

# Build Kansas Fund | Fiscal Year 2026 Application Package | Memo



To: Senator Rick Billinger, Chair, Build Kansas Advisory  
Committee  
Chardae Caine, Kansas Legislative Research Department  
Shauna Wake, Office of the Kansas State Treasurer

From: Jason Fizell, Interim Executive Director, Kansas Infrastructure Hub

RE: Build Kansas Fund Application #2025-163-NWKPDC

Date: July 22, 2025

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Attached, please find an application made to the Build Kansas Fund by Wallace County. The application packet includes the following items:

- Coversheet – provides a high-level overview of the application including a unique identification number, page 1 of 19 of the Build Kansas Fund Application Package.
- Build Kansas Fund Application – includes information submitted with the Build Kansas Fund Application, pages 2-7. Page 8 provides the table of funding sources and zip codes served by the project.
- Attachments – Executive summary and project application, pages 9-19.

## **Project Overview**

Wallace County seeks funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation for funding available through the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program for their Wallace County Safe Streets Implementation project which will address multiple safety issues including hazardous crossings on U.S. Highway 40 and KS Highway 27, vehicle speeding through school zones, and gaps in pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods and school campuses in Wallace County.

This opportunity is a discretionary IIJA program with a local match requirement of 20% of the total project cost. The entity is requesting \$672,523.00 from the Build Kansas Fund, and is providing a local match of \$35,396.00. This request has the potential to unlock \$2,831,674.00 in federal funds, for a total project cost of \$3,539,593.00.

The deadline was June 26, 2025, and this Build Kansas Fund application was received on June 26, 2025.

## **Build Kansas Fund Steering Committee Recommendation**

The Build Kansas Fund Steering Committee reviewed this application on June 9, 2025 following a successful completeness check. The Steering Committee **RECOMMENDS APPROVAL** of Build Kansas Funding to the Build Kansas Advisory Committee for final advice.

# Build Kansas Fund | Fiscal Year 2026

## Application Package | Coversheet



Build Kansas Fund Application Number	2025-163-NWKPDC
Applicant Name	Wallace County
Application Date Received	6/26/2025
Project Name	Wallace County Safe Streets Implementation Project
Project Description	This project will address multiple safety issues including hazardous crossings on U.S. Highway 40 and KS Highway 27, vehicle speeding through school zones, and gaps in pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods and school campuses in Wallace County.
Entity Type	Local Government
Economic Development District (EDD) Planning Commission	Northwest KS Planning & Development Commission
Infrastructure Sector(s)	Transportation
BIL Program	Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)
BIL Program Type	Discretionary
Application Type	Implementation
BIL Application Deadline	6/26/2025
Build Kansas Fund Request	\$672,523.00
Technical Assistance Received	General <span style="float: right;">Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></span>
	BIL Application <span style="float: right;">Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></span>
	Build Kansas Fund Application <span style="float: right;">Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></span>
	Other (Brief Description): Provided General TA and BKF Application Support.
Application Notes	Build Kansas Fund contribution of \$672,523.00 will unlock \$2,831,674.00 in federal BIL funding, with a local cash match of \$35,396.00, for a total project cost of \$3,539,593.00.
<b>Steering Committee Funding Recommendation</b>	<b>7/9/2025   Recommend <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Declined <input type="checkbox"/></b>
<b>Advisory Committee Funding Recommendation</b>	<b>7/22/2025   Recommend <input type="checkbox"/> Declined <input type="checkbox"/></b>

Title	<b>Wallace County</b>	06/26/2025
	by <b>Lissa Sexson</b> in <b>Build Kansas Fund Application</b>	id. 50917365
	404 Broadway Weskan, Kansas 67762 United States 7854433217 lissa.sexson@gmail.com	

<b>Original Submission</b>	06/26/2025
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Score	n/a
Part 1: Applicant Information	
The name of the entity applying for the Build Kansas Fund:	Wallace County
Project Name:	Wallace County Safe Streets Implementation
Entity type:	County Government
Entity Population:	1,512
Applicant Contact Name:	Lissa Sexson
Applicant Contact Position/Title:	Director, Wallace County Community Development
Applicant Contact Telephone Number:	+17854433217
Applicant Contact Email Address:	wacokscommdev@gmail.com
Applicant Contact Address:	313 Main Street
Applicant Contact Address Line 2 (optional):	
Applicant Contact City:	Sharon Springs

