

Safe Routes to School

School Travel Plan, Sugarcreek Township and Bellbrook, Ohio



Table of Contents

Section 1: Safe Routes to School Team Members

Section 2: Introduction

Section 3: Public Input Process

Section 4: Description of Schools

Section 5: School Demographics

Section 6: Current School Travel Environment

Section 7: Barriers to Active Transportation

Section 8: Creating Solutions

Section 9: Mapping

Section 10: The Action Plan

Section 11: Plan Endorsements

Section 12: Supporting Documents

“Walk and Bike for Health”

SECTION 1: The Safe Routes to School Team

Our team is comprised of many community members from various organizations, all bringing different pieces to the vision of providing safe, fun, and, healthy walkways for our children.

The Team includes:

Howard Ackerman	President, Board of Directors Bellbrook Sugarcreek Park District
John Harmeyer	Vice-President, Sugarcreek Local School District Board of Education
Bill Wright	Business Manager, Sugarcreek Local School District
Keith St. Pierre	Superintendent, Sugarcreek Local School District
Bev Wetzel	Transportation Coordinator, Sugarcreek Local School District
Ginger Keeton	Principal, Stephen Bell Elementary
Mike Baldridge	Principal, Bell Creek Intermediate
Jeness Sigman	Principal, Bellbrook Middle School
Cara KillKelley	Township Planner, Sugarcreek Township
Barry Tiffany	Township Administrator, Sugarcreek Township
Tracey Messer	Director of Roads and Services, Sugarcreek Township
Nadine Daugherty	Trustee, Sugarcreek Township
Craig Black	School Resource Officer, Sugarcreek Township Police Department
Don Buczek	Administrative Assistant, City of Bellbrook
Linda Hummel	President, Sugarcreek Township Open Space Advisory Committee
Mike Clark	Member, Sugarcreek Township Open Space Advisory Committee
Adam Panstingel	Member, Sugarcreek Township Open Space Advisory Committee
Sharon Orbash	Parent
Missi Dorner	Parent
Anne Marie Petric	Parent
Mark Moots	Parent
Joe Bornhorst	Resident
Giles Allen	Student

The primary contact for our School Travel Plan is:

Barry Tiffany, Sugarcreek Township Administrator
 2090 Ferry Road
 Bellbrook, Ohio 45305
 (937) 848-8426
 (937) 848- 7060
btiffany@sugarcreektownship.com

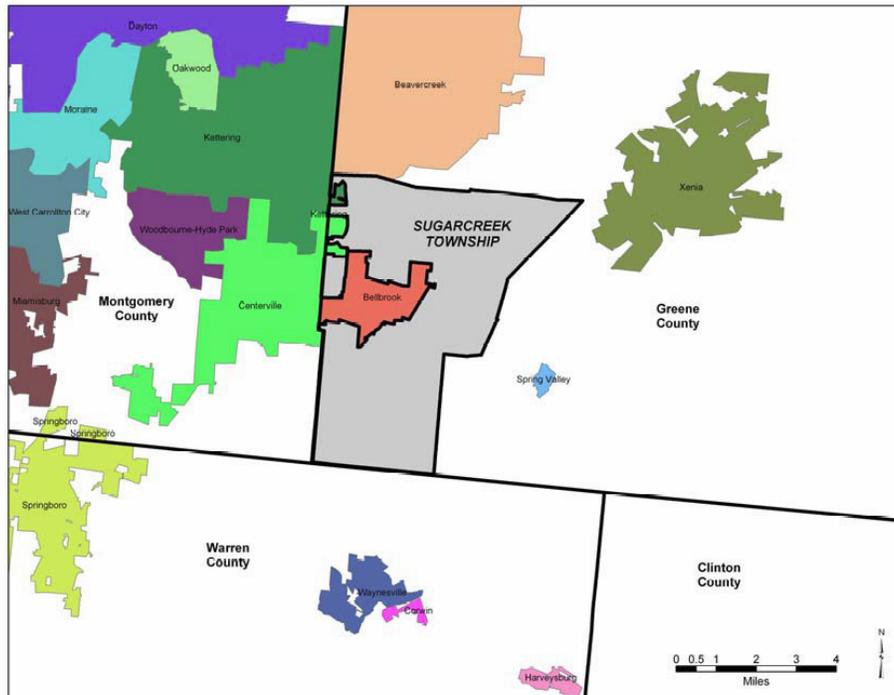
SECTION 2: Introduction

The Sugarcreek Local Schools, the Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Park District, the Sugarcreek Township Open Space Advisory Committee, Sugarcreek Township, and the City of Bellbrook have joined together in a project to make our local schools more accessible to students through walking and bicycling. This physical activity will enhance the lives of our children and will become an integral part of the school district's wellness program. This School Travel Plan aims to address the issues that impede active transportation and seeks to strategically solve these problems by implementing a Safe Routes to School program.

