



# MY SCHOOL IN MOTION

**Sandy Run Middle School  
Concluding Report**



# Table of Contents

<b>My School in Motion Program Overview .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Partnerships .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Parent/Guardian Survey .....</b>	<b>5-6</b>
<b>Walking and Biking Audit.....</b>	<b>7-11</b>
<b>Township Priorities and Recommendations .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Education .....</b>	<b>13-15</b>
<b>Program Manual .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Recommendations .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Resources .....</b>	<b>18</b>

# My School in Motion



Created in 1990, GVF, a not-for-profit organization, is dedicated to inspiring mobility choices for ALL. Through our 34+ years of expertise, GVF develops programs and initiatives that help educate and provide alternatives to driving alone, ultimately improving the quality of life for all.

Through PennDOT's Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Grant, GVF developed the "My School in Motion" program. GVF partnered with Upper Dublin School District to bring the program to Sandy Run Middle School.

The My School in Motion program was developed to promote safety in walking and biking to school and educate the next generation of commuters on the benefits of walking and biking as an alternate mode of travel.

Biking and walking allow students to travel safely, emitting minimal CO<sub>2</sub> emissions while enhancing physical and mental well-being. Schools provide the best opportunity to reach the most vulnerable adolescent population. It is our responsibility to encourage behavioral changes and protect the future safety and health of our children. The My School in Motion program not only improves physical and mental health, but students had an opportunity to participate in a biking/walking audit to look at the streets, sidewalks, and connections within their neighborhood to assess safety. This program is an opportunity for students to have fun, get energized, and build a sense of community.

Components of the program included:

- Parental/Guardian survey
- Walkability and bikeability audits
- Outreach and education



# Partnerships



Through the My School in Motion program, GVF helps to form partnerships between school districts, townships, and counties to prioritize needed infrastructure improvements.

GVF has a long-standing partnership with Upper Dublin Township and has worked closely with the township to improve transportation options throughout the community. One example is the Fort Washington Office Park TDM Plan.

GVF worked with several strategic partners throughout the My School in Motion Program:

- **Montgomery County Planning Commission** provided insight into infrastructure and transportation projects within the area and participated in a walking/biking audit of the area around Sandy Run Middle School.
- **Upper Dublin Township** provided information on township priorities for multi-modal transportation projects, reviewed grant documents, and provided insight into the walking and biking audit completed by GVF.
- **PA State Representative Ben Sanchez** helped GVF connect with Upper Dublin Township and Upper Dublin School District to implement components of the My School in Motion Program, as well as continuing to serve on GVF's Board of Directors.
- **Upper Dublin School District**
- **Sandy Run Middle School**, particularly Principal Dr. Daniel Ortiz.

GVF looks forward to continuing to work with our partners to implement the My School in Motion Program within additional school districts and continue to improve and strengthen our transportation systems.



# Parent/Guardian Survey



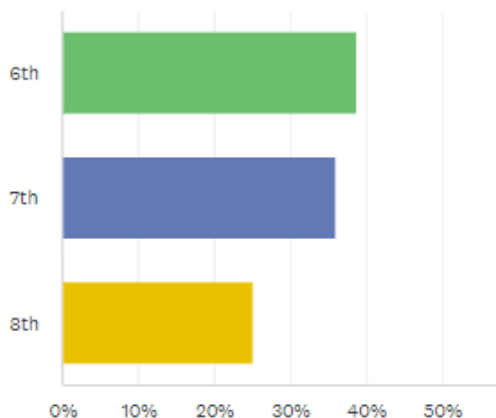
A parent survey was instituted as part of the 'My School in Motion' program administered by GVF in cooperation with Sandy Run Middle School. There were 147 survey responses received.

While the program's goal is to increase awareness and enthusiasm for walking and biking, the program should also lay the groundwork for serious conversations about investing in the infrastructure that will allow for the safety of students as they walk and bike to or from school.