Applicant Contact State: Kansas

Applicant Contact Zip Code: 67758

Is the Project Contact the same as the Applicant Contact? Yes

## Part 2: Build Kansas Fund - Eligibility Criteria

Certify that you are pursuing an Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding opportunity for which your entity is eligible: Yes

Certify that the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding opportunity you are pursuing has a required non-federal match component: Yes

What is the primary county that the project will occur in? Wallace County

The Build Kansas Fund is intended to support Kansas-based infrastructure projects. Please provide a list of all the zip codes this project will be located in, along with an estimated percent [%] of the project located in that zip code. For example, if seeking funding for road infrastructure, provide a rough percent of the roads expected in each zip code:

[Zip Code Percentage.xlsx](#)

Part 3: Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) - Grant Application Information Please Note: This information is related to the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding opportunity to which you will apply. This is NOT information for the Build Kansas Match Fund.

Please enter the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding opportunity title that the entity is applying for: Safe Streets and Roads for All Funding Opportunity

What is the funding agency for this Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding opportunity? U.S. Department of Transportation

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What is the Assistance Listing Number (ALN) for this Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding opportunity? 20.939

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What is the federal application due date for this Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding opportunity? 6/26/2025

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Application Type: Implementation

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What is the federal fiscal year for this Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding opportunity? 2025

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Enter the amount of funding being applied for, from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding opportunity: \$2,831,674.00

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Enter the total project cost: \$3,539,593.00

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Enter the required non-federal match percentage: 20%

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Part 4: Build Kansas Fund - Match Application Information Beginning in July 2024 and moving forward, eligible applicants are expected to contribute a portion of the non-Federal match requirement. This contribution can be in the form of cash and/or in-kind contributions. The goal is to demonstrate the applicant's commitment to the project. The contribution should be significant enough relative to the Build Kansas Fund request. For a local public entity, 5% of the non-federal match is a good guideline, but not a requirement. See Build Kansas Fund Program Guidance for exceptions and more information.

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Enter the non-federal cash match amount being requested from the Build Kansas Fund: \$672,523.00

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Enter the non-federal cash match amount being provided by the eligible applicant, if applicable: \$35,396.00

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Enter the estimated value of the non-federal in-kind match amount being provided by the eligible applicant, if applicable: \$0

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Expected breakdown of funding sources to support the project: Enter the funding source and projected amount from each source to support this project:

[Kansas+DOT+table\\_V2.xlsx](#)

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#### Part 5: Build Kansas Fund - Means Test and Eligible Applicant Match

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What other available funding sources that are currently planned to go unused by your entity will be leveraged for this project? N/A

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Will any American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) or Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Fund monies will be used for the non-federal match?	N/A
What other sources of in-kind match will be leveraged for this project? Please list and include the actual or estimated value of each.	N/A
What other funding sources (local, federal, or non-federal) will be used for this match?	Wallace County will provide the 5% of the non-federal match, which is suggested.
Describe your efforts to find other available funding sources for this project:	The three described funding sources have been explored to date. Our Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan was only finalized in May, which enabled Wallace County to become eligible for the SS4A program. Given the timing, I am working to quickly prepare and submit the SS4A grant application and have not yet pursued additional funding sources
Part 6: Additional Information	
Please upload a draft or final version of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) program grant application associated with this request OR an executive summary providing an overview of the project:	
<a href="#">2025-SS4A_Narrative_-_Wallace_County_KS.pdf</a>	
Provide any additional information about this project not covered in previous sections of this application (optional):	
Part 7: Terms and Conditions	
Understanding of Fund Release Requirements:	checked
Understanding of Use of Funds:	checked

Understanding of Reporting Requirements:	checked
Authority to Make Grant Application:	checked
Persons and Titles: The following persons are responsible for making this Build Kansas Fund application.	Lissa Sexson
Position/Title:	Director, Wallace County Community Development
Additional:	
Position/Title:	
Additional:	
Position/Title:	
Additional:	
Position/Title:	