Our community desires to pursue a Safe Routes to School program because:

- Our children will benefit from physical activity.
- Our community will benefit from less traffic.
- Our earth will benefit from less air and noise pollution.

Sugarcreek Township and Bellbrook



Sugarcreek Township and the City of Bellbrook are located in southwest Greene County on the southeast fringe of the urbanized area surrounding Dayton with direct access to I-675 via Wilmington Pike.

Sugarcreek Township is approximately 26 square miles with an estimated 2008 population of just over 7,000. In the 1990s, Sugarcreek Township witnessed fast paced growth with an

average annual growth rate of 6.3%. This rate has slowed substantially since 2000, with an average annual growth rate of less than 1% primarily due to a change in local policy (increased lot size requirements, higher development standards) and a general market slow down in the housing industry.

The City of Bellbrook encompasses 3.12 square miles with an estimated 2008 population of just under 7,000. The City of Bellbrook saw an average annual growth rate of just under 1% in the 1990s. This rate has dropped just below zero since 2000, primarily due to a lack of available land for development and a general slowdown in the housing industry.

Sugarcreek Township and Bellbrook have witnessed typical suburban development patterns and are for the most part bedroom communities with key corridors identified for commercial development. The township offers available undeveloped land for commercial development along the Wilmington Pike corridor, while the city offers a traditional downtown business district along S.R. 725/Main Street. Most residential development has occurred in subdivisions accessed from arterial streets. Many newer subdivisions have sidewalks internal to the development, but there are few sidewalks located along arterial streets serving to establish the connectivity between neighborhoods and schools, parks, churches, and commercial activity areas that both the Township and City would like to see. A change in township policy has developers of newly proposed subdivisions now constructing connections along these arterials and both communities continue to prioritize filling in the gaps left by prior development.

Sugarcreek Township hosts three school districts-Sugarcreek, Wayne, and Beavercreek. However, only the Sugarcreek Local School District has schools within Sugarcreek Township. The City of Bellbrook is served exclusively by the Sugarcreek Local School District.

The development of this plan is a partnership between Sugarcreek Township and the City of Bellbrook, the Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Township Park District, the Sugarcreek Local School District, the Sugarcreek Township Open Space Advisory Committee, and the residents of the Sugarcreek Township and Bellbrook communities.

SECTION 3: Public Input Process

Our team has worked to include the entire community in developing our School Travel Plan and is committed to continuing this involvement. We have met several times with our committee since the inception of this program in July of 2008 to discuss the Safe Routes to School Program. Our kick-off meeting was attended by our ODOT District Coordinator, William Vorst, who was able to share valuable information on the SRTS program with the SRTS team. Everyone involved in our meetings, including students, parents, and elected officials were in favor of increasing the number of students able to safely walk and bike to school.

The committee decided first to get baseline data through the administration of a Parent Survey using the school district's web site and posted the survey when the district's website was most accessed, just prior to the start of the 2008-2009 school year when bus routes and class