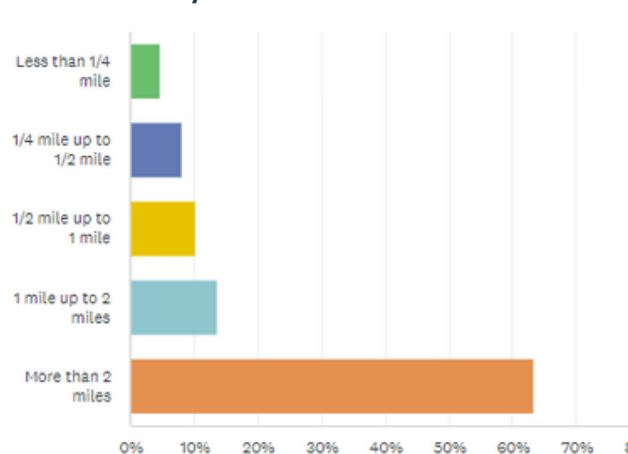
## Key findings of the survey:

- 36% of respondents live less than 2 miles from the school, this number is significant as it shows there is a decent percentage of the student population who could potentially walk or bike to school.
- While the school bus is the predominant mode of travel to and from school, there currently exists a healthy percentage of students who regularly walk or bike to school (12.24%).
- A large percentage of parent responses indicated that they would allow their children in the middle-school age range to walk or bike to or from school without adult supervision (45.57%).
- 20% of respondents stated they allow their child to walk or bike to school.
- When asked to name the issues that affected their decision to allow a child to bike or walk to school, the top two concerns were:
  - Distance is too far from school - 45%
  - Sidewalks or pathways are unsafe or not connected - 19%

Please indicate which grade your child is in:

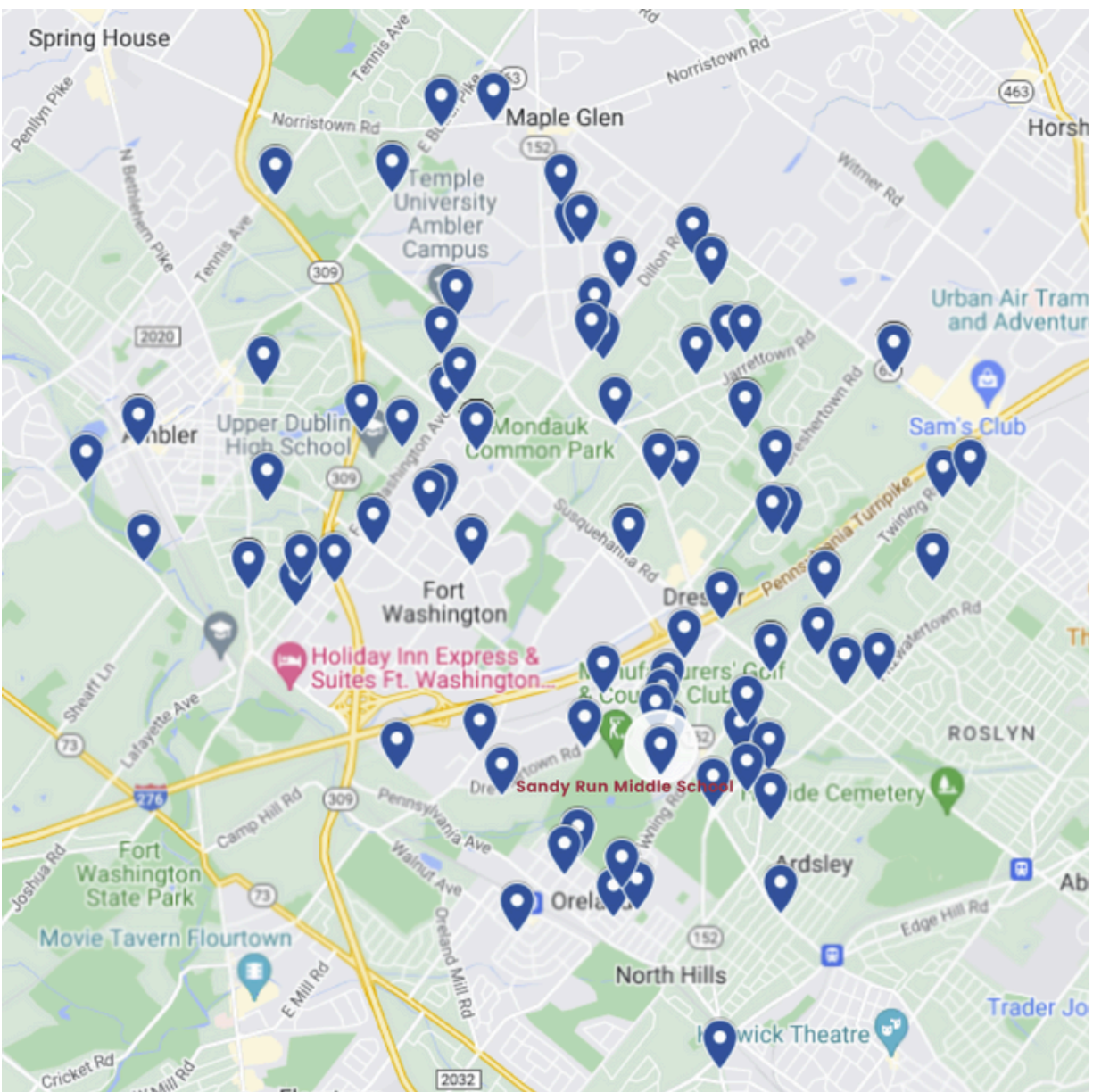


How far does your child live from school?



# Parent/Guardian Survey

- 92% of respondents stated that their child owns their own bike, and almost 90% of respondents stated that they engage in family walks or bike rides within their neighborhood. This demonstrates that most students have some understanding of safety practices when biking or walking throughout their community.
- The geographical area represented is below. Approximately 2/3 of the respondents live north of the PA Turnpike, while Sandy Run Middle School is south of the PA Turnpike. That limits the amount of students who can safely bike and/or walk to school.



# Walking and Biking Audit



In the initial parent/guardian survey, the following roads were identified as areas of concern due to high speed of drivers and unsafe intersections:

- Twining Road
- Susquehanna Road
- Wischman Ave

GVF surveyed parents and students again in the Spring of 2024 to gauge interest in participating in a walking/biking audit and to identify additional intersections and roads around Sandy Run Middle School. Parents identified the neighborhood southwest of Sandy Run Middle School, near the intersection of Valley Road with Garden Road and Twining Road as an area of concern. There is one optional school bus that services the neighborhood that is often overcrowded, and while there are some crosswalks and a crossing guard, there is a portion of the area that does not have connected sidewalks. The intersection of Butler Pike and Susquehanna Road was identified as an additional area of concern, but not within the walking radius at Sandy Run Middle School.

In discussions with the Principal of Sandy Run Middle School, Dr. Daniel Ortiz, the intersections of Limekiln Pike and Twining Road and Limekiln Pike and Martin Lane were also identified as areas of concern. Students frequently walk and bike from the rear of the school and sports fields to the Acme Markets shopping center after school and during events on the Sandy Run Middle School campus.



# Walking and Biking Audit



## Walking and Biking Audit Participants Included:

- Maureen Farrell, Deputy Executive Director, GVF
- Kaitlin Valliere, TDM Manager, GVF
- Dr. Daniel Ortiz, Principal, Sandy Run Middle School
- Derek Dureka, Director of Parks and Recreation, Upper Dublin Township
- Andrew Turner, Transportation Planner II, Montgomery County Planning Commission
- Chris Bradley, State Representative Ben Sanchez's Office

Audit participants reviewed locations of concern and then walked through the rear of the school to further inspect the intersection of Limekiln Pike and Twining Road and the connections to the Acme Shopping Center.

Sandy Run Middle School students (pictured above) discussed how they navigate the area around the school on their bikes.



# Limekiln Pike and Twining Road



Limekiln Pike is a PennDOT owned road, and a main thoroughfare in Upper Dublin Township and accessible from both the main (front) entrance of Sandy Run Middle School and the rear entrance of the school that connects to Limekiln Pike via Martin Lane.

This intersection and the surrounding area were studied extensively as part of the traffic study for the construction of the new Sandy Run Middle School building in 2019.



Dr. Ortiz has indicated many students are running across the street in the middle of the road, which is very dangerous. GVF had extensive conversations with PennDOT regarding potential improvements to Limekiln Pike, as well as talking with Boles Smyth, who worked on the redevelopment project in 2019. The information obtained during these meetings is noted below, as well as on page 12 under Township Priorities and Recommendations. GVF believes this road/intersection needs to be improved so students can be crossing more safely.