Source	Amount	% of Project
Build Kansas Funds (non-federal match)	\$672,523.00	19.00%
Eligible Applicant Cash Match	\$35,396.00	1.00%
Eligible Applicant In-Kind Match (estimated value)	\$0.00	0.00%
BIL Federal Funds (applied for)	\$2,831,674.00	80.00%
Additional Project Contribution (if applicable)	\$0.00	0.00%
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b>	<b>\$3,539,593.00</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**\*Applicant match contribution is 5% of total match requirement**

Zip Code	% of project in zip code
67758	80%
67762	20%
	<b>100% In Kansas</b>

## **OVERVIEW**

Wallace County, Kansas is a frontier jurisdiction located along the Kansas/Colorado border, with a population of just over 1,500 residents spread across three small communities: Sharon Springs, Weskan, and Wallace. Classified as USDA FAR Level 4 – the most rural designation possible – Wallace County faces challenges common to extremely rural areas: low population density, vast distances between services, limited transportation infrastructure, and minimal local capacity for transportation planning or enforcement. These factors contribute to persistent safety risks, especially for non-motorized users such as school children, older adults, and pedestrians in general.

This SS4A Implementation Grant application builds directly upon the Wallace County Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan, finalized in May 2025, which provided a foundational safety analysis and prioritized improvement strategies focused on school-area safety in Sharon Springs and Weskan. The planning process identified needs such as missing sidewalks, hazardous crossings on U.S. Highway 40 and KS Highway 27, vehicle speeding through school zones, and gaps in pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods and school campuses.

From 2018 to 2022, Wallace County recorded 26 injury crashes and 5 fatalities, with many occurring along or near U.S. Highway 40 and KS Highway 27 in Sharon Springs – a corridor heavily used by families and students. Though total numbers are modest, the per capita crash risk is significant for this rural jurisdiction.

Community engagement through the SRTS caregiver survey and interactive map highlighted safety concerns in both Weskan and Sharon Springs. In Weskan, caregivers noted the lack of safe crossings, missing sidewalks near key destinations, and the need for better access to places like the school, post office, and churches. In Sharon Springs, responses emphasized sidewalk gaps, unsafe crossings on Main Street (KS HWY 27), including concerns about a railroad crossing, and an unsafe U.S. Highway 40 crossing.

At community pop-up events, Weskan residents raised concerns about speeding on Coyote Boulevard and supported traffic-calming measures such as flashing beacons, all-way stops, and lower school zone speed limits. In Sharon Springs, school staff described dangerous driver behavior near student crossings and expressed interest in expanding walking and biking routes to the school, parks, and community pool. Across both towns, residents supported practical, low-maintenance improvements and community-driven projects.

Despite resource limitations, Wallace County has demonstrated strong local commitment to advancing safety for vulnerable road users. This application reflects broad stakeholder support and a readiness to implement practical, community-informed safety strategies. The County's

proposed projects target systemic risks and infrastructure gaps near schools and residential neighborhoods.

This application directly advances the SS4A program’s goal of reducing roadway fatalities and serious injuries, while meeting award considerations to serve rural and underserved communities. By funding implementation in one of the most rural counties in Kansas, with minimal historic investment in pedestrian safety, this grant would deliver meaningful, equitable improvements to an underserved population.

## **LOCATION**

Wallace County is located in the High Plains of Northwest Kansas, bordering Colorado. With a population of just over 1,500 residents (2020 Census: 1,512) spread across 914 square miles, it is one of the most sparsely populated counties in the state. The county includes three small communities – Sharon Springs (the county seat), Wallace and Weskan – each separated by expansive agricultural land and rural roadways. The county's extreme remoteness and low population density create unique transportation safety challenges, particularly for school children, pedestrians, and other vulnerable road users.

Wallace County is classified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service as a Level Four Frontier and Remote (FAR) area – the most rural designation available. This classification indicates that the majority of residents live more than 60 minutes from an urban area of 50,000 or more, and more than 15 minutes from towns of 2,500–9,999 residents. These frontier conditions reflect persistent barriers to infrastructure investment, public safety staffing, and multimodal connectivity, aligning closely with SS4A’s statutory focus on underserved and rural communities.

