

Garretson: Local Safety Action Plan



The City of Garretson developed this Local Safety Action Plan to address roadway safety concerns and reduce fatal and serious injury crashes for all users as part of the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program. As a member of the SECOG Regional Safety Action Plan, this local plan builds on regional analysis by focusing on Garretson-specific needs and aligning with existing and planned community improvements. The Local Plan connects regional strategies to targeted local actions to improve safety and advance the goal of eliminating roadway fatalities and serious injuries.

Transportation System & Context

Garretson is a small community that serves as a local hub for surrounding rural areas, with key destinations including the school, ball fields, downtown, and parks. Dows Street carries many walkers and bikers traveling to the ball fields and pool but has no sidewalks, and people are frequently observed continuing north from Dows Street onto Main Street, including children from the manufactured housing on the west end who walk east into the core of town and must cross a railroad track. Additional rail crossings on 5th Street also contributes to safety concerns. Granite Avenue is the main corridor for school drop-offs and pick-ups and also serves as a heavy truck route for industries on the west side of town, creating conflicts between student/family traffic and large vehicles.

The broader transportation network includes 4th Street, 5th Street, Dows Street, Depot Avenue, and other local streets that experience heavy truck traffic and speeding issues, particularly on 4th Street entering town from Highway 120, while the intersection of Highways 106 and 120 has a turning curve that may limit sight distance. Future development and growth are planned south of the football field and to the south and west of town, which will increase travel demand and the need for safe multimodal connections. Walkers and bikers going to Split Rock Park north of town must currently travel on a roadway with no sidewalk and cross railroad tracks, and a childcare facility near 1st Street and Center Street often walks children to the school, requiring crossings of Center Street and Main Street. The community has also expressed strong interest in a trail connection to Palisades State Park and Split Rock Park to provide safer, more comfortable access to these regional recreation destinations.

Vehicles Available

Vehicles Available	VO Total 2014	VO Total 2024	Percent Change
Total Households	477	568	19.08%
No Vehicle Available	18	3	-83.33%
1 Vehicle Available	133	227	70.67%
2 Vehicles Available	156	227	45.51%
3 Vehicles Available	120	62	-48.33%
4+ Vehicles Household	50	49	-2.00%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Population Growth & Characteristics

Category	2014	2024	Percent Change
Population	1,305	1,176	-9.89%
Under 18 (Youth)	412	247	-40.05%
18 to 64	733	651	-11.19%
65 + (Older Adults)	160	278	73.75%
Total Households	477	568	19.08%
Owner Occupied	338	356	5.33%
Renter Occupied	139	212	52.59%

Regional Safety Action Plan Vision and Goals

Vision: *The SECOG region will collaboratively pursue a future where no one is killed or seriously injured on our transportation system, using thoughtful, locally guided planning to create safer, more connected communities.*

Regional Goal: To help communities involved in this plan improve transportation safety, SECOG will provide shared performance standards, data tools, and coordination support that enable member jurisdictions to set and track their own safety goals.

Public Engagement

Stakeholder interviews were conducted with representatives from the City of Garretson and community members also contributed 11 map pinpoints and completed 28 surveys, providing location-specific feedback on transportation safety needs. Input focused on school and recreation access, particularly along Dows Street and Granite Avenue, where high levels of walking and biking coincide with heavy truck traffic and limited pedestrian infrastructure. Residents highlighted speeding on 4th Street entering town from Highway 120, safety concerns at the Highway 106 and Highway 120 intersection, and issues at railroad crossings on Dows Street and 5th Street where pavement markings are lacking. Community members also emphasized the need for safer routes to Split Rock Park, improved crossings near the childcare facility at 1st Street and Center Street, and a future trail connection to Palisades State Park and Split Rock Park, along with broader improvements to manage truck traffic and enhance multimodal safety throughout Garretson.

Garretson participated in the SECOG Regional Safety Action Planning process in 2026 to identify regional transportation safety priorities. As a part of that process, community engagement and data analysis identified the top safety concerns locally within Garretson.