## Sidewalks and Crosswalks

- There are sidewalks on both sides of Limekiln Pike from Twining Road to Martin Lane.
- There are crosswalks at the Limekiln Pike/Twining Road Intersection.
- There are pedestrian walk signals at the Limekiln Pike/Twining Road Intersection.
- There is a crossing guard at the Limekiln Pike/Twining Road Intersection during school drop-off and dismissal.

## Biking

- There are no protected bike lanes.
- There are no bike lane markings.
- Bikers are expected to bike on the roadway.

## Road Conditions

- Limekiln Pike is posted at 40 MPH in this section, with a single lane in each direction
- North of the Twining Road intersection, Limekiln Pike has approximately 12-foot lane widths with 10-foot shoulders. South of the Twining Road intersection, Limekiln Pike has an approximately 12-foot southbound lane with a variable width shoulder and a 14-foot northbound lane.
- The lane configuration at the signalized intersection includes right turn lanes on Limekiln Pike. Limekiln Pike has wide receiving lanes at the intersection with Twining Road.

# Limekiln Pike and Twining Road



## Crash Data

- Crash data for the Limekiln Pike (SR 152) & Twining Road signalized intersection:
  - There have been nine reportable crashes from 2019 to the present.
  - The predominant crash type is angle crashes (4 incidents).
  - Fortunately, there have been no serious injury or fatal crashes, and none of the crashes involved a vulnerable user.
- Crash data on Limekiln Pike between Dreshertown Road and Fitzwater Road:
  - There have been two crashes involving vulnerable users near Martin Lane and the Fairway Shopping Center driveway.
  - One crash involved an eight-year-old crossing the street toward the gas station at the corner of Limekiln Pike & Twining Road, resulting in a minor injury.
  - The other crash involved a bicyclist being struck by a left turning vehicle while crossing the Fairway Shopping Center driveway, with the severity of the crash unknown.

## Summary

Although this area has no missing sidewalk connections, it has no biking infrastructure. Students also frequently walk and bike directly from the rear of Sandy Run Middle School to the ACME Shopping Center and cross Limekiln Pike at Martin Lane, where there is no crosswalk. Traffic Calming measures are needed on Limekiln Pike.



# N. Hills Neighborhood



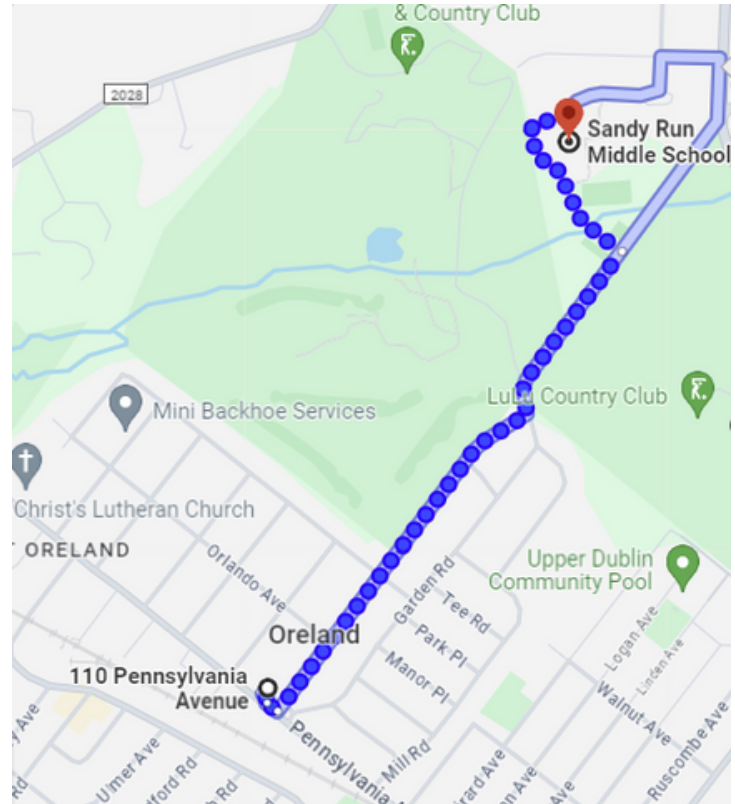
N. Hills neighborhood is southwest of Sandy Run Middle School in East Oreland. It is within the walking radius of Sandy Run Middle School, but has an optional school bus that serves the neighborhood that is often overcrowded.

