

Is Active School Transport Sustainable in a Northern, Rural Environment? Exploring Child and Parent Perspectives on Facilitators and Barriers.

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BACKGROUND

- ❖ Only 25% of Canadian children use active transportation to school (ATS) compared to > 50% a generation ago (1, 2).
- ❖ 9% of boys and 4% of girls accumulate the recommended levels of physical activity (PA) per day (3).
- ❖ Rates of PA are lower among northern & rural youth compared to urban youth (4).
- ❖ ATS can be a conduit for increasing PA among children and youth (5), but research on ATS in this population is limited to large urban and suburban areas.
- ❖ There is also a lack of literature on intrapersonal (e.g. students attitudes and beliefs) factors.

PURPOSE

- ❖ To explore perceptions, facilitators & barriers to ATS among children and parents.



METHODS

Setting

- ❖ Small city (population 54,000) in rural Northeastern Ontario, Canada.

Participants and Procedures

Students:

- ❖ Two focus groups were conducted with 14 students (Mage 10.6 ± 0.75 yrs; 7 male, 7 female) from two schools engaged in ATS initiatives.
- ❖ A semi-structured interview guide elicited information related to ATS attitudes and beliefs and perceived barriers and facilitators to ATS.

Parents:

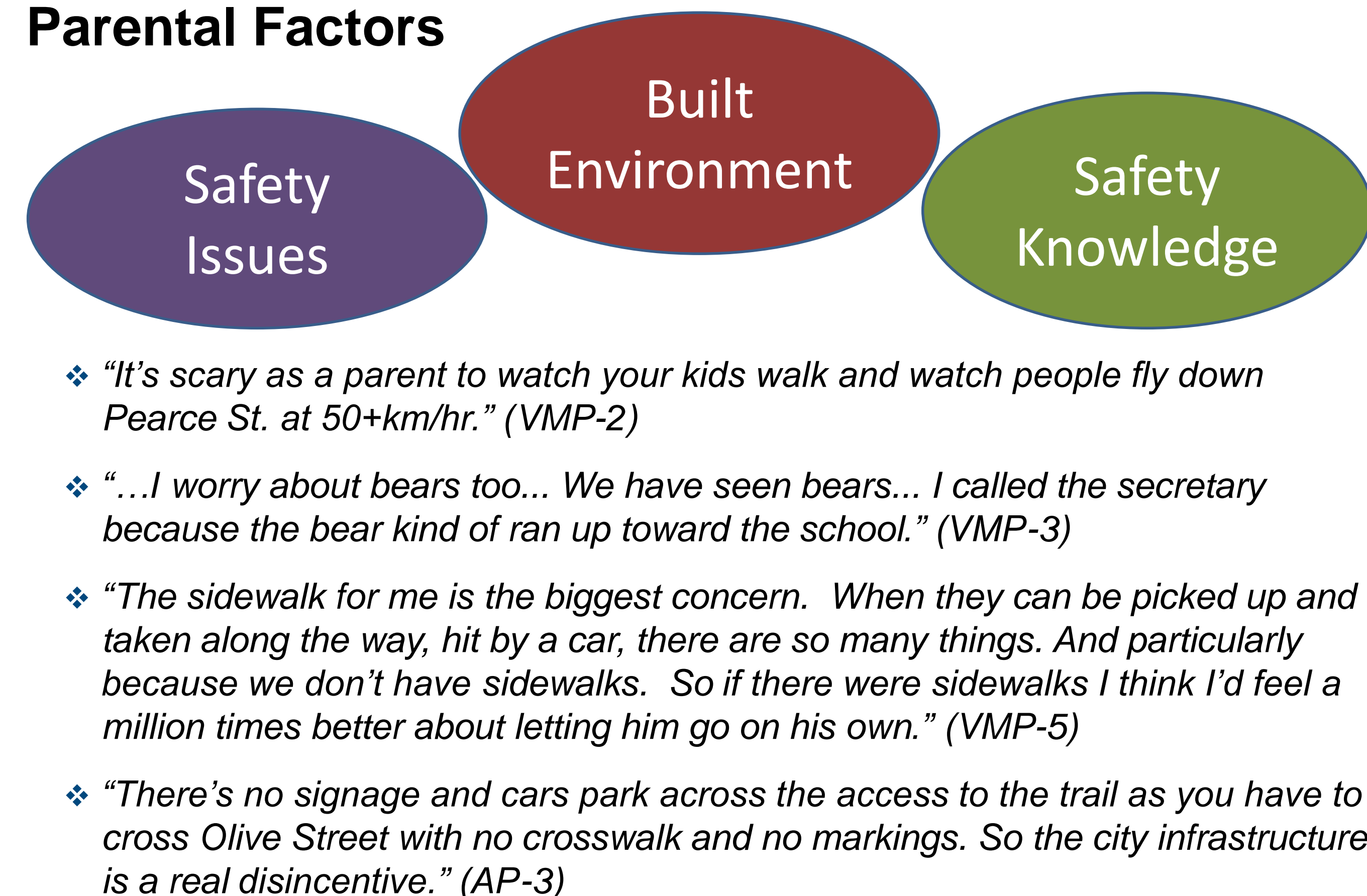
- ❖ One-on-one interviews with parents (N=15) were based on items from the Modified Active PASS (Physically Active School Settings) Survey (6).