information were being checked by parents. See attachment A for full survey results. Of the 199 survey respondents, 65% lived within two (2) miles of their child's school, but only 7% reported that their children biked or walked to/from school. 45% of survey respondents reported that their child had asked for permission to walk or bike to/from school within the last year. 94% of survey respondents reported that they would probably let their child walk or bike to school if sidewalks or pathways were changed or improved, while 93% stated that they would if safety of intersections and crossings were. Parents also identified traffic (84%), speed (83%), crossing guards (76%) and adults to bike or walk with (65%) as issues that if improved or changed would make them more likely to allow the children to bike and walk to/from school. Notably, 22% of respondents indicated that their child's school either discouraged or strongly discouraged biking and walking to/from school, while 76% indicated their child's school neither encouraged nor discouraged it. Only 2% of respondents reported that their child's school encouraged biking and walking to/from school. 93% of respondents understood that biking and walking to/from school was a healthy activity for their children. The survey responses were helpful in understanding that improvements need to be made in order to make parents more comfortable allowing their children to bike and walk to school and also highlighted that encouragement needs to be improved in order to help make this program successful. Due to a generally low rate of response associated with the online survey, the Committee decided to send paper surveys home to parents with report cards the week of April 13, 2009. The SRTS Committee worked to have four local restaurants donate pizza parties to incentivize the students to return completed surveys. Classes with the highest return rate were awarded parties which were held on May 1, 2009. Results from these Parent Surveys can be found on the SRTS Data Tools Online Data Entry and Analysis System. In-class tallies were also completed the week of April 13 to get additional baseline data to be used in evaluation. Results of the in-class tallies can also be found on the SRTS Data Tools Online Data Entry and Analysis System. In lieu of a typical public meeting with generally low attendance, parents on the SRTS Committee recommended an outreach event at the local Sugar Maple Festival attended by thousands of local residents each year. This event took place on April 18 and 19, 2009. Every student in grades K-8 was invited to participate in our Sugar Maples Festival activity by way of letters attached to the Parent Surveys that went out earlier in the week. A Safe Routes to School booth was set-up at the Festival where SRTS Committee members were on hand to talk to community members about Safe Routes to School. A mapping activity for students allowed students to find their houses and schools on a map and talk to committee members about how they felt about the current conditions for biking and walking to school. Barriers were highlighted (traffic, lack of sidewalks, and distance) and solutions were proposed (pathways, reductions in speed, increased police presence during school travel time, and safe crossings). Those students participating in the activity were entered into a raffle to win one of two bikes donated by Wal-Mart and were able to draw a ticket for a prize. Bike helmets were donated by the Sugarcreek Township Police Department and SRTS funds paid for pencils and silicone bracelets with our SRTS message, "Bike and Walk for Health". Overwhelming public support for Safe Routes to School was evident.

The committee also coordinated with the school district's transportation coordinator and learned that all students in the district, regardless of their proximity to their school, are able to

utilize school transportation. The transportation coordinator was able to provide the proximity of students to their schools, valuable information in assessing the potential for increasing the number students able to engage in active transportation. We posted our meeting dates on the township website, ran articles in the Township and City newsletters, and had coverage in the Dayton Daily News. We were able to benefit from the wide range of publicity surrounding the annual Sugar Maple Festival each year. Meetings of the SRTS Committee continue to be posted online and a webpage specifically about SRTS on the township's website is planned. We have also incorporated the Open Space Advisory Committee's comprehensive walkway/bikeway plans (see attachment B) into our planning process. We will resurvey students once we begin putting our identified countermeasures into practice to see if we have successfully increased the number of students biking and walking to/from school.

SECTION 4: School Descriptions

The Sugarcreek Local School District has one elementary school (grades K-2), one intermediate school (grades 3-5), and one middle school (grades 6-8).

A K-8 approach has been taken for this planning process.