## Sidewalks and Crosswalks

- The sidewalks are inconsistent, especially between Pennsylvania Ave and Valley Road.
- There are two crosswalks, one at Valley Road and Twining Road and one at Twining and Garden Roads. These crosswalks do not have flashing lights.
- There is a crossing guard at Twining and Garden Roads during drop-off and dismissal.

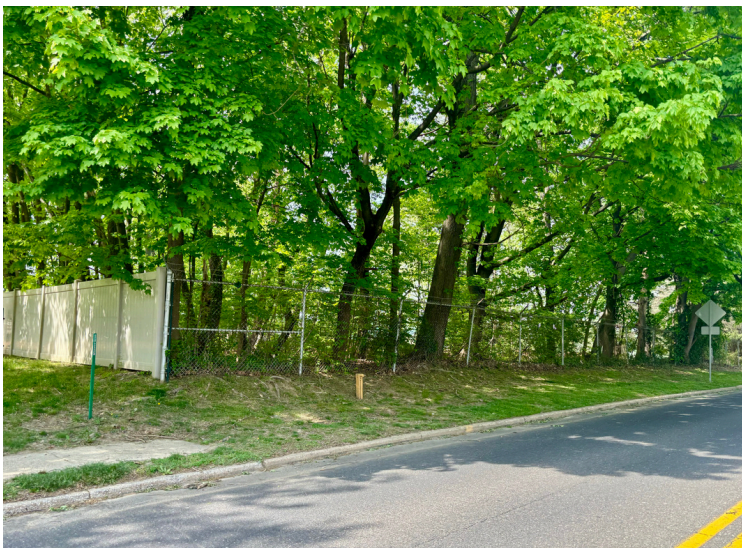
## Biking

- There are no protected bike lanes.
- There are no bike lane markings.
- Bikers are expected to bike on the roadway.



## Summary

N. Hills neighborhood is the neighborhood within the walking radius of Sandy Run Middle School that has the most students who would benefit from improved infrastructure. The sidewalk does not connect on both sides, although there is green space along the road on the side of the golf course.





## Missing Connections

Upper Dublin is prioritizing community connectivity as part of the [Open Space Plan](#). To do this, the Township identified [70 missing connections](#), including sidewalk connections, trail connections, bike lanes, crosswalks, and pedestrian tunnels and bridges. As these connections are built, they will add to the existing pedestrian and bicycling network.

## Proposed Trail

One of the missing connections is a trail that connects Beechwood Road to Valley Road in the N. Hills Neighborhood. This trail would add connectivity in the walking radius of Sandy Run Middle School to make it safer for more students to walk and bike to school.

## Limekiln Pike

A comprehensive study of Limekiln Pike in the area of Sandy Run Middle School was completed in 2019, prior to the construction of the new school building. However, measures to reduce speed and improve the intersection should still be considered.

Montgomery County Planning Commission, as part of the walking audit, recommended that traffic calming measures be implemented on Limekiln Pike, such as extending the school zone past the intersection of Limekiln Pike and Twining Road.

### Potential Traffic Calming Measures to Limekiln Pike and Twining Road

- A school zone flasher may be beneficial to alert motorists to students walking in the area.
- Boles Smyth suggested the intersection could be turned into a pedestrian phase, also known as a pedestrian scramble or all-way pedestrian crossing phase.
  - This is a traffic signal movement that stops all vehicle traffic at an intersection to allow pedestrians to cross in any direction, including diagonally.
  - Since there is also a crossing guard at this intersection, this can also be managed.
- In talking with PennDOT it was suggested that Upper Dublin Township may also want to consider the installation of dynamic speed display signs. This can be done using mobile speed displays that the local police department can use to curb speeding through education. Dynamic speed displays show the speed of approaching vehicles, and studies have shown these devices can reduce vehicle speeds. If Upper Dublin Township wishes to determine if the speed limit on Limekiln Pike warrants a reduction, the municipality would need to request the department to perform a speed study. Should a speed reduction be warranted, the municipality would be responsible for the purchase, installation, and maintenance of the speed limit signs (35 MPH and below).
- The wide receiving lanes could also be reduced to 12 feet or 11 feet to calm traffic through the intersection. This low-cost measure could be implemented by installing a white edge line on the northern leg of the intersection and eradicating and re-stripping the edge line on the southern leg of the intersection. Reducing lane widths throughout the corridor may also provide a reduction in speed.

