgrounds Avenue Crossing:
This is one of two key Fairgrounds Avenue crossings for students who live in the southern portion of the school attendance area. Robinson Street provides a direct, convenient and safe route to the school property. However, the intersection of Robinson Street and Fairgrounds Avenue is an unsignalized crossing. Due to this relatively simple crossing location, with only two travel lanes, very good visibility and low traffic volume, this uncontrolled crossing could be improved with ladder style pavement marking, solar powered pedestrian flashing signals and stand-back pavement areas. In addition, enforcement strategies such as speed trailers, pedestrian decoy operations and adult crossing guards may be needed to deter unsafe driver behaviors.
**Fairgrounds Avenue Sidewalk Improvements** - A large portion of the southern school attendance area could potentially use Fairgrounds Avenue as the primary east/west route to travel to and from school. Fairgrounds Avenue has 2 lanes of traffic but does widen at certain intersections to accommodate turn lanes. Due to this street being a primary east/west route, the following improvements should be considered:

- Update non-compliant curb ramps at all intersections to meet ADA Standards
- Add missing sidewalks along the route
- Replace sidewalks that are damaged or heaving with new sidewalks to improve accessibility, safety and comply with ADA Standards. Replacement sidewalks should be a minimum of 5’ wide.
- Add signage to indicate that this street is a Safe School Travel Route.
- Provide marked crosswalks to guide students along the school walking route and to alert drivers to an often used pedestrian crossing.
- Identify safe businesses along Fairgrounds Avenue.

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**Fairview Street Sidewalk Improvements** - Fairview Street is the primary east/west route for students who live to the far western portion of the school attendance area. In order to create a safer route, the following should be considered:

- Sidewalks should be added where they are currently missing
- Non-compliant curb ramps should be updated at all intersections to meet ADA Standards
- Sidewalks that are damaged or heaving should be replaced with new sidewalks to improve accessibility, safety and to comply with ADA Standards. Replacement sidewalks should be a minimum of 5’ wide.
- Add signage along the route to indicate that the street is a Safe School Travel Route.
Bermuda Drive Sidewalk Extension: Along the western side of Bermuda Avenue there are missing section of sidewalk near the intersection of Robinsin Street. This additional 150’ of sidewalk will provide a continuous safe route from the Robinson Street sidewalks to Bermuda Ave.

Safe Route Sidewalk Rehabilitation: Various sidewalk and curb ramps along the designated safe walking routes are showing signs of deterioration. The City should continue to monitor sidewalk conditions for cracks, buckling, or heaving. Damaged sections should be identified and repaired or replaced. In addition, the City should notify property owners to trim trees and shrubs that interfere with visibility and access along the sidewalk and to keep sidewalks clear of obstacles such as parked cars, trash receptacles and piled snow.

School Grounds Directional Signage and Pavement Marking: In order to make the parent drop-off and pick-up procedures more apparent, directional signs, curb paint and pavement stencils are recommended.
Section 8- Improvement Mapping

**Legend:**
- **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BOUNDARY**
- **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AREA**
- **TAFT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**
- **CITY OF MARION SCHOOL**
- **SAFE SCHOOL TRAVEL ROUTE**
- **PROVIDED ACCESSIBLE SIDEWALKS, CURB RAMPS & NEIGHBORHOOD SAFE ROUTE SIGNAGE**
- **ENHANCED VISIBILITY CROSSWALK WITH ADA COMPLIANT CURB RAMPS, MARKED CROSSWALKS, AND CROSSWALK SIGNAGE**
- **SAFE SCHOOL ROUTE SIGNAGE**
- **POTENTIAL SAFE BUSINESSES**

**City of Marion, Ohio**
Section 9: The Action Plan

The following action items were selected because they have the greatest impact on the barriers of active transportation in the City. The primary barriers that have been identified by the SRTS Advisory Committee, parent and student surveys, public forums and walkability checklists include: Violence and Crime, Distance, traffic speed & volume along the school routes, safety at intersections & crossings, and Drop-off and Pick-up congestion.

