

Safe Routes to School Action Plan – Mackay, Idaho



Background

Mackay, Idaho is a town of just over 500 people and located in Custer County, Idaho. Located along Highway 93, the town is set in a scenic area along the Lost River Mountain Range, nestled in the Lost River Valley. With such proximity to attractions such as the Mackay Reservoir and both the Lost River and Pioneer Mountain ranges, the community is home to an economy largely made up of a growing tourism sector, with both mining and agriculture still as significant contributors.



Local mural and natural scenery backdrop to Main Street in Mackay

Main Street runs perpendicular to US Highway 93 and most of the city is southwest of the highway. The highway has two travel lanes and continuous two-way center turn lane, two bike lanes, on-street parking, and sidewalks on both sides for five blocks. Beyond the five blocks, the Highway transitions to a two-lane road with gravel shoulders. There are sidewalks on both sides of Main Street for three blocks to the southwest, and there are few other maintained sidewalks in town.



Bike lane on Hwy 93 in Mackay

The school buildings are located six blocks south of Main Street on Spruce Street which runs parallel to the highway two blocks to the southwest. The city park is also on Spruce Street just one block from Main Street. Most city residences are southwest of the highway, however there are locations

where crossing the highway is an important need including at the intersections of Highway 93/Main Street and Highway 93/Cedar Street where the city/county fire station is located. Additional crossings may be needed in the future at Highway 93/Rose Street and/or Highway 93/School Street which leads to the school campus.

The city has been proactive in adopting goals and plans to encourage walking and bicycling. Recently the city was able to overlay the pavement and rebuild the curbs, gutter and sidewalk on Main Street. There is a plan to establish a pathway system that leads to all of the major destinations in



Mackay, Idaho Street layout

Mackay. Phase I of the pathway system would connect the school(s) with the city park and library along Spruce Street. Later phases will connect to the tourist park, the golf course, rodeo grounds and the airport. The lack of curb and gutter on these routes makes them candidates for pathways rather than sidewalks. However as our work proceeded we discovered that there are poorly maintained sidewalks on some of these routes.

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Recommended Infrastructure Improvements

Spruce Street is the primary route connecting most of the residential area of Mackay with the elementary school. Concentrating efforts on Spruce will create a safer route for most students who can walk and bike to school and connect other civic uses, such as the park and library, to the schools.

1. **Spruce, Cedar to Rose.** *Maintain striping – short term. Extend asphalt and use extruded curbing to define walkway until land develops – mid term.* The city has already taken proactive steps by striping the roadway to create a shoulder area for pedestrians. The next step will be to extend the asphalt enough on both sides of the roadway to create a 5' wide surface. Then, the city should



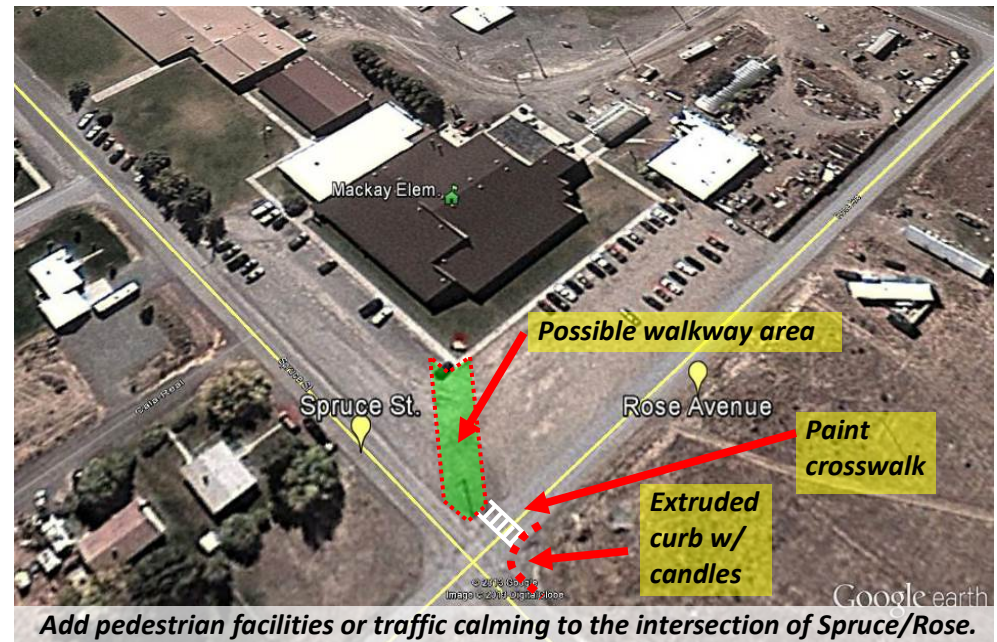
- place an extruded curb along this segment. At such time as development is required to construct new and complete sidewalk on this segment the shoulder lane can become a bike lane.
2. **Spruce St., Cedar to Rose** *Clean and repair existing sidewalk, extend sidewalk to pavement edge at intersections.* This section of Spruce Street already has sidewalk but it is covered with gravel, dirt and vegetation in some places and is in disrepair in others. The city should work to clean up and repair it and extend it to the paved road surface at the intersections over time. (See recommendation #7 for more detail.)

3. **Spruce St., Capitol Ave. to Artemsia.** *Stripe now with a walkway such as between Cedar and Rose.* When funding is available construct a shoulder pathway with extruded curbs.



