SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

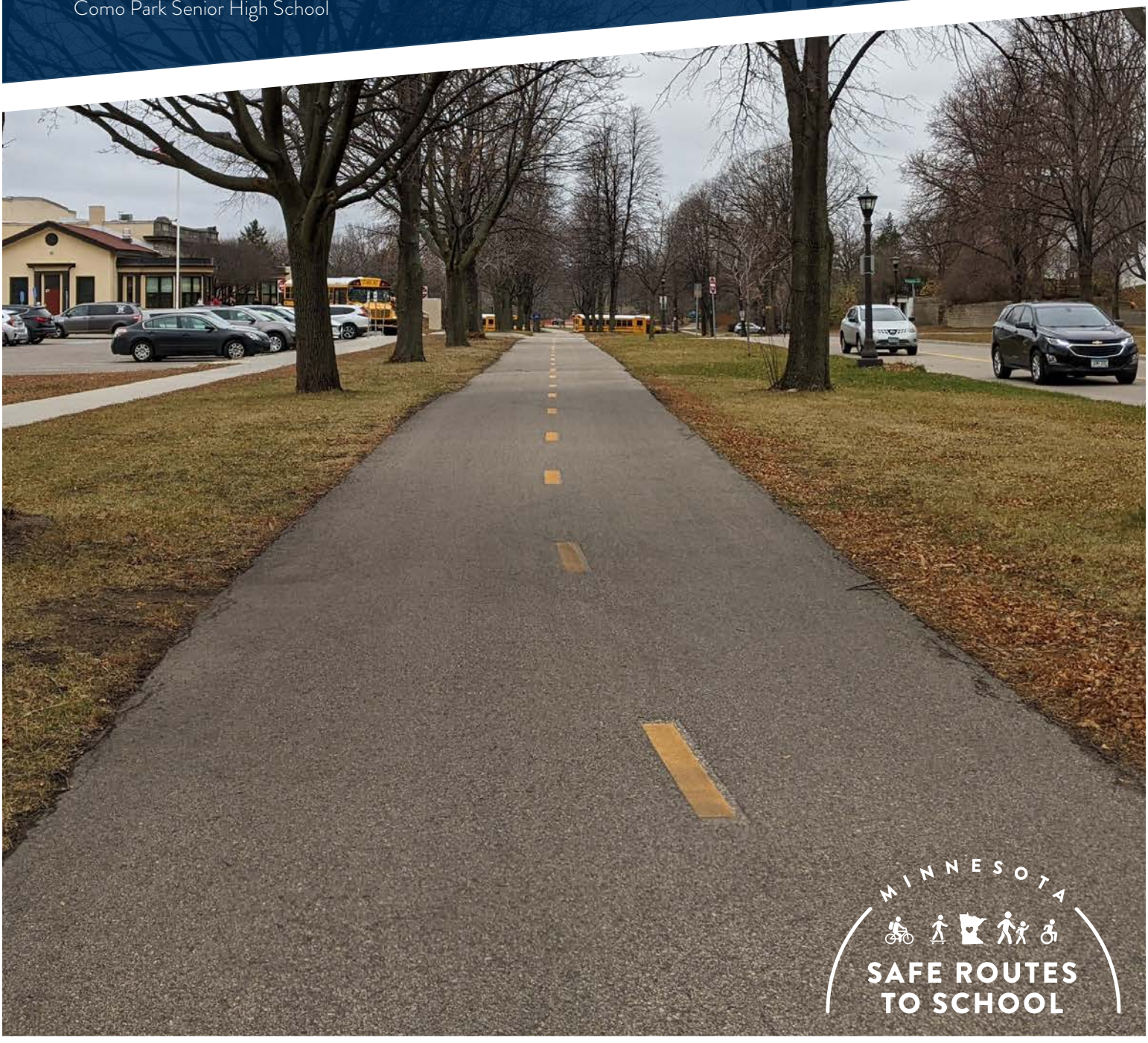
A holistic plan to improve the safety and accessibility of walking and biking to school, while empowering students to walk and bike independently at school and in their own neighborhoods

SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA

Como Park Elementary School

Como Park Senior High School

AUGUST 2023



Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the participation of the following individuals and organizations in the development of this Safe Routes to School plan.

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MINNESOTA SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Table of Contents

ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

This report is designed to support and be accessible to multiple groups of people involved with Safe Routes to School around Como Park Elementary and Como Park Senior High, including students, caregivers, teachers, school administrators, public works staff, elected officials, and county and state employees. This plan focuses on key information and recommendations, while the appendices document additional participation, analysis, resources, and deliberation that shaped the development of the plan.

THE VISION

A holistic plan to improve the safety and accessibility of walking and biking to school, while empowering students to walk and bike independently at school and in their own neighborhoods.

THE 6 Es

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs rely on six core strategies, called the "Six Es," to work toward their vision.

EQUITY – THE OVERARCHING E

Prioritizing positive outcomes for students from lower-income households; Black, Indigenous, and other students of color; students with disabilities; and other students who face disproportionate barriers to walking, biking, and rolling to school because of their group membership. This plan uses the term "priority populations" to refer to disproportionately impacted groups of students and other community members.

ENGAGEMENT

Working with students, families, school staff, and community members and organizations, especially those from priority populations, to identify needs, better understand barriers, and create solutions together for walking, biking, and rolling.

EVALUATION

Measuring how Safe Routes to School initiatives are implemented (process evaluation) and what their impacts are (outcome evaluation), especially how initiatives Engage with and support priority populations.

EDUCATION

Providing students and other community members, especially those from priority populations, with skills and knowledge about walking, biking, and rolling.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Normalizing a culture of walking, biking, and rolling through incentive programs, events, and activities that center priority populations.

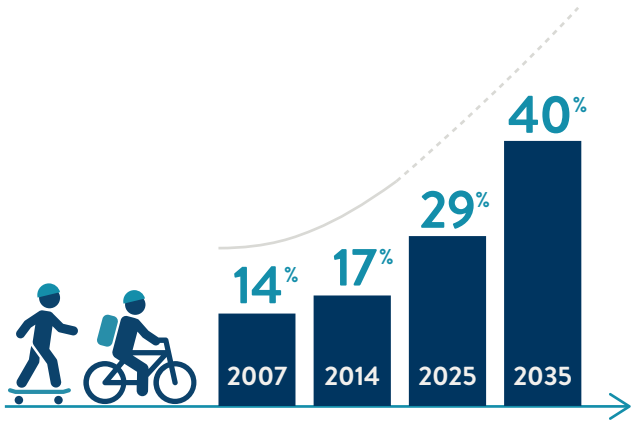
ENGINEERING

Developing Equity-focused changes to the built environment that support youth travel, designed and prioritized through community Engagement.