With the implementation of these action items, the City will have made a significant improvement to the walkability and bikeability of the community and increased children's safety and health as they travel the school route.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strategy Type</th>
<th>Strategy Name</th>
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<th>Responsible Party</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
<th>Possible Funding Source</th>
<th>Percent of Students Affected</th>
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</table>
August 2, 2011

Ohio Department of Transportation

Subject: Taft Elementary School SRTS
Marion, Ohio

To Whom It May Concern:

The City of Marion, a partner in the SRTS project with the Marion City Schools and Marion Public Health, has been very active during the development of the program. We have participated in several meetings and open houses. Both administrative staff and elected officials have tracked the development of the SRTS application.

The City endorses the SRTS submission document. We trust the material will be favorably reviewed by ODOT and set the stage for important infrastructure work in the vicinity of the Taft Elementary School in the Fairpark area.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Jay M. Shoup, Director of Public Service

Cc: Mayor Scott Schertzter
To Whom it May Concern:

As a representative of the Marion City Schools, I wish to extend our complete support for the Taft Elementary School Travel Plan. If approved and grant money is provided, improvements would be made in the district to allow more children to safely walk and ride their bicycles to school. As can be seen in the Travel Plan, there are many areas of the district that have insufficient sidewalks, crosswalks, etc. 42% of the Taft students were bussed this past school year. Hopefully, that number can be reduced if Travel Plan improvements are made.

The Marion City Schools have invested $3,750.00 to help the School Travel Plan. We think this is a good community endeavor and will continue with our support!

Sincerely,

Roger D. George
Assistant Superintendent
Marion City Schools
July 19, 2011

To Whom It May Concern,

Marion Public Health would like to express our support for the school travel plan and proposed Safe Routes to School project at Taft Elementary School, a Marion City Schools building. It was in fact one of our programs, Creating Health Communities and Project Coordinator, Amy Gorenflo, that breathed new life into this endeavor after it had been tabled due to budgetary concerns. Learning about the Safe Routes to School initiative, and then discovering it had been considered in the past, Amy brought all partners back to the table and offered financial assistance to hire a professional develop the best possible travel plan for Taft.

We support this effort because it’s a great way to show children and families we care about their health enough to create a safe and reliable way to get to school, thus increasing their physical activity and hopefully improving upon their health and well-being. It is also such a great community initiative that has brought together government, schools and the community and this is always something we will support.

As Health Commissioner, I am very concerned about the health of the children of Marion County. We have body mass index rates in all our schools that are significantly higher than the state average. A 2010 study of 1978 students completed by our department revealed 35% of children in kindergarten were either overweight (18%) or obese (17%), 44% of third graders were overweight (17%) or obese (27%) and 45% of fifth graders were either overweight (19%) or obese (26%). Considering these staggering rates of obesity in our community, we must act to increase physical activity and improve the nutrition habits of our children.

Again, Marion Public Health is in full support of this project and have devote time and resources in an attempt to ensure its success.

Sincerely,

Kathy Dixon, MD
Health Commissioner
Marion Public Health

www.marionpublichealth.org
August 29, 2011

Ohio Department of Transportation

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the Safe Routes to School Plan for the City of Marion. The Marion Police Department is dedicated to the safe passage to and from school for all our children each day. The funds from this grant will give us the opportunity to help provide the children of the City of Marion a safe, healthy and fun option when coming and going from school.

Sincerely,

Tom Bell
Chief of Police
September 8, 2011

To All This May Concern:

As the President of the William Howard Taft Elementary School’s PTA, I would like to express mine as well as the group’s endorsement of the Marion City Schools Safe Routes to School Plan. This project will provide the ability and opportunity to give our students safe travel routes to and from school. These enhanced and safe routes will also encourage more of our students to be physically active and exercise by walking or riding a bike to school.

The William Howard Taft Elementary School PTA will continue to participate in and work to support the Marion City Schools Safe Routes to School Plan as an ongoing and continuous effort. As a parent, I feel honored that such an organization is concerned with my child's safety; and we have been given a great opportunity to support our community and make it safe for all. Thank you in advance for your consideration in funding this worthwhile project that will provide a great benefit to our children and community.

Sincerely,

Amy D. Pirnstill
William Howard Taft Elementary
PTA President
BS Child and Family Community Services
Tri-Rivers Center for Adult Education
Career Transitions and Placement Coordinator
Vocational Evaluator and Job Profiler
Independent Study Coordinator
Public Safety Services Student Representative
Student Pick-up/Dismissal
MARION STAR
October 2nd, 2010

MARION - Community officials are thinking about applying for money to improve sidewalks, crosswalks and streetlights near city schools.