The roadway network in Wallace County is minimal but carries local, regional, and freight traffic. The intersection of U.S. Highway 40 and Kansas Highway 27 (Main Street) occurs in Sharon Springs, forming the county’s busiest and most complex corridor. U.S. 40 also serves as the main east-west route through Wallace County, running directly past the school campus in Sharon Springs. In Weskan, Coyote Boulevard is the central thoroughfare and a concern for speeding and truck traffic, especially during harvest.

While Wallace County lacks a traditional high-injury network due to low total crash volumes, local equivalents were identified through the 2025 Wallace County Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan. Analysis of crash data, school transportation patterns, and community feedback identified priority risk areas near school campuses, crossings along U.S. 40 and KS-27, and several residential connectors with limited or no pedestrian infrastructure.<sup>1</sup>

This SS4A Implementation Grant will fund improvements in these identified high-risk areas. Geographic focus areas include:

- **Sharon Springs:** Sidewalk gap completion, crossing enhancements at U.S. 40 and KS-27, improved safety infrastructure along Ferlen Avenue and Main Street, and upgrades to the railroad crossing sidewalk on Kansas Highway 27 (Main Street).
- **Weskan:** Sidewalk installation near the school, pedestrian safety enhancements along Coyote Boulevard, RRFB or all-way stop at Carter Street/Cooper Avenue, and reduced school zone speeds with flashing signs.

These focus areas were prioritized through crash data, caregiver input, field observation, and school engagement. Final project scopes will be refined during design and coordination with the Kansas Department of Transportation. A map PDF highlighting these corridors, gaps, and project areas is included in the Supporting Documents section.

## **RESPONSE TO SELECTION CRITERIA**

### **Selection Criterion #1: Safety Need**

Wallace County faces distinct and persistent roadway safety challenges stemming from its rural and frontier context. With a population of 1,512 spread across 914 square miles, the county has minimal pedestrian infrastructure, limited staff capacity, and significant distances between services. Despite low absolute crash volumes, Wallace County's per capita crash risk is concerning. From 2018 to 2022, the county recorded 92 total crashes, including 26 injury crashes and 5 fatalities, with concentrations of serious crashes along U.S. Highway 40 and KS Highway 27 in Sharon Springs – areas heavily used by children and families. Most crashes, 51 or 55% occurred during daylight, and 26 crashes or 28% happened at dark.<sup>1</sup>

The Wallace County Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan (May 2025) served as the county's first in-depth transportation safety planning effort. Through caregiver surveys, mapping tools, and in-person community pop-ups, the plan identified priority safety concerns:

- Missing and degraded sidewalks
- Unsafe crossings on KS-27 (Main Street) and U.S. 40
- Speeding in school zones and high-volume truck traffic during harvest
- Unsafe pedestrian crossings at the railroad tracks
- Lack of school zone speed signage and inadequate traffic control near schools

Though the county lacks a traditional high-injury network due to low crash density, high-risk locations were geospatially identified in the SRTS Plan based on crash data, roadway features, and observed travel behavior. These areas include Main Street in Sharon Springs, Coyote Boulevard in Weskan, and several residential roads that lack pedestrian accommodations.

## **Selection Criterion #2: Safety Impact**

The proposed SS4A Implementation Grant will fund a targeted suite of low-cost, high-impact infrastructure improvements that directly address the systemic safety challenges identified in Wallace County's 2025 Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan. These improvements are focused in the communities of Sharon Springs and Weskan, where children regularly walk, bike, or are dropped off at school along state highways and local roads lacking safe pedestrian infrastructure.

### **The proposed improvements include:**

- Sidewalk gap closures and new sidewalk construction near schools and residential areas
- Installation of rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) and all-way stops at priority crossings
- Enhanced crossing treatments at U.S. Highway 40 and Kansas Highway 27
- Traffic calming measures including curb extensions and reduced posted school zone speed limits
- Sidewalk upgrades at the Kansas Highway 27 railroad crossing in Sharon Springs

These strategies are aligned with the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Proven Safety Countermeasures, including pedestrian safety improvements (such as RRFBs, curb extensions, and sidewalk connectivity) and speed management techniques. Many of the selected treatments are also supported by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) "Countermeasures That Work", which identifies evidence-based tools to improve safety for vulnerable road users.