01. WHY SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL?

Why Safe Routes to School?

Today, less than 20% of K-8 students walk or bike to school, but as recently as 1970, nearly 50% of students walked or biked to school. Where schools and housing are located, how roads are designed, and how automobiles are regulated have all contributed to this decline. Through policy changes, infrastructure improvements, and programs, Safe Routes to School helps create physical and social environments that empower students, their families, and their communities to walk and bike more often. Communities that participate in Safe Routes to School also benefit from less air, noise, and water pollution; lower road maintenance costs; and more pleasant streetscapes for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers alike.



SRTS initiatives are contributing to more students and families walking and biking to school.

Most kids are not getting enough physical activity.

Roads near schools are congested, decreasing safety and air quality for children.

KIDS WHO WALK OR BIKE TO SCHOOL:

- Arrive alert and able to focus on school
- Feel better about their physical health
- Are more likely to have good mental health
- Get most of their recommended daily physical activity just from traveling to and from school
- Have better school performance and test scores

A REINFORCING CYCLE OF WALKING AND BIKING TO SCHOOL

- More students walking and biking to school
- Greater focus on policies, infrastructure, and programs to support walking and biking
- Safer and easier routes to and from school
- Better air quality and more pleasant bike and pedestrian environments

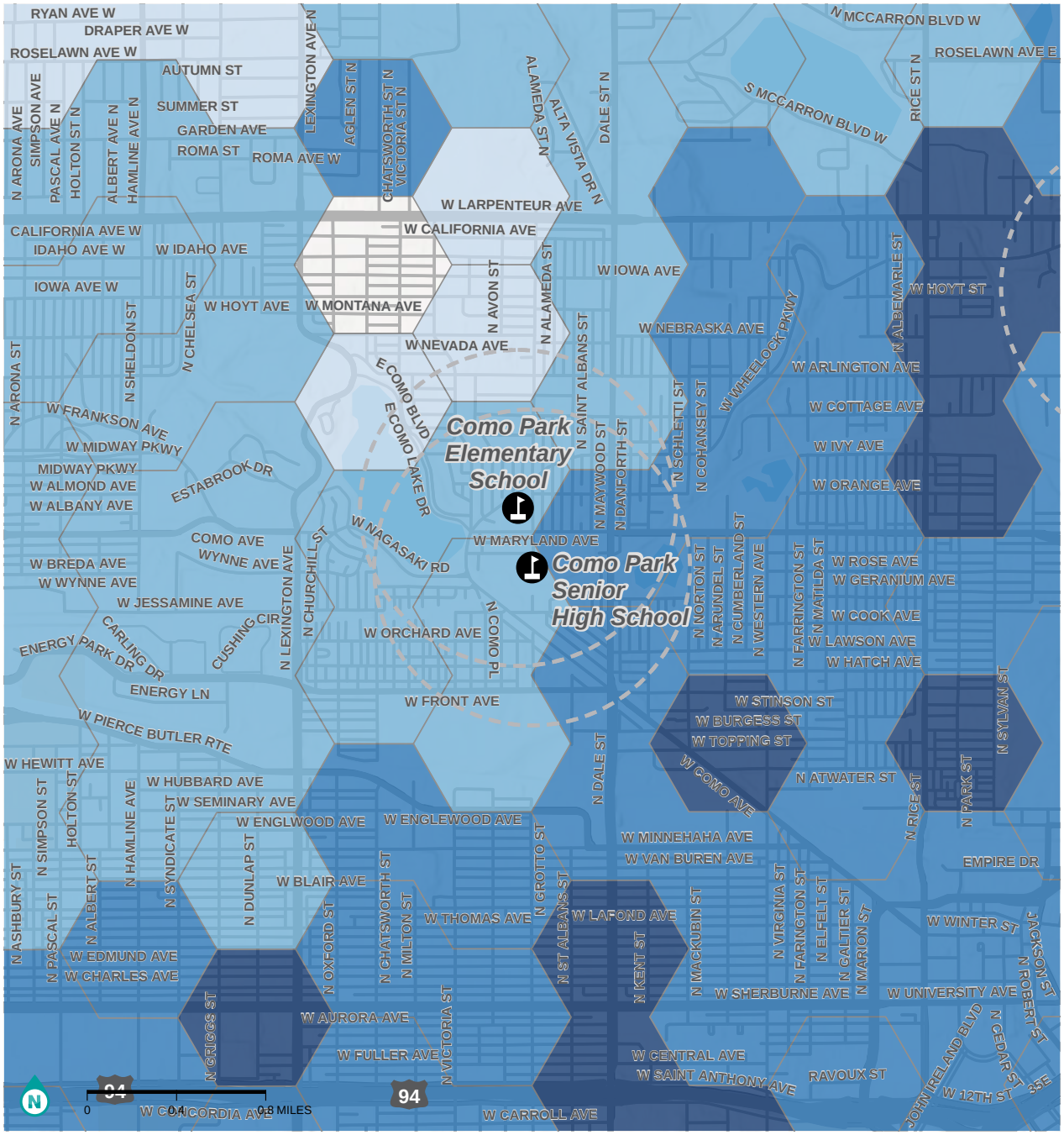
*More information, including primary sources, can be found at http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org.

Equity in SRTS

Disparities in access to resources such as high-quality jobs, schools, parks, healthcare, food, and a full range of transportation choices impact the health and well-being of communities. These differences are not random—they are the results of government policy and funding in the past and present, which has worked to the benefit of some and to the disadvantage of others.

Equity in Safe Routes to School is impacted by transportation system inequities—such as limited access to high-quality walking and biking infrastructure or the presence of highways or busy roads in lower-income neighborhoods and neighborhoods with more BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) individuals—as well as inequities in related systems. For example, racial wealth inequities and racial discrimination in housing mean that BIPOC or lower-income students may live further away from schools than their white peers and those from higher-income families.