Officials for Marion Public Health, the city of Marion and Marion City Schools have discussed applying through the Safe Routes to School program for federal funds to improve pedestrian/bicycle safety within two miles of one school building.

Under the program, applicants must get Ohio Department of Transportation approval of a school travel plan for the 2-mile area. Successful applicants will be eligible to be awarded up to $500,000 for pedestrian or bicycle facilities and $100,000 for training and public awareness projects per building.

Safe Routes to School, administered by ODOT, is funding 66 projects with $11 million ranging in size from $1,650 to $500,000 in 2010. Only buildings housing grades kindergarten through 8 are eligible.

Marion officials hope to get in on the 2011 round of funding, most likely applying for money for one school building to evaluate whether the results warrant seeking funding for others in the future, City Schools Superintendent James Barney said.

"If all goes well, we certainly would be open to expanding that," Barney said. He said the board of education will discuss the proposal at its meeting Monday.

Taft Elementary School is the most likely school to be targeted because it's the largest elementary school, with a student population of more than 400, he said.

The program was considered about four years ago to pay for a pedestrian bridge at Harding High School until it was learned the program applied only to K-8 schools. City Engineer Jim Bischoff said it was discussed with school officials again about a year ago, but the $10,000 expense to have a plan developed was more than either wished to pursue, he said.

Amy Gorenflo, coordinator for Marion Public Health's Creating Healthy Communities program, proposed applying for the funds again, suggesting her program could contribute $2,500 of its federal grant money toward the plan. The school district and the city could split the remaining cost, about $3,750 each, or a fourth organization may be sought to contribute and reduce the cost further, Barney and Bischoff said.

The health district, the city and the school district have not voted on the proposal, but Bischoff, Barney and Gorenflo said it is a worthwhile project.

"I think partnering with the schools is a good thing," Bischoff said. "Even though sidewalks are not the city's responsibility, they're the homeowners', it's just going to help. You're always looking at the safety issue. Anything around those schools that promotes the safety of those kids is going to help."

The Safe Routes to School program promotes physical health of children, Gorenflo said, "to get kids more physically active in a safe way. By being more physically active there's a good chance of reducing childhood obesity."

Barney said the funding will help in a variety of ways.

"We think there are benefits at a couple levels," he said. "There's the benefit for kids to be able to safely walk to school.... The benefit to the community could be that it adds sidewalks where there are not currently sidewalks. It will be safer to walk."

Gorenflo said her program just wants to help the community and would support the plan as developed by the school district and the city.

Applicants for funding in 2011 must submit their school travel plan by July 2011 and, if the plan is approved, apply for funding from September to November 2011, according to ODOT spokesman David Rose.
Marion City Council
Finance Committee Agenda
March 7, 2011 @ 6:30 PM

Roll Call

Minutes of February 22, 2011
New Business:

Item 1. ORDINANCE MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE ARRA
ENERGY GRANT FUND PREVIOUSLY AWARDEO TO THE CITY OF MARION FOR
THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2011 (Auditor Carr)

Marion City Council
Legislation, Codes & Regulations
March 7, 2011 @ 6:40 PM

Roll Call

Minutes for February 22, 2011
New Business:

Item 1. Transfer of liquor permit application for Norris Grocery @ 901 Bennett St.

Marion City Council
Streets & Sewers
March 7, 2011 @ 6:50

Roll Call

Minutes of February 7, 2011
New Business:

Item 1. Announcement – Public Meeting and Open House @ Taft Elementary School
(Fairpark) on March 15, 2011, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. in reference to “Safe Routes to School
Program” (Safety Director, Jay Shoup)

Item 2. Further discussion on Utility Billing (Safety Director, Jay Shoup)

Items not on the Agenda
The Marion City Schools and the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee is seeking public input regarding the Safe Routes to School program. The Safe Routes to School program is funded by the Federal Highway Commission and is an effort to make walking and biking to school safer by looking at crosswalks, signage, sidewalks, bike paths, bike safety, physical education, speed enforcement and monitoring, etc. A possible $500,000 could be awarded to the Taft community through this grant.

A public meeting will be held in an effort to gather feedback from citizens on barriers and obstacles that may hinder students walking or biking to school. Representatives will be available to introduce visitors to the Safe Routes to School program, review proposed School Travel Plans for William Howard Taft Elementary and answer questions.