Ideally, GVF was advocating for Limekiln Pike on PennDOT's 5-year Complete Streets Resurfacing plan. Unfortunately this location is not on PennDOT's 5 year paving plan at this time. PennDOT does not have a scheduled project outside of re-surfacing either and thus these changes would have to be undertaken by either the municipality, school district or the county either with local funds or possibly via a grant funded project.



## My School in Motion Website

GVF developed and maintained the website [schoolinmotion.com](http://schoolinmotion.com) to serve as a resource with information about the My School in Motion program, as well as national examples of biking and walking resources



### SANDY RUN MIDDLE SCHOOL



Parents and Guardians, welcome to 'your' page of the School in Motion website for Sandy Run Middle School






Information about a biking and walking audit coming soon!  
Check back periodically to this page for the latest updates.

Components of the program include:

- Biking and walking events
- National recognition for the school through The League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly America Program
- Walking and biking audits
- Website & video development
- Education and marketing
- The My School in Motion Club



## PARENT RESOURCES

 <p><b>CDC RESOURCES AND PUBLICATIONS</b></p> <p><a href="#">READ MORE &gt;</a></p>	 <p><b>2008 - 2018 CDC TRENDS IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY</b></p> <p><a href="#">READ MORE &gt;</a></p>	 <p><b>WALKING SCHOOL BUS GUIDE</b></p> <p><a href="#">READ MORE &gt;</a></p>	 <p><b>PARENTS ORGANIZING BIKE TRAINS</b></p> <p><a href="#">READ MORE &gt;</a></p>	 <p><b>REPORT ON INCREASING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY</b></p> <p><a href="#">READ MORE &gt;</a></p>
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## Email Communications

GVF worked with Dr. Ortiz to develop email communications about the My School in Motion program to be sent to parents and guardians that introduced the program, detailed the survey results, and cited the benefits of biking or walking to school. Below are portions of the email communications.



### Key Takeaways from the My School in Motion Program

- Awareness of the academic and health benefits of physical activity.
- Understanding of the importance of safe streets, sidewalks, and connections in facilitating walking and biking to school.
- Small changes make a big difference! You do not have to walk or bike every day to see benefits.
- Habits won't change overnight—many people are used to driving everywhere.

### Benefits of Walking/Biking to School

- Kids who are more physically active have better academic performance and concentration throughout the day ([Neuroscience](#) and [Nordic Science](#))
- Exposure to nature and free outdoor play can improve mental health, reduce stress, and relieve ADHD symptoms ([NIH](#))
- Air quality around the school improves when there are fewer vehicles idling on campus, relieving asthma symptoms ([CDC](#))

### About the Walking / Biking Audit

In the Spring, we will be inviting students (and parents if interested) to participate in a walking / biking audit around the school. As a resident and principal within Upper Dublin Area School District, I believe it is important to get out in the community more and look forward to conducting this audit with fellow students. GVF will led these efforts, and we will have an opportunity to critically assess the streets, sidewalks, and connections around Sandy Run Middle School. Members of Upper Dublin Township, the Montgomery County Planning Commission, and other stakeholders will also be invited to participate to help identify the gaps in connectivity for biking and/or walking to school. Stay tuned for an official date and information on how to sign up to participate!



## Bike Month Resources

May is Bike Month and corresponds to both the Spring weather and end of the school year, when more students are biking to school and around their neighborhoods. GVF provided resources for Sandy Run Middle School to share to encourage safe biking behaviors.

### **DID YOU KNOW: May is Bike Month!**

Although the school year is quickly coming to an end, we want to remind our students to be safe while they are riding throughout the community, as well as when they are riding to school for the remaining weeks.