Safe Routes to School works to address these inequities through programs, infrastructure, and policy improvements that help priority populations. Priority populations include individuals, groups, and communities who are more likely to rely on walking, biking, or transit for transportation; are more vulnerable to unsafe traffic conditions; or have suffered historic disinvestment in safe, comfortable, walking and biking infrastructure. By looking at demographic data, examining existing transportation services and policies, and speaking with members of the community, the Como Park Safe Routes to School team worked to develop recommendations that support equity in walking and biking to school.



PRIORITY EQUITY AREAS

COMO PARK
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PLAN

15-Minute Walk Buffer

Active Transportation Equity Score

- 1 - 3
- 4 - 6
- 7 - 9
- 10 - 12
- 13 - 15

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MINNESOTA SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Refer to Appendix H for a description of the methods used to produce this map.

Como Park Elementary

SITE CIRCULATION

Pedestrians and Bicyclists: Como Park Elementary has good connections to school for students walking and bicycling, particularly to the north and east. There is a sidewalk that connects the main school entrance to the sidewalk along Grotto Street North, where many students walk to find their ride or connect with other walking routes. The school is adjacent to Wheelock Parkway, which has separated walking and biking paths that connect to the Como Lake trails, among other connections. Crossing East Como Boulevard and Maryland Avenue West is more challenging.

School Buses: Buses enter the southwest parking lot along Wheelock Parkway and line up in the access aisle parallel to the school. Teachers walk students out to buses. There can be conflicts between buses making turns onto Wheelock Parkway and people walking and biking, since the driveways cross the sidewalk and bike path.

Vehicles: Parent/caregiver pick-up and drop-off happen in the main parking lot northeast of the school. There are directional arrows painted on the parking lot pavement. Cars line up and school staff help direct students to their rides. Parents/caregivers have driven into entrances to the parking lot where they're not allowed, including the entrance to the staff parking lot on the northeast corner, even after temporary materials were placed there to block the entrance. Parents/caregivers driving into that entrance can cause conflicts with students walking and biking on the sidewalk that crosses it.

SCHOOL CONTEXT:*

Como Park Elementary

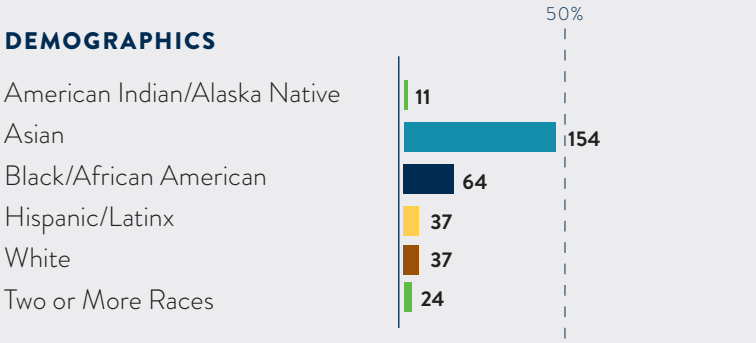
ENROLLMENT:

327

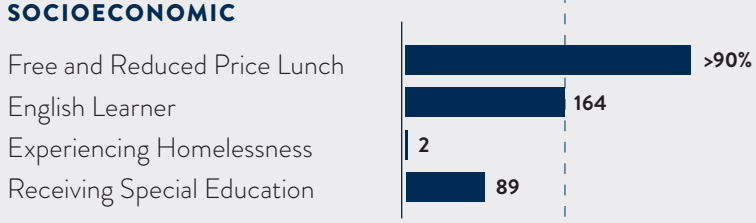
GRADES SERVED:

Pre-K-5

DEMOGRAPHICS



SOCIOECONOMIC



Source: SY 2023 student enrollment data from the Minnesota Department of Education.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS:

- Nearly half of the Como Park Elementary student population is Asian, with a significant number of Black/African American students and relatively small subsets of students who are Latinx, White, two or more races, or American Indian/Alaska Native.
- Como Park Elementary has a high percentage of free and reduced price lunch-eligible students (over 90%) compared to the state of Minnesota (40%).
- 60% of Como Park Elementary students speak a language other than English at home.

Como Park Senior High

SITE CIRCULATION

Pedestrians and Bicyclists: At dismissal, many students walk north from school on Grotto Street North to nearby residences or bus stops. There can be conflicts between students walking and vehicles picking up students along Grotto at intersections with Rose Avenue West and Maryland Avenue West. A community member informally volunteering as a crossing guard helps students cross at the intersection of Grotto Street North and Maryland Avenue West. Some students walk or ride their bikes to/from the west along the Lake Como bicycle path. There isn't a pedestrian crossing at Rose Avenue West and there is a sidewalk gap along Rose Avenue West, which makes it challenging for students to access the school from this direction.

School Buses: Busing is provided by Metro Transit, and students who live outside the walk zone (more than one mile away from school) receive free Metro Transit Go-To passes. This year, St. Paul Public Schools is using grant funding to provide passes for all students who want them, including those who live within the walk zone. Many students take buses from stops along Maryland Avenue West or Dale Street North.

Vehicles: At dismissal, vehicles queue along Rose Avenue West in front of the school to pick up students and exit the parking lot area on Grotto Street North. Some vehicles wait to pick up students along Grotto Street North and Maryland Avenue West near the stop signs, preventing traffic from flowing. One lane is closed on Rose Avenue West and Grotto Street North to create a one-way traffic flow. There is significant congestion at Grotto Street North and Rose Avenue West at school arrival and dismissal.