In Garretson, roadway departure crashes and nighttime conditions are key contributors to safety risk, particularly on higher-speed routes that pass through or around the community.

Across SECOG, engagement feedback has emphasized managing speeds and improving walking and biking connections. In Garretson, crash patterns point toward visibility improvements and roadway departure countermeasures as effective safety strategies.

Figure 1. Types of crashes

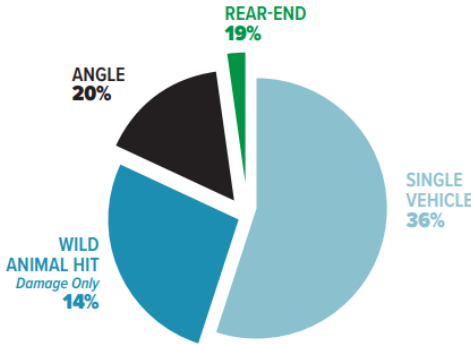


Figure 2. Crashes per year



Crash Analysis

There were **88 total crashes** from 2021-2025

2 fatal or severe crashes (2.3%) — lower than regional average (3.8%)

55% on 55+ mph roads; 41% on 65+ mph

43% in dark conditions — higher than region (36.5%)

No crashes involving people **walking or biking**

Engagement Takeaways

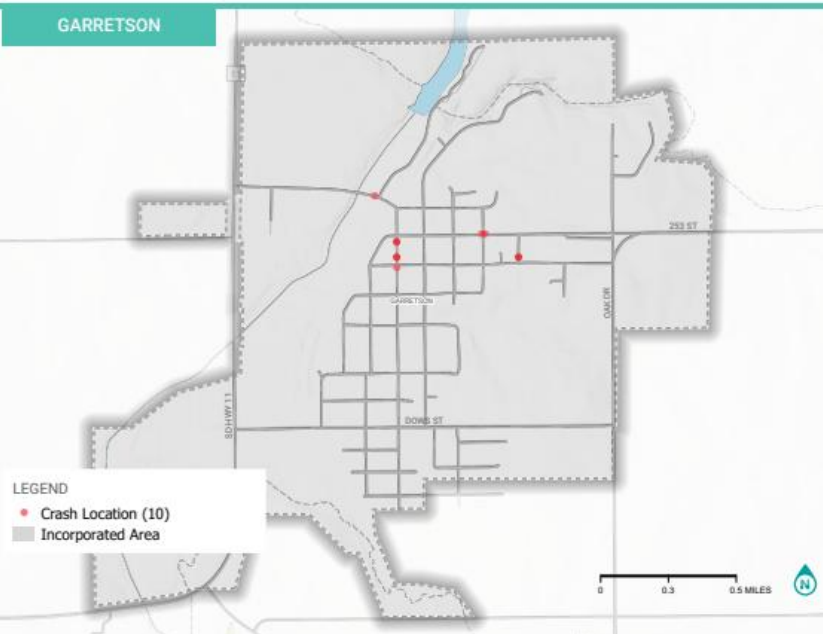
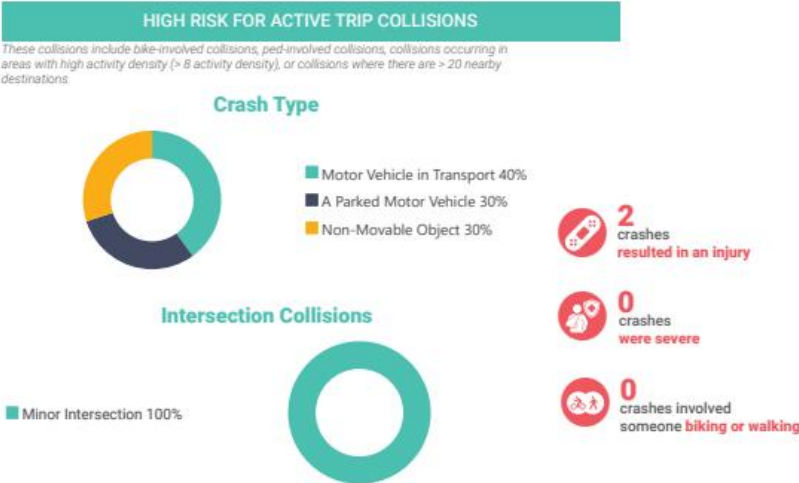
Several comments focused on **unsafe speeds and driver behavior**, especially on key residential streets. These concerns are further enhanced **around school areas**. Residents also value sidewalk **access to Split Rock Park**.