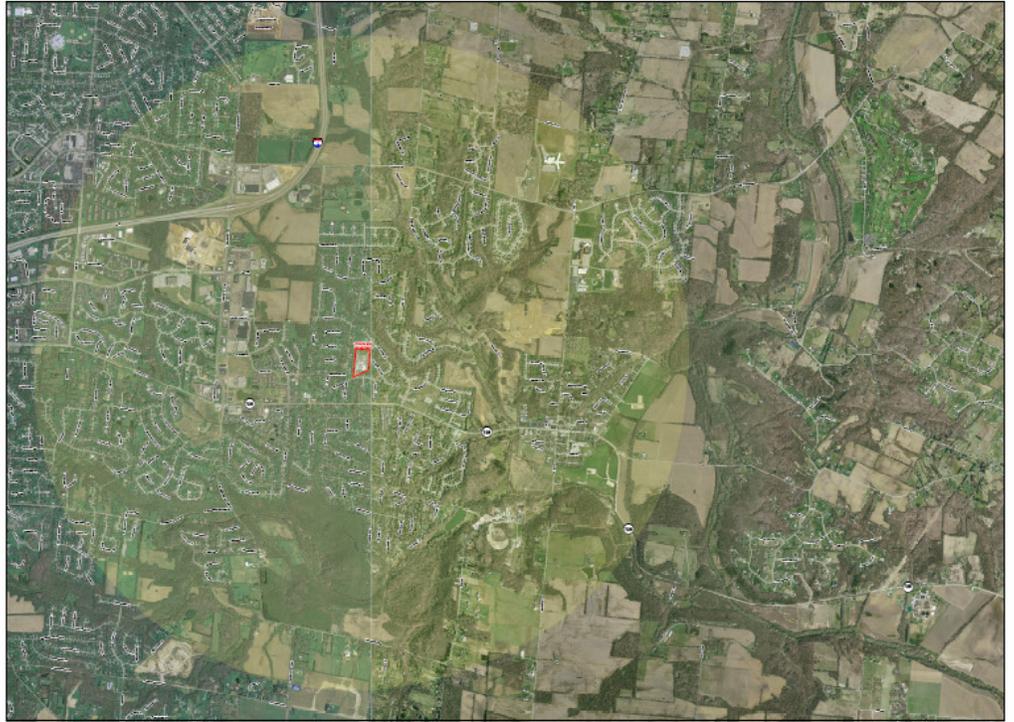
The schools included in our School Travel Plan are:

Stephen Bell Elementary- Stephen Bell serves 570 students in grades K-2. It is centrally located in the City of Bellbrook, on North Linda Drive. The school is located between older residential neighborhoods with no sidewalks to the south and west and a newer residential neighborhood with sidewalks to the east. 54.3% of students attending Stephen Bell live within a two-mile radius of the school building.



2 Mile Radius of Stephen Bell

CITY OF BELLBROOK
GREENE COUNTY, OH
STEPHEN BELL ELEMENTARY
2 MILE SCHOOL RADIUS MAP



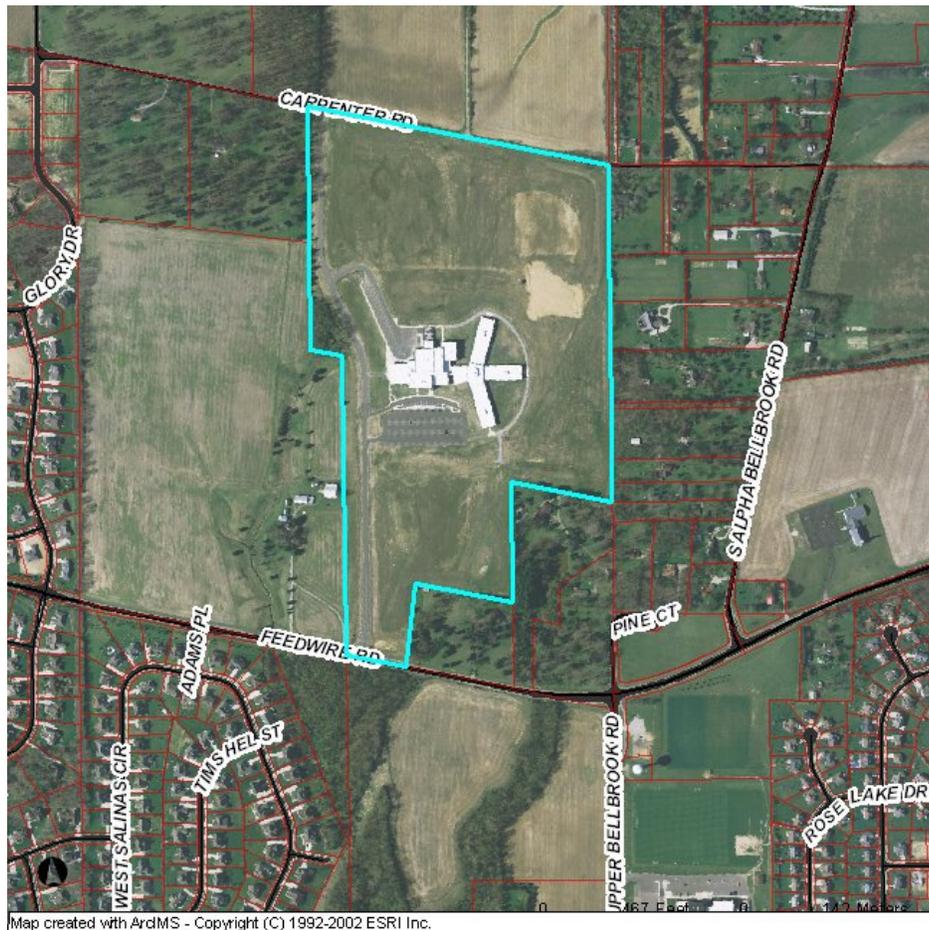
Bell Creek Intermediate – Bell Creek Intermediate is located off Upper Bellbrook Road, a principal arterial road, and is located just inside the City limits. Bell Creek Intermediate serves students in grades 3-5 and is home to 589 students. Kable’s Mill, one of the largest residential subdivisions in the township, is located directly to the north and east of Bell Creek. A paved pathway provides access into the adjacent high school property from Kable’s Mill, providing access to Bell Creek. Notably no identified walkway/bikeway exists linking the two campuses and students must navigate through vehicular traffic to get from the terminus of the existing paved pathway at the High School to the Intermediate School. Feedwire Road, serving numerous residential subdivisions to the west of the Intermediate School, has no sidewalks or dedicated bikeways and is dangerous to navigate for walkers and bicyclists. The major intersection at Feedwire and Upper Bellbrook Roads has a cross walk, but lacks signalization to allow pedestrians to safely navigate the intersection. A paved pathway does exist from downtown Bellbrook to the southern property line of the Intermediate School.