SCHOOL CONTEXT:*

Como Park Senior High

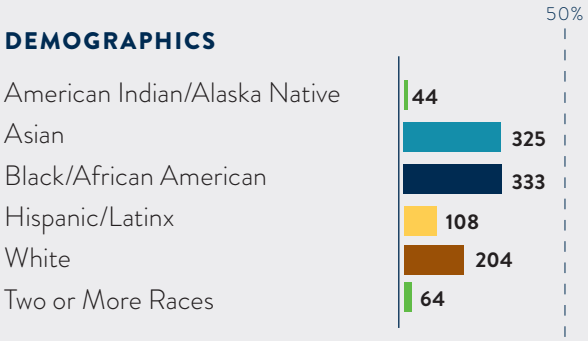
ENROLLMENT:

1,078

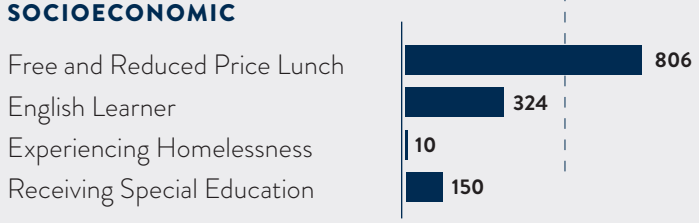
GRADES SERVED:

9-12

DEMOGRAPHICS



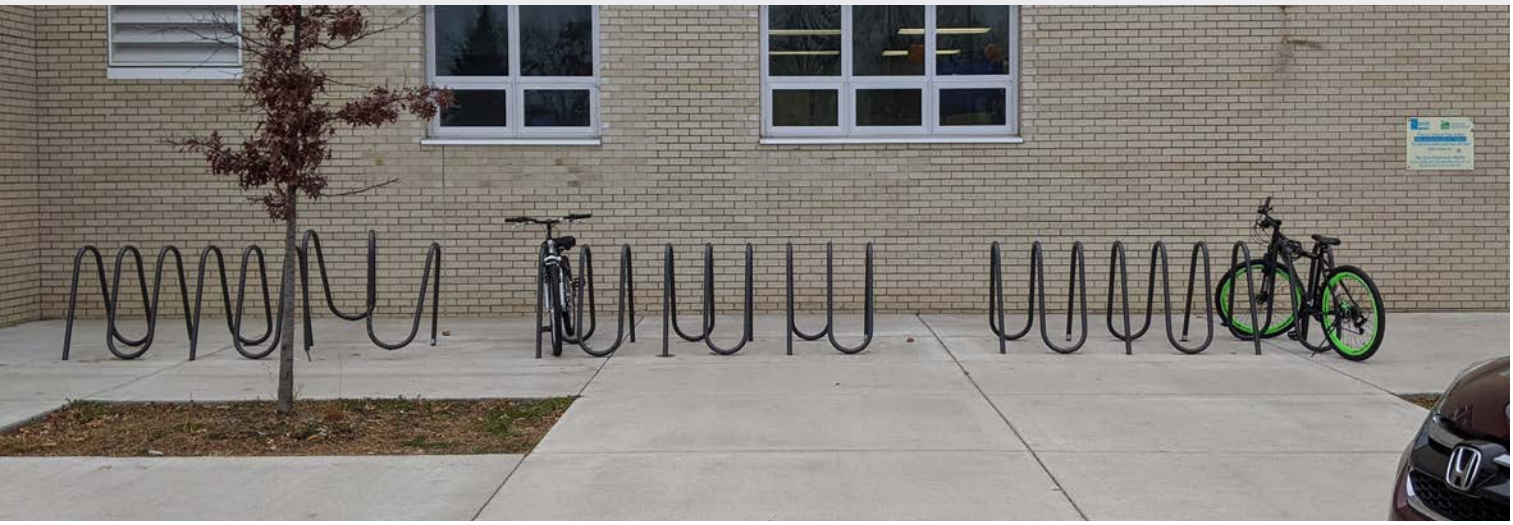
SOCIOECONOMIC



**Source: SY 2023 student enrollment data from the Minnesota Department of Education.*

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS:

- The Como Park Senior High student population is predominantly Black/African American and Asian, with a significant number of white and Hispanic/Latinx students and relatively small subsets of students who are two or more races or American Indian/Alaska Native.
- Como Park Senior High has a high percentage of free and reduced price lunch-eligible students (75%) compared to the state of Minnesota (40%).
- Almost 55% of Como Park Senior High students speak a language other than English at home.
- Many students may not have experience using Metro Transit, and education and encouragement in this area could be helpful.



02. INFRASTRUCTURE

Introduction to Infrastructure

Physical changes to the streetscape are essential to making walking, biking, and rolling to school safer and more comfortable.

An in-person walk audit and discussions with the Safe Routes to School Team, school and district staff, caregivers, students, community members, and city and county staff informed recommendations to address key barriers to walking and biking around Como Park Elementary and Senior High Schools.

Recommendations are prioritized on the basis of community and stakeholder input, traffic and roadway conditions, cost, number of students impacted, and benefit to priority populations. This planning process was designed to address historical and contemporary inequities in who benefits from and who is burdened by transportation systems, and equity considerations accordingly played a central role in the prioritization of infrastructure recommendations. Especially in the winter months, improved maintenance and lighting can contribute to improving equitable access to walking and biking routes, even where a sidewalk or path is present.

WINTER MAINTENANCE

For students and community members with disabilities, winter maintenance is key to accessing sidewalks and trails during snowy months. This is also true for students and families who walk and roll as their primary means of transportation, either because they cannot afford or choose not to own a vehicle, or because other transportation options aren't accessible to them. Cities can adopt policies that prioritize winter maintenance

of existing infrastructure and make it easier for the most vulnerable users of our transportation system—including students—to get around in winter. These policies help to increase transparency and improve reliability for the active transportation network.

For example, cities can:

- Adopt policies that prioritize snow clearing and removal on active transportation facilities
- Prioritize clearing of routes that provide access to transit
- Develop and share information publicly regarding sidewalk and shared use pathway snow clearing and removal practices
- Hold a winter maintenance forum or conduct a survey around specific winter engagement concerns
- Work with schools to establish volunteer groups of residents to clear sidewalks on priority routes to school

LIGHTING AND VISIBILITY

Similarly, lighting for people walking and biking is important for both actual and perceived sense of safety and security. In winter climates like Minnesota's, where darker days mean school arrival and dismissal can occur in the dark, lighting is especially important for mitigating safety concerns and encouraging active transportation throughout the year.

While lighting can sometimes be seen as a costly investment, it is an important step for ensuring equitable access to walking and biking routes. Lighting should be seen as a necessary component of bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements, not seen as a potential add-on or "nice-to-have" feature.

Communities can consider:

- Creating a lighting plan for priority pedestrian routes to install trail or sidewalk lighting over time
- Partnerships with or requirements for private

development to provide lighting
- Incorporating high-visibility safety vests into crossing guard and Walking School Bus events
- Giveaways that help kids access winter gear such as clothing or bike lights

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

This plan does not represent a comprehensive list of every project that could improve conditions for walking and bicycling in the neighborhood. Instead, it calls attention to key conflict points and potential improvements. Recommendations range from simple striping changes to more significant changes to streets, intersections, and school infrastructure.