The County is committed to implementing at least three elements of the Safe System Approach:

- **Safer People:** Enhanced crossings, traffic control, and school zone signage will encourage safer behaviors among drivers and provide better protection for children, seniors, and pedestrians.
- **Safer Roads:** Physical upgrades such as sidewalks, RRFBs, curb extensions, and visibility enhancements will reduce the risk of crashes, especially at known conflict points.

- **Safer Speeds:** Lowered posted speed limits in school zones and design-based traffic-calming interventions will reduce vehicle speeds and improve driver yielding behavior.

Incorporating these elements together creates layered safety benefits that will persist over time, even with limited enforcement. The proposed infrastructure is designed for durability and low maintenance, with long-term value in protecting pedestrians and improving the safety culture of both communities.

The project also incorporates simple yet effective safety technologies, such as RRFBs and flashing school zone signage, which have been proven to increase driver yielding and awareness at crossings. These technologies are particularly important in small rural towns, where other enforcement mechanisms are limited.

Finally, this project aligns with Kansas's State Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP), which identifies pedestrian safety, rural roadway safety, and vulnerable road users as statewide focus areas. Wallace County's proposed interventions address these priorities directly, helping fulfill state-identified safety goals and extending those benefits into one of Kansas's most rural and underserved regions.

Together, these targeted investments offer a cost-effective path to eliminating serious roadway injuries and fatalities – delivering measurable and lasting safety improvements for Wallace County residents and visitors.

### *IMPLEMENTATION COSTS*

The proposed Wallace County Safe Streets Implementation Project represents a strategic and highly cost-effective investment in reducing roadway fatalities and serious injuries in a rural, underserved region. From 2018 to 2022, Wallace County experienced 5 roadway fatalities and 26 injury crashes, concentrated primarily near school zones and major corridors such as U.S. Highway 40 and Kansas Highway 27. With a total federal funding request of \$2,831,674, this equates to addressing 1.77 fatalities per \$1 million in federal funds requested – a significant return when considering the long-term benefits of even one life saved in a small, close-knit community.

The total project budget is \$3,539,593, comprised of:

- \$2,831,674 in SS4A federal funds (80%)
- \$707,919 in non-federal match (20%), which includes:
  - \$672,523 from the Build Kansas Fund (BKF)
  - \$35,396 from Wallace County

All requested funds are focused on infrastructure and operational safety improvements, consistent with SS4A guidelines. No duplicative administrative or behavioral programming costs are included. Budget categories are summarized below:

- **Administrative and Legal:** \$100,000 (traffic control and stormwater pollution prevention)
- **Architectural & Engineering Fees:** \$165,000
- **Other A&E Services:** \$280,000
- **Site Work:** \$440,900
- **Demolition and Removal:** \$30,000
- **Construction:** \$1,970,845
- **Miscellaneous Costs:** \$254,174
- **Indirect Costs (10% de minimis on MTDC):** \$298,674

These investments will implement low-cost, high-impact countermeasures in Sharon Springs and Weskan – completing critical sidewalk gaps, improving crossings, reducing speeds, and enhancing pedestrian visibility. Given the compact community layout, these improvements will serve a wide geographic benefit and provide long-term, sustainable safety outcomes, aligned with both the Safe System Approach and SS4A program goals.

### **Selection Criterion #3: Engagement and Collaboration**

Wallace County has prioritized meaningful public engagement and multi-sector collaboration throughout the planning and development of this project. The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan – completed in May 2025 – served as the foundation for both community dialogue and cross-agency coordination. The planning process featured:

- **Caregiver Surveys** that provided detailed, qualitative feedback on infrastructure and safety concerns for children walking or biking to school
- An **Interactive Online Map** to collect location-specific observations, hazards, and community-suggested solutions
- **Pop-Up Community Events** in Sharon Springs and Weskan, where residents shared lived experiences and helped shape project priorities
- A series of **SRTS Team Meetings**, convening diverse local stakeholders to guide and review the planning process

These efforts produced a plan that reflects local needs and has broad support. For example, Weskan residents emphasized speeding on Coyote Boulevard and requested flashing signage or

an all-way stop; in Sharon Springs, respondents prioritized safer pedestrian crossings on Main Street (KS HWY 27) and U.S. Highway 40, as well as improvements to the Main Street railroad crossing. These concerns are directly addressed by the proposed interventions.