A meeting is currently scheduled for Tuesday, March 15\textsuperscript{th} at William Howard Taft Elementary, beginning at 6:00 PM. The meetings will be organized and presented in an Open House format. Stations will be setup for visitors to review barrier maps, school site maps, and site photos. The public is welcome to attend the meetings anytime during this time to ask questions and submit comments.

Comments and suggestions can be submitted at the meeting or mailed to the Sean M. Smith prior to April 8, 2011. Additional information and details will be provided at the meeting.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Sean M. Smith, Principal

1000 Robinson St.

Marion, Ohio 43302

Phone: (740) 223-4500

Fax: (740) 223-4499
Funds sought to improve safety in Taft Elementary area

Written by
JOHN JARVIS
The Marion Star
Mar 24, 2011

MARION -- Sean Smith said the success of a coordinated effort to seek up to $500,000 in federal funds could repair crumbling sidewalks, signs and more around Taft Elementary School.

"I see a need for the signage, which they focus on, the sidewalks, the curbs, the ADA-accessible," the Taft principal said, referring to the Americans With Disabilities Act and pursuit of the Safe Routes to School funding. "They're trying to make it a safer place not only for the students but the whole community getting out and walking."

Officials for the city of Marion, Marion Public Health and Marion City Schools attended the public meeting, which was at Taft Elementary, the district's largest school with a pupil population of more than 400.

Safe Routes for Schools is a program of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration, which provides funds to states to substantially improve the ability of primary and middle school students to walk and bicycle to school safely. Each state administers its own program. Successful applicants will be eligible to receive up to $500,000 for pedestrian and bicycle facilities and $100,000 for training and public awareness projects per building.

The Marion effort, which is being funded by the city, Marion Public Health and City Schools, is "on schedule," City Service Director Jay Shoup said.

Shoup said the local group plans to submit its application in late June before the July 1 deadline, competing with other applications statewide for $21 million available for the program in Ohio.

The city and school district each are paying $3,750 toward the $10,000 plan, and the health district is contributing $2,500 from the Creating Healthy Communities grant.
program.

City Councilman Mike Thomas, D-3rd Ward, estimated 50 people attended the meeting, which organizers scheduled to coincide with a third-grade music program to increase attendance.

"Any input you have from the general public is a big factor," Thomas said.

The turnout pleased Shoup, who said he was told by a consultant that a larger number of people attended the Marion meeting than attended a similar event in Findlay.

A landscape architect with Floyd Browne Group is about three-fourths done with the plan, Shoup said.

Repair and construction of sidewalks within the 2-mile radius of the school covered in the program comprises much of the plan, he said. Marking crosswalks and constructing curb and gutter also are included.

The application effort also incorporates the health district's objective of addressing childhood obesity by improving access to safe walking and bicycling routes for children and others.

Smith liked the health aspect of the plan, too.

"I think it's a good thing for all students," he said. "... It's not only Taft. It's all students. I'm for anything that will promote physical activity or the health of a community."

He said he hopes the program also increases public awareness of the importance of clear, safe walkways.

"In the snow our kids are walking down the street," he said. "Those are things we take for granted because we live here. Those are things we need to be aware of to shovel sidewalks or cut back trees."
# City of Marion

**Taft Elementary School**

**Safe Routes to School (SRTS)**

**School Travel Plan (STP) Project**

**Public Open House**

March 15, 2011

## Sign-in Sheet

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<tr>
<td>Frank Fulton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rebecca Gustin</td>
<td>623 Concord Ave.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruth Masters</td>
<td>312 St. James St.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Thomas</td>
<td>974 Woodrow Ave.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jay Shoup</td>
<td>617 Girard Ave.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matt Simpson</td>
<td>Delaware Ohio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kasey Williamson</td>
<td>Worthington Ohio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amandavaughn</td>
<td>23 Waller St.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashley Hickman</td>
<td>385 E. Fairground</td>
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<tr>
<td>Megan Hickman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jason Hickman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hannah McInerney</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wycle Millisor</td>
<td>755 Trinidad Dr.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Maltby</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melissa Blevins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shona Newsome</td>
<td>458 Patterson St.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jackie Caudill</td>
<td>1121 Gemmuda Dr.</td>
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<td>Rhonda Wright</td>
<td>778 Robinson St.</td>
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<td>Drexon Ericson</td>
<td>440 E. Mark St.</td>
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<td>Patrici Gregory</td>
<td>1111 Bryant St.</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. Williams</td>
<td>337 E. Mark St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karin Z. Housworth</td>
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# City of Marion
## Taft Elementary School
### Safe Routes to School (SRTS)
#### School Travel Plan (STP) Project
##### Public Open House
###### March 15, 2011