Recommendations identified in this plan are not necessarily endorsed by MnDOT but are planning-level concepts that will require additional engineering design.

Infrastructure Recommendations

HORTON AVE AND COMO LAKE BIKE/PEDESTRIAN PATHS

PRIORITY Low ○○●

Stakeholders and community members supported this project because it will provide safety and comfort benefits. It is not a top priority in this plan because it may not have immediate benefits for priority populations and will serve relatively few students.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, City of Saint Paul

RECOMMENDATION

Make trail connections between the shared use path through Como Park and the Como Lake bike trail. Consider making the Como Lake bike trail two-way or providing a bicycle facility to travel clockwise around the south side of the lake.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

Students walking or biking to Como Park Senior High from the west use the paths around the south side of the lake as a connection. The shared use path through Como Park ends at Horton Avenue, and the bike trail around the south side of the lake is one-way. The Como Regional Park long-range plan and updated St. Paul Bicycle Plan set goals to make these trail connections more intuitive and highlight connections to neighborhoods.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

While this recommendation supports walking and biking, it does not address transportation equity goals.

COMO AVE AND NAGASAKI RD

PRIORITY Medium ○●○

Stakeholders and community members were supportive of this project; it stands to provide significant safety and comfort benefits to users, it may benefit priority populations, it will serve a modest number of students, and it may be costly to implement.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

City of Saint Paul, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation

RECOMMENDATION

Upgrade crossings to include accessibility improvements, such as a curb ramps that meet current ADA standards, lining up the curb ramps with the crossing, shortening and simplifying the crossing. Further evaluation of specific improvements is needed, but removal of the channelized island should be considered. Other elements to consider include modifying the free right condition and creating a protected intersection.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

This is an intersection with multiple legs that can feel complicated to cross. This intersection is a connection point between the Como Avenue bike lane and the Como Lake trails.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

Some of Como Park's higher-priority equity areas lie to the southeast of the schools, and improvements at this intersection could improve walking and biking access to the school campuses.

ROSE AVE W

PRIORITY High ●○○

This project will serve a large number of students, will address on-campus accessibility and safety concerns, and is likely to be relatively low-cost to implement.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

City of Saint Paul, Saint Paul Public Schools

RECOMMENDATION

Add a sidewalk connection to accommodate students walking along the segment west of the school campus.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

There is a sidewalk gap west of the school campus, and students walk or bike along this road. During school drop-off and pick-up times, it can be congested with vehicles queuing. Providing sidewalks (ideally on both sides of the road) would be helpful for school walking or biking field trips and from a safety/access standpoint (for fire drills or evacuation). Road ownership in this location is complex: SPPS property extends to the west end of the track, where the road becomes public right-of-way.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

This recommendation supports students walking to nearby Metro Transit bus stops, and would provide better access to students walking or biking from higher-priority equity areas to the southeast.

ROSE AVE W AND E COMO BLVD

PRIORITY High ●○○

This project will serve a modest number of students and will provide safety and comfort benefits, but is likely to be costly to implement.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

City of Saint Paul, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation

RECOMMENDATION

Add a pedestrian crossing on the south side of the intersection, including high-visibility crosswalk, median refuge island, and school crossing signs, as well as a connection to the Como Lake trail. Consult the St. Paul Department of Public Works policy on crosswalk markings when considering marked crosswalks. See Appendix L for a draft project concept.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

Navigating the connection between the bike trail and Rose Ave W can be challenging, as the crossing is unmarked and there is limited visibility for people driving north. There are no curb cuts to cross E Como Blvd at Rose Ave W, and there is no connection to the Lake Como and Como Park trails from this intersection.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

This recommendation supports students walking to nearby bus stops, and would provide better access to students walking or biking from higher-priority equity areas to the southeast.

COMO AVE

PRIORITY Medium ○●○

While some stakeholders supported this project and it will provide significant safety and comfort benefits, it will serve a small number of students and is likely to be costly to implement.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

City of Saint Paul (west of Dale), Ramsey County (east of Dale)

RECOMMENDATION

Upgrade bike facility to a separated bikeway.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

Students biking to Como Park Senior High from the southeast have expressed that this road can feel busy. Separating the bike lane from traffic could improve comfort and safety for all road users.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

Some of Como Park's higher-priority equity areas lie to the southeast of the schools, and improvements along this corridor could improve walking and biking access to the school campuses.

MARYLAND AVE W AND GROTTO ST

PRIORITY High ●○○

This project will serve a large number of students, will benefit priority populations, will provide moderate safety and comfort benefits, and is likely to be moderately expensive.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

City of Saint Paul

RECOMMENDATION

Install a demonstration project to evaluate placement of curb extensions on Maryland on the southwest and northeast corners to improve visibility and shorten crossings. Remove "No Parking" signs along Maryland Ave. Add high-visibility crosswalks where appropriate. Consult the St. Paul Department of Public Works policy on crosswalk markings when considering marked crosswalks.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

This can be a challenging intersection to navigate when walking or biking. During arrival and dismissal, vehicles queue up Grotto to this intersection, and park/stop near the stop signs and bus stops at the intersection waiting to pick students up, which limits visibility of people walking and crossing at corners.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

This intersection is a crossing barrier between both schools and a higher-equity-priority area for students walking or biking to the campuses from the south and east.

DALE ST N

PRIORITY Medium ○●○

Stakeholders and community members supported this project, it is likely to benefit priority populations, and will serve a large number of students, but may be costly to implement.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

Ramsey County, City of Saint Paul

RECOMMENDATION

Consider intersection treatments to improve safety. The planned four-to-three lane conversion project with added bike lanes on Dale St N is an opportunity to evaluate treatments such as median refuge islands, especially at intersections including W Wheelock Pkwy, Maryland Ave W, Jessamine Ave W, and Front Ave/Como Ave.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

Dale St N is a higher volume street, which makes walking along or across it feel less safe and more unpleasant. A student walking to Como High School was recently hit by a car crossing Dale St N on Maryland Ave W. A Ramsey County four-to-three lane conversion project is planned on Dale St from Front Ave to Hwy 36.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

There are several higher-priority equity areas to the east of Dale St N, which acts as a barrier to accessing the school campuses by walking or biking.