The project demonstrates deep collaboration across jurisdictions and sectors. The SRTS planning process was co-led by Wallace County Community Development, KDOT and Toole Design, and involved the following team members:

**Weskan Safe Routes to School Team (USD 242):**

- John Cox, Superintendent
- Laura Sexson, Assistant Principal
- Christina Aldridge, Teacher Representative
- Aiden Aldridge, High School Student Representative
- Hollie Schattel, Wallace County Recreation
- Billie Cox & Evan Stucky, Weskan Township
- Amber Brown, Wallace County Community Foundation
- Marshal Unruh, Wallace County Sheriff

**Sharon Springs Safe Routes to School Team (USD 241):**

- Christy Hammer, Superintendent
- Eric Jarvis, Teacher Representative
- Joe Edwards, High School Student Representative
- Raya Wagoner, Wallace County Recreation
- Audry Heyl, Wallace County Courthouse
- Verlan Wagoner, Mayor of Sharon Springs
- Don Henderson, City Manager
- Amber Brown, Wallace County Community Foundation
- Marshal Unruh, Wallace County Sheriff
- Chrysanne Grund, Wallace/Greeley County Health Services

These teams reflect collaboration among public and private partners, including:

- **Local government entities:** Wallace County, the City of Sharon Springs, Weskan Township
- **Academic institutions:** USD 241 Wallace County and USD 242 Weskan
- **Non-government organizations:** Wallace County Community Foundation, Wallace County Recreation, Wallace County Health Services
- **Law enforcement and emergency services**
- **Residents and students,** who provided first hand insight



Community engagement has also highlighted the day-to-day realities for families with accessibility needs. Audry Heyl, Deputy Court Clerk, is the wife of Kevin Heyl, a young father who was recently paralyzed from the waist down in an accident. Their four young children attend daycare and school along Main Street (KS HWY 27), and the family lives on the south side of Sharon Springs. Kevin regularly navigates Main Street in his motorized wheelchair and uses the existing railroad crossing to reach essential services. The crossing has become a focal point for public concern – videos have circulated showing Kevin struggling to cross safely. While local officials have tried to patch the crossing, the need for a permanent, accessible fix is clear and urgent.

Additional engagement revealed growing safety concerns related to youth using e-scooters along Main Street (KS HWY 27), particularly in the summer months. Without a designated path, these young riders weave through vehicle traffic and must also cross the same railroad tracks that present risks to pedestrians and wheelchair users. The City of Sharon Springs is currently exploring ordinances to manage e-scooter use and is coordinating with infrastructure planning efforts to ensure that updated policies align with safer, designated spaces for youth mobility.

### *UNDERSERVED COMMUNITY FOCUS*

Wallace County is a Level 4 Frontier jurisdiction per USDA Economic Research Service – defined as the most remote and least populated designation. With a population of just over 1,500 residents across 914 square miles, the county experiences persistent disinvestment, geographic isolation, and limited access to transportation infrastructure. According to the USDOT's Justice40 mapping tool, the proposed project areas align with underserved status indicators, including rurality, income levels, and infrastructure gaps.

- Demographically, Wallace County's residents are predominantly rural, with a median household income of \$56,000 (ACS 2022), and nearly 20% of children under 18 living below the poverty line.
- Qualitatively, residents consistently cited barriers to safe walking routes, poor pedestrian infrastructure, and lack of enforcement or signage as limiting safe mobility.

By addressing these concerns through locally guided improvements, this project aligns with SS4A's goal of equitable investment in underserved communities. Public engagement will continue throughout final design and implementation, ensuring that local knowledge and lived experience remain central to decision-making.

## PROJECT READINESS

Wallace County is well-positioned to complete the full scope of this SS4A Implementation Grant project within the required five-year timeframe. The County has developed a realistic project schedule and partnered with experienced regional professionals to prepare construction cost estimates and planning milestones. No major environmental, right-of-way, or permitting challenges are anticipated, enabling efficient progression from design to construction.