There are many benefits of riding a bike to school, including:

- Building a sense of community with other bikers and classmates
- Getting exercise to start your day, which can enhance focus and concentration in the classroom
- Improves mental well being
- Reducing traffic and using less gas, which improves our environment

## Bicycle Safety Flyer

Created by GVF and sent to Sandy Run MS to distribute.

**MY SCHOOL IN MOTION** **SANDY RUN MIDDLE SCHOOL** **UPPER DUBLIN**

### MAY IS BIKE MONTH!

SHARE THE ROAD WITH 3 SIMPLE STEPS FOR **BICYCLE SAFETY**

**01 PROTECT YOUR HEAD**  
Always wear a helmet.

**02 OBEY ALL TRAFFIC LAWS & LIGHTS**  
Bicycles must follow the rules of the road like other vehicles.

**03 ACT LIKE A CAR**  
Drivers are used to the patterns of other drivers. Don't weave in and out of traffic. The more predictably you ride, the safer you are. Check for traffic. Be aware of traffic around you.

# Program Manual



At the end of the grant, GVF provided Sandy Run Middle School with a program manual to continue the program.

The program manual is 12 pages long and includes information on the following program components:

- Parental/Guardian survey
- National recognition for the school through The League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly America Program
- Club member participation in walking and biking audits
- Communications
- Education and Marketing
- Events

GVF plans to utilize the program manual to bring the My School in Motion program to other schools within the region. GVF would like to expand this program and offer it to other school districts in our region. The program manual and lessons learned from this program will be very valuable.

GVF has encouraged continued partnership with Sandy Run Middle School to help strengthening and further the My School in Motion program and components outlined in the manual.



# Recommendations



## Bike Racks

Sandy Run Middle School has bike racks near the front entrance of the school, but no racks near the rear exit that leads to Limekiln Pike. Students who bike from neighborhoods north of Sandy Run Middle School would benefit from safe bike storage on the other side of the school. During the walking and biking audit, students also supported this addition. In addition, this will provide more access to bike storage during events at the football field.



## Education Opportunities

School administration should use Back to School communications to help educate families who live within walking/biking distance to Sandy Run Middle School about the opportunity for students to walk and/or bike.

Additionally, biking and walking safety tips could be included in regular school email communications as well as under the transportation section of the school website as a way to get to school.

## Bike Fix-It Station and Air Pump Kit

To further encourage students to bike to school, GVF recommends that Sandy Run Middle School install a bike fix-it station and air pump kit, which includes all the tools necessary to perform basic bike repairs and maintenance, such as changing a flat or adjusting brakes and derailleurs.



# Resources



Below are resources GVF recommends that Sandy Run MS make available to students to assist students with biking and walking to school:

## RUTI

Ruti is a text-message-based, trip planning tool that finds the bike route with the least amount of car traffic or traffic stress.

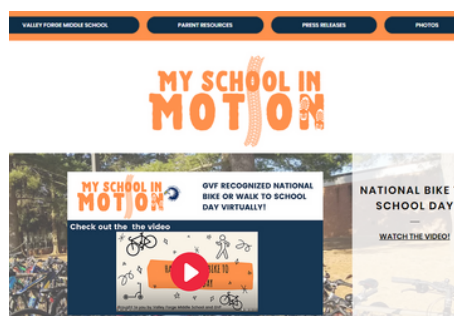
[rutiapp.bike](http://rutiapp.bike)



## SCHOOL IN MOTION WEBSITE

GVF developed the website [schoolinmotion.com](http://schoolinmotion.com) to provide resources and information about the My School in Motion program.

[schoolinmotion.com](http://schoolinmotion.com)



## WALKING/BIKING POOL GUIDE

This guide outlines the benefits of starting a walking or biking pool and points to consider before launching it.

[schoolinmotion.com/parents-resources](http://schoolinmotion.com/parents-resources)



## CIRCUIT TRAILS

The Circuit trails connect our local communities. Visit the website to help plan your trip.

[circuittrails.org](http://circuittrails.org)



## WEARETDM

Information on alternatives to driving alone & for the latest TDM news.

[wearetdm.com](http://wearetdm.com)





# MY SCHOOL IN MOTION

SCHOOLINMOTION.COM



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