Rose St./Spruce St. Intersection – The intersection serving the elementary school campus is Spruce Street and Rose Avenue. The intersection is a two-way stop with stopping occurring on Rose Avenue. The intersection is without any designated walking surface or crosswalk. Additionally, the entrance of the school lacks a defined walkway that leads from the intersection to the sidewalk adjacent to the school building which causes a less orderly crossing at the intersection. We recommend the following for both the intersection and the entrance of the school:

4. *Paint crosswalk* on Rose nearest school (SW) to improve driver awareness and designate the appropriate location for crossing.
5. *Define and narrow the curb radius* at the intersection with an extruded curb to slow turning movements. Add reflective candles for visibility; this will help with snow events and driver awareness.
6. *Add landing* for pathway on school grounds, delineate more robust entry to school by dividing the parking lot into two spaces with walkway. Add décor, landscaping, rock/boulders, etc., perhaps using volunteers and donated materials to help improve the walking experience and also heighten traffic calming effects.



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Citywide – Mackay is very fortunate that many streets were constructed with sidewalks. However, over time the sidewalks have either not been maintained by property owners or the city, or have been covered up by gravel, dirt, or shrubs. Fortunately, with some effort, the community could increase their linear sidewalk inventory by determining where the sidewalks exist and how best to recoup each segment.

7. *Repair Sidewalks* Completing an inventory of the sidewalks is a significant step to being able to promote and enforce sidewalk maintenance. The next step is to repair the damaged sections. Create incentives to clean and repair damaged sidewalks, extend sidewalks where possible to the intersections, prioritize fixing sidewalk gaps in plans and budgeting actions.

Common sidewalk conditions in Mackay.



Main St./Spruce St & Main/College St. – College and Spruce are the two most used streets Mackay which run from north to south. Meanwhile Main Street runs perpendicular and intersects both in the center of town at the busiest area. Currently, both intersections are two way stops with limited pedestrian facilities and limited markings.

8. *Add 4-way stops, curb extensions, zebra-striped crosswalks*, possibly use in-pavement pedestal markers. These actions will help improve safety and promote use. A 4-way stop will calm traffic, curb extensions will shorten the crossing distance and the markings and pedestal would improve driver awareness. This is an area where drivers should be moving slowly and with caution; these treatments will encourage that.

Policy Recommendations

City Recommendations

The consultants reviewed planning and policy for the city and school district. Recommendations are below.

City Recommendations

1. Implement comprehensive plan goals on mixed use and housing variety by considering zoning amendments to encourage those activities
 - Allow Accessory Dwelling Units
 - Refine zone in downtown.
2. Limit cul-de-sacs except for reasons of topography.

Note: *Model policies can be found in the resource link.*

3. Review city policy on sidewalk maintenance. Enforce adopted policy to maintain sidewalks by working collaboratively with adjacent owners. The city should consider policy to support pathway construction in the funding decisions for capital improvements, such as in the CIP
4. Prioritize pathway improvements identified in pathways plan, consider using all funding sources including local and stated transportation funds and federal Surface Transportation rural funds and to complete asphalt shoulder additions, starting on Spruce Street.

School District Recommendations

5. Consider a general board policy promoting healthy living and regular physical activity.
6. School wellness policy - Recognize benefits of physical activity.
 - Support walking and biking to school as physical activity.
 - Recognize academic benefits for physically active students.
7. Support active transportation, Safe Routes to School Program when safe for students.

Joint City/School District Recommendations

8. Develop policy and process to meet regularly, collaborate on facility planning and share facilities as a means to make most efficient use of tax dollars.

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Non-Infrastructure Recommendations

City

1. Conduct an annual condition inventory including sidewalks, crosswalks, signage, and general pavement conditions.
2. Begin a program to clear and maintain sidewalks, perhaps with spring and fall citywide clean-up days. Inform citizens of their responsibilities as property owners to ensure sidewalks are clear.
3. Use annual conditions inventory and school survey findings to continually help identify the locations for improvements to infrastructure such as signage, crossings, sharrows and other pavement markings on local streets.
4. Support Walk to School and other events by continuing emergency vehicles and escorts and use of the park as a starting point.

Example of extending sidewalk to pavement at crossing with asphalt



School District

5. Conduct student tallies and surveys annually.
6. Hold safety assemblies annually or integrate the information shared during the assembly into the health or PE curriculum.
7. Explore walking schools bus(es) or a regular walking day such as “walk with the principal” for students who live in Mackay to encourage kids to become more physically active on a regular basis. Consider dropping bused students at a specified location (e.g. the park) periodically such as once a quarter, month or week to get them involved.

Events:

8. Continue Walk to School Day, consider more regular walking activities or a Fun Run. Consider an annual Bike Rodeo on the day of the Fun Run in partnership with the sheriff’s department to teach safe biking skills. See resource link for how-to information.
9. Explore the creation of a walking program for students who are unable to walk to school. Menan’s Midway Elementary has a “Pacers” program to get students walking. It provides a great opportunity for students to be physically active regardless of barriers to safe active transportation and could be used as a model for Mackay.

Note: Event and activities information can be found in the resource link.



Resources: Model and sample policies and other tools are available at: <http://www.idahosmartgrowth.org/index.php/resources/> – go to Best Practices

This project was conducted by Idaho Smart Growth and Vitruvian Planning with support from the Idaho Transportation Department.