COMO PARK ELEMENTARY DRIVEWAY OFF GROTTO ST N

PRIORITY Low ○○●

This project will impact a modest number of students, will address on-campus accessibility and safety concerns, and is likely to be relatively low-cost to implement.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

Saint Paul Public Schools

RECOMMENDATION

Add “Staff Parking Only” signage to Grotto Street N parking lot entrance and move visitor parking to the main parking lot. Consider closing the Grotto Street N entrance in a future reconstruction project.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

This driveway to the staff-only parking lot is closed to parents/caregivers, but some use it anyway. Closing this driveway at pick-up and drop-off would prevent parents/caregivers driving from blocking or obstructing the sidewalk where students walk and bike to access the school.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

Improving sidewalk access around the school improves safety for people walking, including those who live in equity priority areas and people with disabilities.

COMPLETE SIDEWALK NETWORK

PRIORITY High ●○○

This project will serve a large number of students, will provide significant safety benefits, and is likely to be moderately expensive.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

City of Saint Paul

RECOMMENDATION

Ensure streets near the school(s) have sidewalks in good condition by filling sidewalk gaps, repairing or replacing sidewalks in poor condition, and installing ADA-compliant curb ramps where needed.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

City of Saint Paul staff have data on sidewalk gaps and ADA compliant curb ramps near the school. See Appendix D for maps. Although a full audit of existing sidewalk conditions near the school was not completed as part of this planning process, it is estimated that about half the sidewalk network citywide is deficient and needs repair based on historical projects and segmented inspections. More information is needed to determine the existing sidewalk condition within a half mile radius of the school.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

Improving sidewalks and curb ramps around the school(s) improves safety for people walking, including those who live in equity priority areas and people with disabilities.

COMO PARK SENIOR HIGH PARKING LOT

PRIORITY High ●○○

The project will serve a large number of students and could provide modest safety benefits. While the project costs would be modest, there is no funding available to implement them. Consider temporary signs until funding is available for permanent improvements.

WHO WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN?

Saint Paul Public Schools

RECOMMENDATION

Install signs and road markings to indicate where caregiver drop-off and pick-up should happen; when possible, provide staffing to help direct and manage traffic.

WHY IS THIS RELEVANT?

Caregivers line vehicles across three lanes while waiting to pick up students and can interfere with buses leaving on time and create conflicts with pedestrians and bicyclists. In the '23-'24 school year, Metro Transit buses will also be on campus to pick up students, reducing space for waiting and increasing the need for buses to be able to leave on time and stay on schedule.

HOW WILL THIS ADDRESS EQUITY?

Bringing Metro Transit buses onto campus provides a more convenient and comfortable service for students who ride the bus.

03. PROGRAMS

Introduction to Programs

Programs are opportunities to increase awareness, understanding, and excitement around walking, biking, and rolling to school.

Programs are focused on educating students, families, and the broader community about walking and biking. Programs also help to build a culture that supports and normalizes walking and biking to school and other destinations. Because programs are low cost and can often be implemented quickly by an individual school or the school district, they represent an important Safe Routes to School strategy that complements longer-term strategies, including infrastructure improvements and policy changes.

Program Recommendations

EXISTING PROGRAMS

The Saint Paul Public School District, Como Park Elementary, and Como Park Senior High have been actively working toward providing safe and inviting spaces around school for students. This work provides a valuable baseline for expanding programs to encourage more students to walk and bike.

Active or previously implemented programs include:

- After-school outdoor club has taught bike skills
- Bike fleets are available through SPPS, BikeMN, Ramsey County SHIP
- Bike racks recently installed at Como Park Elementary
- Both schools take walking field trips to Como Park
- Como Park Elementary PE teacher has partially completed Walk! Bike! Fun! training

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Conversations with school and district staff, caregivers, students, community members, and city and county staff led to the following program recommendations. Programs were identified to meet the needs, capacities, and interests of the community and were prioritized based on existing programs, input from local stakeholders, the extent to which the program would serve priority populations, and the readiness of the school to launch the program.

Recommended programs:

- Walk, Bike, and Roll to School Days
- Drop & Walk
- Walk and Bike Field Trips
- Walk! Bike! Fun! Curriculum
- Earn-a-Bike Program
- Transit Curriculum
- Bike Rodeo
- Crossing Guards/School Safety Patrol
- Enhanced School Communications

EQUITABLE IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Each of the recommended programs can be implemented to benefit priority populations. In some cases, programs are inherently beneficial, but other times they require intentional thought to make sure they are implemented equitably and reach students who could benefit the most from them.

When working to start a new or update an old program, school staff and partners should ask themselves:

- Who could benefit the most from this program?
- Are there any barriers to participating in this program, including cultural, social, or financial?
- Are there any school resources that can help reduce barriers to participation?
- Are there community partners who could help us spread the word about this program, or help make it more effective?

After an event, it is also important to think about what went well and what could be improved in the future. Helpful questions to consider include:

- Is this a one-off program, or is there a way to provide ongoing support for it?
- Were any student or family groups absent? Is there something that could help them participate in the future?
- What did students think of the event? Families? Staff?

Taking a few minutes before and after an event to check in on these questions can make a big difference in building a culture of walking and biking that is accessible to all students and families.

WALK, BIKE, AND ROLL TO SCHOOL DAYS

National Walk and Bike to School Days engage millions of students and families every October and May. Minnesota also celebrates Winter Walk to School Day in February. Education and encouragement programming can increase awareness and expand participation. Events can also take place more frequently (e.g., Walking Wednesdays) if there's interest and capacity.

When, where, and how will this be implemented?
On district-wide Walk, Bike, and Roll to School Days. Include promotion and celebrations for participants; remote bus stop and walk events; and/or walking school buses or bike trains, including from transit stops for high school students.