Data Analysis

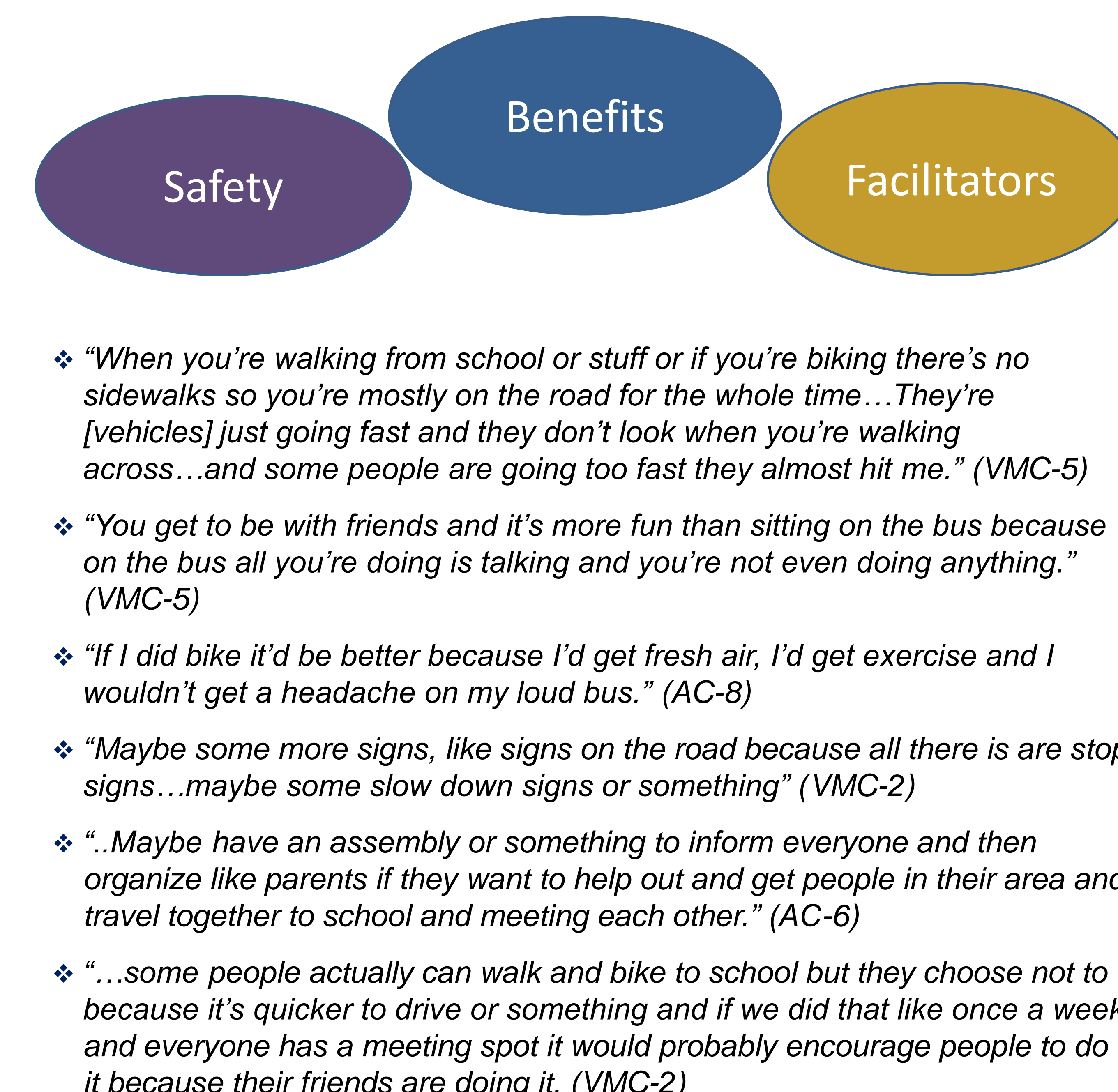
- ❖ Data were reviewed by three members of the research team and analyzed using content analysis (7). Categories were identified and clustered into themes (8).

RESULTS

Parental Factors



Student Factors



PRACTICE & POLICY

- ❖ There is a need for key stakeholders to continue engaging in partnerships to address key factors deterring parents from allowing their children to engage in ATS.
- ❖ Despite short-term ATS interventions, parents and students feel safeguards are not in place.
- ❖ Until ATS investors work collaboratively, elementary school-based initiatives to promote ATS are likely to have minimal long-term impact.



CONCLUSIONS

- ❖ Safety is the biggest concern for parents and students.
- ❖ Benefits of and barriers to ATS in the rural north are similar to larger urban centers.
- ❖ Safety issues related to wild animals along routes to school and a lack of sidewalks are distinct barriers.

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