Project Recommendations

See the SS4A Regional Safety Action Plan project website for more information at www.secog.org



Crash Analysis



Recommendations

Project #1: Main Avenue Safety Improvements

Crash Trends

- Angle Crashes at Main and Essex
- Parking Crashes between 2nd and 4th Streets

Countermeasure Options

- Essex & Main
 - Replace Yield Signs with Stop Signs for Essex
 - Improve sight visibility
 - Lighting if improvements still needed
- Main between 2nd and 4th Streets
 - Traffic Calming Measures
 - Curb Extensions at corners
 - 4-way stop at 3rd Street

Project #2: Dows Street through town – Bike and Pedestrian Safety and Speed Reduction

Safety Feedback Received

- Railroad Crossings are hazardous
- Bikes and Pedestrians and Children unsafe mixing with trucks and trains.
- Speeding

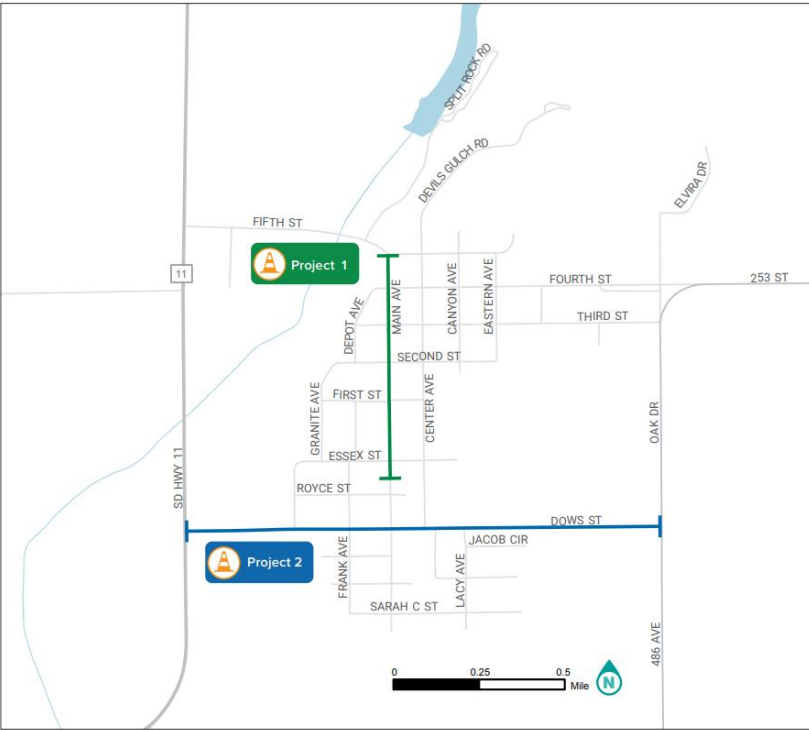
Countermeasure Options

- Extend sidewalk from Park west and from Railroad Street to SD 11
- Visibility Enhancement Crossing at Park with RRFB
- Speed Feedback Signs
- Improve Rail Crossings (RCIP grant)

Additional Projects

- Enhanced Ped/Bike Safety project at School Complex – TA funding (Safe Routes to School)
- Split Rock/Devils Gulch/Main Street bike trail/ped connections – TA funding
- 5th Street Railroad Crossing Improvements (Railroad Crossing Improvement Program (RCIP))
- Palisades Bike Trail Connections – DNR funding