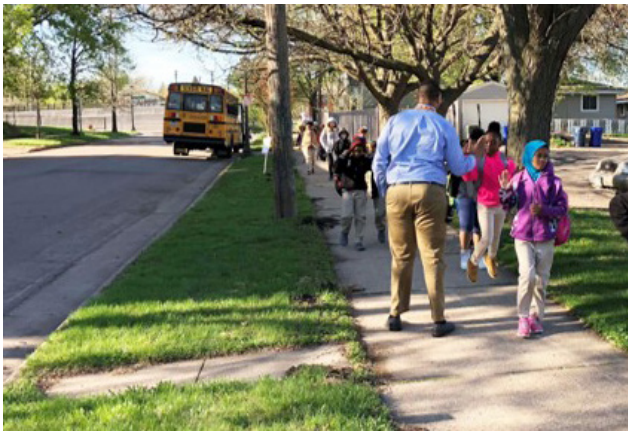
Why is this relevant and recommended?
District-wide events are held each year; a champion at each school could continue coordinating participation.

How will this address transportation inequities?
Coordinated events can make walking, biking, and rolling accessible to students disproportionately impacted by unsafe crossings.

How will this be evaluated?
Student participation counts.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?
Students, PTO, school and district staff.

What is the timeline for implementation?
Short term (1 year).



DROP AND WALK

During a drop-and-walk event (also called park and walk or remote drop-off), bus drivers and caregivers drop students at a designated off-campus location and students walk the rest of the way to school. Remote drop-off events can help reduce drop-off congestion on campus and provide students who live further from school with an opportunity to walk to school.

When, where, and how will this be implemented?
Coordinated drop-off points along the Como Lake Trail and/ or Wheelock Parkway.

Why is this relevant and recommended?
Strategic drop-off locations can remove major crossing barriers (e.g., Dale Street).

How will this address transportation inequities?
Coordinated events can make walking/biking accessible to students disproportionately impacted by unsafe crossings.

How will this be evaluated?
Annual caregiver survey about transportation patterns.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?
Students, PTO, school staff.

What is the timeline for implementation?
Short term (1 year).

WALK AND BIKE FIELD TRIPS

A field trip made by foot or by bicycle gives students a supportive environment in which to practice their pedestrian safety or bicycling skills and showcases the many benefits of walking and bicycling for transportation, including health and physical activity, pollution reduction, and cost savings. The destination of the field trip may vary, or the field trip could be the ride itself.

When, where, and how will this be implemented?
Elementary and/or high school students can use bikes from one of the available fleets and ride on the trails that surround the schools. High school students could volunteer to accompany elementary field trips.

Why is this relevant and recommended?
Available bike fleets and nearby trails are resources that can be used on a walking or biking field trip to help build confidence walking and biking and community awareness.

How will this address transportation inequities?
Walk and bike field trips can support student knowledge of and comfort with walking/biking, regardless of a student's access to such resources outside school.

How will this be evaluated?
Participation counts; number of events held.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?
Elementary and high school staff and students, volunteers.

What is the timeline for implementation?
Medium term (2-3 years)

WALK! BIKE! FUN! CURRICULUM

Walk! Bike! Fun! is a two-part curriculum designed specifically to meet Minnesota education standards. The program helps students ages five to thirteen learn traffic rules and regulations, the potential hazards to traveling, and handling skills needed to bike and walk effectively, appropriately, and safely through their community.

When, where, and how will this be implemented?
Training is available for educators to incorporate the curriculum during the school day, typically during PE or health class. Staff can also incorporate safety education into existing events or during the school day at an assembly or other school-day or after-school programs.

Why is this relevant and recommended?
Walk! Bike! Fun! is tailored to meet education standards for students in Minnesota. Access to the adjacent trail system provides a unique opportunity to extend the classroom beyond the school campus.

How will this address transportation inequities?
This in-school curriculum supports student knowledge of and comfort with walking/biking, regardless of a student's access to such resources outside school.

How will this be evaluated?
Number of students with access to walk/bike education.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?
Elementary school staff, BikeMN, students.

What is the timeline for implementation?
Medium term (2-3 years).

EARN-A-BIKE PROGRAM

Over a number of sessions, students learn the basics of bike repair and maintenance, bicycle safety and related topics while refurbishing a donated bicycle. At the end of the program, students earn the bikes they learned to repair.

When, where, and how will this be implemented?
High school students could repair bikes donated through Free Bikes 4 Kidz or through SPPD, and take classes through an after-school outdoor club or as part of shop class. Bike classes could be taught by local advocacy group or bike shop volunteers. Helmets could be provided by SPPD and bike locks could be offered as well.

Why is this relevant and recommended?
Students may lack access to bicycles, helmets and locks. Learning to maintain and repair a bicycle that they earn builds confidence and ownership.

How will this address transportation inequities?
This program could provide access to bikes, helmets, and locks for students who do not currently have them.

How will this be evaluated?
Participation counts; student travel tallies.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?
High school staff and students, parents, local advocacy groups, local bike shops.

What is the timeline for implementation?
Medium term (2-3 years).

TRANSIT CURRICULUM

Partner with Metro Transit, MoveMN, and SPPD to provide lessons on personal safety when using transit, intermodal connectivity, and benefits of taking transit.

When, where, and how will this be implemented?
Volunteers from partner organizations could visit advisory periods or be available to answer questions at all-school events. The Metro Transit bus bike rack could be used for students to practice loading and unloading a bicycle. Students could track their trips as part of a Green Transportation Challenge, with prizes or incentives.

Why is this relevant and recommended?
Busing for high school students is provided by Metro Transit. In MoveMN focus groups, students expressed concerns about personal safety on transit. Increasing confidence in transit use and intermodal trips will build a culture of sustainable and active transportation.

How will this address transportation inequities?
This will support student knowledge of and comfort with transit.

How will this be evaluated?
Student travel tallies to measure modal change over time.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?
High school staff and students, Metro Transit, MoveMN, and SPPD staff.

What is the timeline for implementation?
Short term (1 year).

BIKE RODEO

Bicycle safety education should involve comprehensive skills-based session(s) designed to encourage students to bike more, by giving them the knowledge and skills they need to be able to ride a bike safely and confidently.

When, where, and how will this be implemented?
A bike rodeo could take place as a stand-alone event or incorporated into existing community or school events. High school students could volunteer to help teach bike skills to elementary school students.

Why is this relevant and recommended?
Events such as bike rodeos can teach bike handling skills, as well as knowledge about the rules of the road and safe cycling practices.

How will this address transportation inequities?
The event could target priority populations with a focus on transportation equity. Local bike shops or SPPD could provide giveaways and/or demonstrations for students who do not have access to bicycles, quality bike locks, or helmets.