### Engineering Support and Cost Estimates

Preliminary construction cost estimates for this grant application were developed by Andrew Brunner, PE, of EBH Engineering, whose office is located approximately 30 miles north of Sharon Springs in an adjacent rural county. Although no formal contract has been executed, Andrew has provided valuable technical support to date and is a strong potential partner for design and construction oversight.

His regional experience equips him with a clear understanding of the balance needed in rural agricultural communities – where pedestrian and cyclist safety must coexist with the functional needs of large farm equipment such as combines, semis, and tractors. This practical, context-sensitive approach to design will ensure that proposed infrastructure improvements are both safe and operationally feasible for all users in a rural setting.

### Project Delivery and Timeline

Wallace County has developed the following timeline, based on engineering guidance and administrative capacity:

- **January 2026** – SS4A Grant Award Notification
- **March 2026** – Engineering Contract Executed
- **June 2026** – Design Survey Complete
- **August 2026** – Field Check Plans Submitted
- **November 2026** – Final Check Plans Submitted
- **December 2026** – Advertise for Construction Bids
- **January 2027** – Bid Award and Contractor Selection
- **April 2027** – Construction Start
- **October 2027** – Construction Completion

This timeline is realistic and achievable, with appropriate contingencies built in to accommodate unforeseen challenges, while remaining well within the SS4A five-year implementation window.

## **Environmental Review and NEPA**

Given the scope – primarily sidewalk infill, crosswalks, minor surface modifications, and traffic-calming elements – Wallace County anticipates a Categorical Exclusion (CE) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). No significant environmental impacts have been identified. The County will work with the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) and FHWA to complete any necessary documentation promptly in the design phase.

## **Right-of-Way and Utility Coordination**

Most of the project will occur within existing public rights-of-way under the jurisdiction of Wallace County, the City of Sharon Springs, or Weskan Township. No private land acquisition is currently anticipated. If needed, right-of-way verification and coordination will be addressed early in design.

Utility relocations, if any, are expected to be minor. Utility providers will be engaged during the design process to confirm locations and coordinate early adjustments, if needed.

## **Design Standards**

Wallace County will follow the Kansas Department of Transportation's (KDOT) standard roadway design specifications as the foundation for this project. In certain locations – such as school zones or low-speed residential streets – the County may pursue context-sensitive, minor adaptations to better address pedestrian safety and calm traffic. These may include painted curb extensions, enhanced crosswalk visibility, or other visual treatments consistent with FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures and rural design practices.

No significant deviations from standard design protocols are anticipated, and any non-standard treatments will be reviewed and approved by KDOT during the design phase. This approach ensures that all infrastructure improvements are both safe and appropriate for Wallace County's rural, agricultural setting while maintaining regulatory compliance.

## **Public Engagement and Local Agreements**

The County will continue to engage the public through design and construction, building on the successful engagement activities from the SRTS Plan. This will include:

- Public input meetings in both Sharon Springs and Weskan
- Project updates via county website, schools, and bulletin boards
- Consultation with school leaders and emergency service providers

Implementation agreements between Wallace County and its local partners – including the City of Sharon Springs, Weskan Township, USD 241 and USD 242 – will be finalized prior to construction. These jurisdictions already collaborated through the SRTS process and have expressed support for this next phase of work.

<b>SUPPORTING DOCUMENT LINKS</b>	
Wallace County Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan, May 2025	<a href="#">LINK</a>
Crashes in Kansas - Wallace County - 2018-2022 (Data Source: <a href="http://hub.kansasgis.org">hub.kansasgis.org</a> )	<a href="#">LINK</a>
USDA Frontier and Remote, Wallace County, Kansas	<a href="#">LINK</a>
Childhood Poverty in Wallace County, Kansas	<a href="#">LINK</a>
Median Household Income Data, Wallace County, Kansas	<a href="#">LINK</a>
SS4A FY25 Implementation Supplemental Estimated Budget, Wallace County, Kansas	<a href="#">LINK</a>
SF-424C Budget Information for Construction Programs	<a href="#">LINK</a>
Wallace County Estimate - Sharon Springs (EBH Engineers)	<a href="#">LINK</a>
Wallace County Estimate - Weskan (EBH Engineers)	<a href="#">LINK</a>
Wallace County Maps	<a href="#">LINK</a>