2 Mile Radius of Bell Creek



Bellbrook Middle School- Bellbrook Middle School is located fronting on Feedwire Road, another principal arterial road, and opened in 2006. The school is also accessed from Carpenter Road, a collector road, to the north. Bellbrook Middle School is home to 670 students in grades 6-8. The school also serves the needs of the community after hours, allowing large group gatherings to be held. There are a number of residential subdivisions with sidewalks internal to the developments to the south and west of the Middle School. No sidewalks exist along Feedwire or Carpenter Roads and there is no linkage from the pathway leading from the Kable's Mill subdivision (approximately 2000' linear feet from the Middle School) into the High School campus to get Middle School students living in Kable's Mill from this existing paved pathway to the Middle School. There are no sidewalks leading into the Middle School campus from Feedwire Road, nor from Carpenter Road, requiring that students engaging in active transportation follow the same paths and share the same areas as vehicular traffic. The major intersection at Feedwire and Upper Bellbrook Roads has a identified cross walk, but lacks a signalization to allow pedestrians to safely navigate the intersection.



2 Mile Radius of Bellbrook Middle School



SECTION 5: School Demographics

Stephen Bell Elementary School

Student demographics include:

White (Non-Hispanic)	Black	Hispanic	Multiracial	Asian of Pacific Islander	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Economically Disadvantaged	Limited English Proficiency
87%	3%	2%	4.5%	1.5%	0.5%	18%	3%

Bell Creek Intermediate School

Student demographics include:

White (Non-Hispanic)	Black	Hispanic	Multiracial	Asian of Pacific Islander	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Economically Disadvantaged	Limited English Proficiency
89%	3%	2%	3%	2%	1%	16.5%	3%

Bellbrook Middle School

Student demographics include:

White (Non-Hispanic)	Black	Hispanic	Multiracial	Asian of Pacific Islander	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Economically Disadvantaged	Limited English Proficiency
88.5%	4%	2%	3%	2%	0.5%	14%	1.5%

SECTION 6: Current School Travel Environment

Stephen Bell Elementary

Mode of Transportation	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family vehicle	Car pool	Public transit	Other
Percentage of students	0.3%	0.0%	76.2%	20.9%	1.1%	0.7%	0.8%

These are the distances our students live from the school:

Distance Student lives from School	0 miles to ½ mile	½ mile to 1 mile	1 mile to 1½ miles	1 ½ miles to 2 miles	Over 2 miles
Percentage of students	23	136	101	50	260

Bell Creek Intermediate School

Mode of Transportation	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family vehicle	Car pool	Public transit	Other
Percentage of students	4.4%	0.4%	74.3%	18.6%	1.2%	0.5%	0.7%

These are the distances our students live from this school:

Distance Student lives from School	0 miles to ½ mile	½ mile to 1 mile	1 mile to 1½ miles	1 ½ miles to 2 miles	Over 2 miles
Percentage of students	1	10	102	96	380