Priority Projects



1. Main Avenue Safety Improvements
2. Dows Street Bike and Pedestrian Safety and Speed Reduction



Project #44 – Main Avenue Safety Improvements



Crash Trends

- Angle Crashes at Main and Essex
- Parking Crashes between 2nd and 4th Streets

Countermeasure Options

- **Essex & Main**
 - Replace Yield Signs with Stop Signs for Essex
 - Improve sight visibility
 - Lighting if improvements still needed
- **Main between 2nd and 4th Streets**
 - Traffic Calming Measures
 - Curb Extensions at corners
 - 4-way stop at 3rd Street



Dows Street through town – Bike and Pedestrian Safety and Speed Reduction (100)

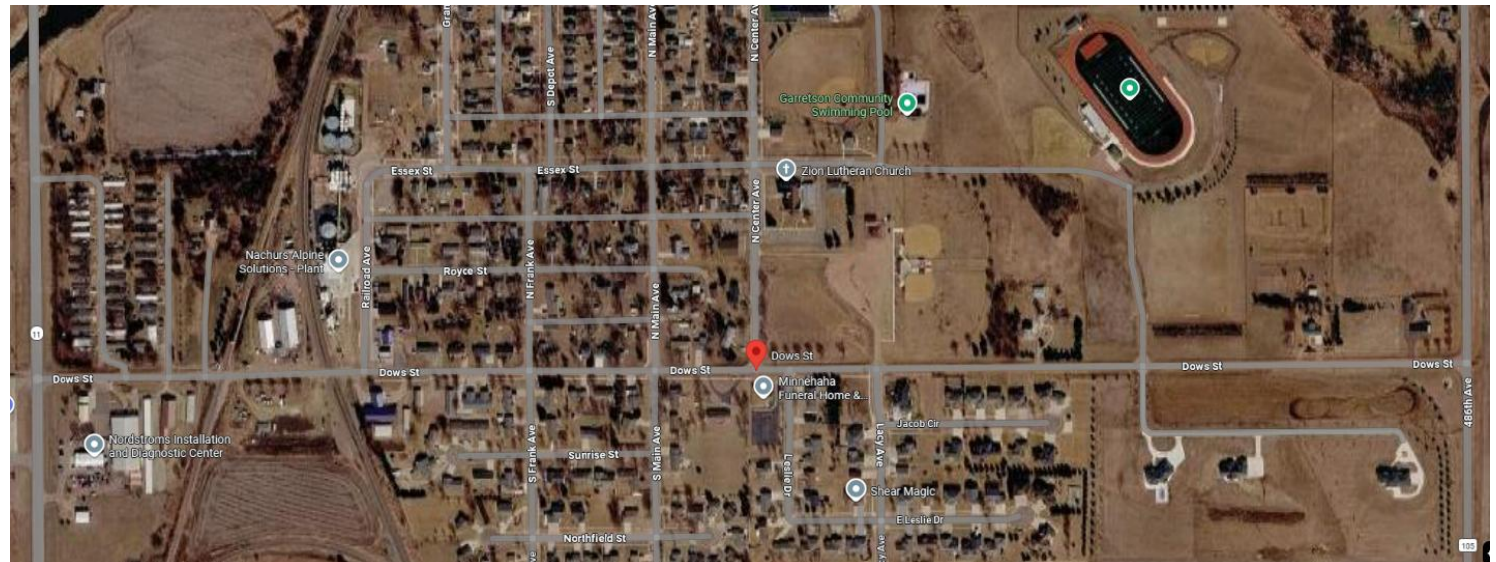


Safety Feedback Received

- ✓ Railroad Crossings are hazardous
- ✓ Bikes and Pedestrians and Children unsafe mixing with trucks and trains.
- ✓ Speeding

Countermeasure Options

- Extend sidewalk from Park west and from Railroad Street to SD 11
- Visibility Enhancement Crossing at Park with RRFB
- Speed Feedback Signs
- Improve Rail Crossings (RCIP grant)



Other Safety Projects Recommended



- Enhanced Ped/Bike Safety project at School Complex – TA funding (Safe Routes to School)
- Split Rock/Devils Gulch/Main Street bike trail/ped connections – TA funding
- 5th Street Railroad Crossing Improvements (Railroad Crossing Improvement Program (RCIP))
- Palisades Bike Trail Connections – DNR funding