## Sign-in Sheet

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<tr>
<td>Teresa White</td>
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<td>Alicia Minibuster</td>
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<td>589 Patterson St.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Randy Morgan</td>
<td>589 Patterson St.</td>
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<tr>
<td>curt Ecken</td>
<td>650 Fairpack Ave.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lyna Gustafson</td>
<td>650 Fairpark Ave.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diana &quot;Stef&quot;</td>
<td>1276 Montego Dr.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April Nukse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scott Quin</td>
<td>278 E. Centurie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brady Carter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna Meier</td>
<td>500 Main St.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amanda Campbell</td>
<td>325 Libby Lane</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicole McDonal</td>
<td>1041 Bermicia Circle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irene Buchi</td>
<td>1250 Grenada Dr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cisse Green</td>
<td>8927 SR 294-HARPSTER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Green</td>
<td>1926 Harderly Henry E. Marion, OH 43307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Schuster</td>
<td>920 Forest Lawn Dr.</td>
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City of Marion, Ohio
March 15, 2011 Public Open House
City of Marion
Taft Elementary School
Safe Routes to School (SRTS)
School Travel Plan (STP) Project
Public Open House
May 19, 2011

**Sign-in Sheet**

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<td>Luke McGuire</td>
<td>560 Nassau Dr.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amy Piresalis</td>
<td>514 Nassau Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay M. Shoup</td>
<td>City of Marion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michelle Shimp</td>
<td>583 N. State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin Edwards</td>
<td>1136 Bryant St. Marion, OH 43302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin P. McMorris, Jr.</td>
<td>1019 Bermuda Dr. Marion, OH 43302</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sue Acie</td>
<td>1033 Old Rd. Marion, OH 43302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missy Greenaway</td>
<td>1244 Grenada Dr. Marion, OH 43302</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dave Griffin</td>
<td>1119 Martinique Dr. Marion, OH 43302</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charley Holtsberry</td>
<td>684 N. State Marion, OH 43302</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shawn Terry II</td>
<td>1260 Bermuda Dr.</td>
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<td>Stacy Penwell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paula T. Martin</td>
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<td>Philip Miranda</td>
<td>390 Patten St. Marion, OH 43302</td>
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<td>Emy W. Huff's</td>
<td>1126 Bermuda Dr. Marion, OH 43302</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Douglas</td>
<td>338 Patten St. Marion, OH 43302</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laria Doughter</td>
<td>336 Patten St. Marion, OH 43302</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan Bluma</td>
<td>1138 Bahama Dr. Marion, OH 43302</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brenda Lehman</td>
<td>582 N. State St. Marion, OH 43302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precious Lopez</td>
<td>193 E 11th Ave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peggy Hall</td>
<td>442 N. State St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Harris</td>
<td>447 Fairlane Ave. Marion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
City of Marion
Taft Elementary School
Safe Routes to School (SRTS)
School Travel Plan (STP) Project
Public Open House
May 19, 2011

**Sign-in Sheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Hamblin</td>
<td>826 Fairwood Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lori Hughes</td>
<td>195 E Fairground St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Marshall</td>
<td>1085 Barbour Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alene Dale Long</td>
<td>1065 Richmond Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Rieser</td>
<td>838 Central Dr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat Campbell</td>
<td>235 Pearl St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Campbell</td>
<td>325 Libby Lane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil Thompson</td>
<td>Polk St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle Holloway</td>
<td>473 W. Greenwood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deirdre Byler</td>
<td>1007 Benjamin Dr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue Groves</td>
<td>296 Fairview St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Casey</td>
<td>489 N. Prospect St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunshine Edwards</td>
<td>1134 Bryant St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Szmigelski</td>
<td>1213 Bahama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jutrine Boyd</td>
<td>3054 Larue Prospect Rd. W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Hard</td>
<td>713 Herman St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loui Kendall</td>
<td>1000 Richmond Rd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rick Llifer</td>
<td>1033 Uhlau Rd Marion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary Hinze</td>
<td>1526 N. Main St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa Starks</td>
<td>508 N. State St.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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