Bellbrook Middle School

Mode of Transportation	Walk	Bike	School Bus	Family vehicle	Car pool	Public transit	Other
Percentage of students	0.6%	0.0%	72.1%	25.0%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%

These are the distances our students live from the school:

Distance Student lives from School	0 miles to ½ mile	½ mile to 1 mile	1 mile to 1½ miles	1 ½ miles to 2 miles	Over 2 miles
Percentage of students	0	24	96	71	479

We have the following supports or activities in place during student travel time and our school arrival and dismissal procedures include:

Stephen Bell Elementary

Stephen Bell Elementary covers K thru 2. Students walking or riding their bikes to school may arrive twenty minutes early. There are no crossing guards or bike racks provided for these students. Once they have arrived, they are greeted by a teacher at the door, and they must report to the office. They wait in the hall for school to start. This also applies to our students who are driven to school.

For dismissal, students who are walking or riding their bikes home will report to the office for dismissal. They must have written permission from their parents before being allowed to leave the building. They are dismissed at the same time as all the other children who are being picked up or riding the bus. Students who are being picked-up must wait for their parents inside the building for the parents to come and get them. A teacher will then check them off a list as they leave together.

The amount of students who ride their bikes or walk home alone is very small. They are usually accompanied by an adult.

Bell Creek Intermediate

Our 3rd-5th graders attend Bell Creek Intermediate. This school has very few sidewalks and the

number of walkers is low compared to what it could be for this school.

Bell Creek also allows their students to arrive twenty minutes early to school. They gather inside the main entrance, but are not greeted by an adult outside the building. Bell Creek does not have crossing guards due to the lack of sidewalks near their school. The children riding their bikes or walking park their bikes on the side of the building and must report to the front office with the other students.

For dismissal, student walkers and bike riders may leave at first bell. These students must have written permission from their parents. Their name is on a list and a teacher checks them out before they leave the building. Anyone who is not on this list, must report to the office or ride the bus home.

Also at first bell, children being picked-up may report to the office. They will leave the front of the building and one teacher supervises as the children enter their parent's car one at a time. Our busing system works as follows; half of the students begin to load the buses at first bell and the second half at second bell. Sugar creek Local Schools stage their bus transportation to help with traffic control. All bus loading is supervised by four teachers.

Bellbrook Middle School

This school is located one of the busiest roads in our district. At this school, students in grades 6-8 live in many developments located within walking distance and are involved in many after school activities.

At the Middle School students can be dropped off twenty minutes before school starts and report to the cafeteria. They are not greeted by an adult, but are supervised by some. When riding the bus to and from school, adults are located outside the building to observe the behavior of students.

If students walk or ride their bikes, they may enter the building when they arrive. If it is twenty minutes early, then they must report to the cafeteria. When leaving to go home students may leave at first bell. Walkers and students who are being picked-up are not supervised by an adult. They are to leave through the front door where their parents are waiting or if they are walking or biking they are to go toward the busy street. This school also does not have crossing guards.

District-Wide Policies:

None of our schools provide "hazardous route" busing to students. All students have the option of riding to school via bus.

The Sugar creek Local School District has a written policy on the use of bicycles. Policy 5514 states, "The Board of Education regards the use of bicycles for travel to and from school by students as an assumption of responsibility on the part of those students – a responsibility in the care of property, in the observation of safety rules, and in the display of courtesy and

consideration toward others. The Board will permit the use of bicycles by students in accordance with the administrative guidelines of the Superintendent. The Board will not be responsible for bicycles which are lost, stolen, or damaged.”

Board Policy 8600 states that all children in grades K-8 living beyond a 1 mile walking limit from their school is entitled to bus transportation, though all children are provided busing by the Sugarcreek Local School District.

City regulations on sidewalk maintenance are attached, as is Section 5543.10 of the ORC as the township has no adopted sidewalk maintenance policy (Attachment C).

SECTION 7: BARRIERS TO ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

SECTION 8: CREATING SOLUTIONS

SECTION 9: MAPPING

<See attached engineering study>

SECTION 10: THE ACTION PLANS

<See attached>

SECTION 11: PLAN ENDORSEMENTS

<See attached>

SECTION 12: SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

<See attached A-C>