How will this be evaluated?
Participation rates, before and after participant survey, annual caregiver transportation preference survey.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?
School staff, PTO, BikeMN, local bicycle shops, SPPD, community partners, students.

What is the timeline for implementation?
Short term (1 year).

CROSSING GUARDS/SCHOOL SAFETY PATROL

Crossing guards are trained adults, paid or volunteer, who are legally empowered to stop traffic to assist students with crossing the street. School safety patrols are trained student volunteers responsible for enforcing drop-off and pick-up procedures and assisting with street crossing.

When, where, and how will this be implemented?
Existing volunteer crossing assistance near Como Senior High can be augmented by additional student safety patrols and/or formal, trained adult crossing guards.

Why is this relevant and recommended?
Intersections near the two school campuses are seen as barriers to walking and biking by families who live in the neighborhood.

How will this address transportation inequities?
This program will support student safety and comfort with walking/biking; crossing guards or safety patrol can be positioned to support routes for priority populations.

How will this be evaluated?
Driver yielding tallies; student travel tallies to measure modal change over time.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?
School district, school administration or PTA, teachers, staff, local government, SPPD, volunteers.

What is the timeline for implementation?
Medium term (2-3 years).

ENHANCED SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

Existing communication channels can highlight the benefits of active school travel for students and families. Sharing regular SRTS updates and events throughout the school year will keep the benefits top-of-mind for families, gradually shift perceptions about safety and convenience, and contribute to a school culture that supports walking and biking.

When, where, and how will this be implemented?

- Include walking and biking in all school communications about transportation, including website, open house events, student handbook, etc.
- For high school, include messages about how walking and biking can help address climate change.

Why is this relevant and recommended?
This will build upon the district's strong communications resources.

How will this address transportation inequities?
Connecting families with each other and with information will provide support to those who are new to the school or trying walking or bicycling for the first time.

How will this be evaluated?

Number of families reached.

Who needs to be involved to make this happen?

District communications staff, PTO, school staff.

What is the timeline for implementation?
Short term (1 year).

04. WORKING FOR CHANGE

Action Steps

This plan provides two critical ingredients for creating a more equitable transportation system around Como Park Elementary and High Schools: a prioritized set of infrastructure and program recommendations. To make these recommendations a reality, all members of the Como Park community can play a role. The following text provides ideas for where to start.

PRIORITY SRTS INITIATIVES

Como Park Elementary

- Promote new bike parking and bike lock library to families
- Celebrate Walk, Bike and Roll to School Days
- Hold a Bus-Stop-and-Walk event in conjunction with a Walk, Bike, and Roll to School Day
- Once PE teacher is fully trained in WBF, teach biking in PE and hold a bike rodeo at a family event

Como Park Senior High School

- Install a demonstration project with temporary curb extensions at Maryland Ave W and Grotto St N
- Pursue funding to fill the sidewalk gap on Rose Ave W
- Install signs and pavement markings in parking lot areas to better manage drop-off and pick-up
- Implement transit curriculum as part of High School Foundations lessons. These will be led by students. Work with Move MN and Metro Transit to develop/adapt curriculum and train students to implement it.

IMPLEMENTING INFRASTRUCTURE CHANGES

DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Before investing in a long-term infrastructure change, cities and partners may implement a demonstration project to test out an idea. These temporary projects are quick, have a relatively low installation cost, and build support for a long-term permanent change. Demonstration projects can also help engineers and designers make sure that design details are worked out before any new concrete is installed, such as making sure school buses have enough room to turn.

Demonstration projects can be paired with programming or educational events to encourage additional behavior change. For example, new curb extensions may be paired with a crossing guard to bring additional attention to tricky crossing locations. Or a school may organize a Walk, Bike, and Roll to School Day after installing a demonstration project to encourage students and families to try out the new infrastructure.

DEMONSTRATION PROJECT EXAMPLES

Demonstration projects can take many forms, with a few examples shown here. In previous SRTS efforts, communities have installed a shared use path on the street where there are no sidewalks (top left photo below), curb extensions at wide and uncomfortable intersections (top right and bottom photos below), and a number of other creative solutions.

Demonstration projects are typically installed in the spring or fall to have enough time to observe their effects before winter arrives. In some cases, a community may be specifically interested in a component of winter maintenance and may design the project to stay in place through the winter.

COMO PA
GOLF COURSE
Hamline Ave
COMO REGIO
BIC Round Stic M
I RIDE
MY BIKE FROM
HERE
TO SCHOOL
I BIKE
FROM HERE

TAKING COMMUNITY ACTION

A more equitable transportation system that prioritizes safe, comfortable, and fun opportunities to walk, bike, and roll benefits everyone. While this plan is focused on addressing connections to schools, many improvements will benefit people with no relationship to the schools because we all share the same streets, sidewalks, and trails. Likewise, many needed changes, such as reducing speed limits and normalizing walking and biking, extend far beyond the school system.

Your number one role as a community member is to advocate for changes that make walking, biking, and rolling safer, more comfortable, and more fun. Speak to elected officials, show up to community meetings, talk about walking and biking at school events and with school administrators, and organize and vote for candidates who support walking, biking, and public transit.

I AM A STUDENT, CAREGIVER, OR COMMUNITY MEMBER

Students, families, neighborhood associations, advocacy groups, and local businesses can have incredible influence when advocating for change in their school and broader community. This is true both as individuals, as well as when community members come together into groups, such as a Parent Teacher Organization or disability advocacy groups. For example, students, caregivers, and community members can support and lead SRTS initiatives including:

- Advocating for policy change and funding at City Hall
- Developing campaigns to generate enthusiasm and improve social conditions for SRTS
- Volunteering time to lead a Walking School Bus or organize a bike drive
- Fundraising for SRTS programs and small infrastructure projects

I AM A SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEE

School district staff bring an important perspective and voice to advocating for a more equitable transportation system. By describing the challenges and opportunities their students face around walking and biking, and by petitioning local elected officials for improvements, school district employees can support policy and infrastructure improvements that benefit their students and the broader community. Staff are also ideally positioned to implement the recommendations in this plan, whether it be a classroom-level curriculum or school district–wide policy around walking and biking.

I WORK FOR THE CITY OR COUNTY

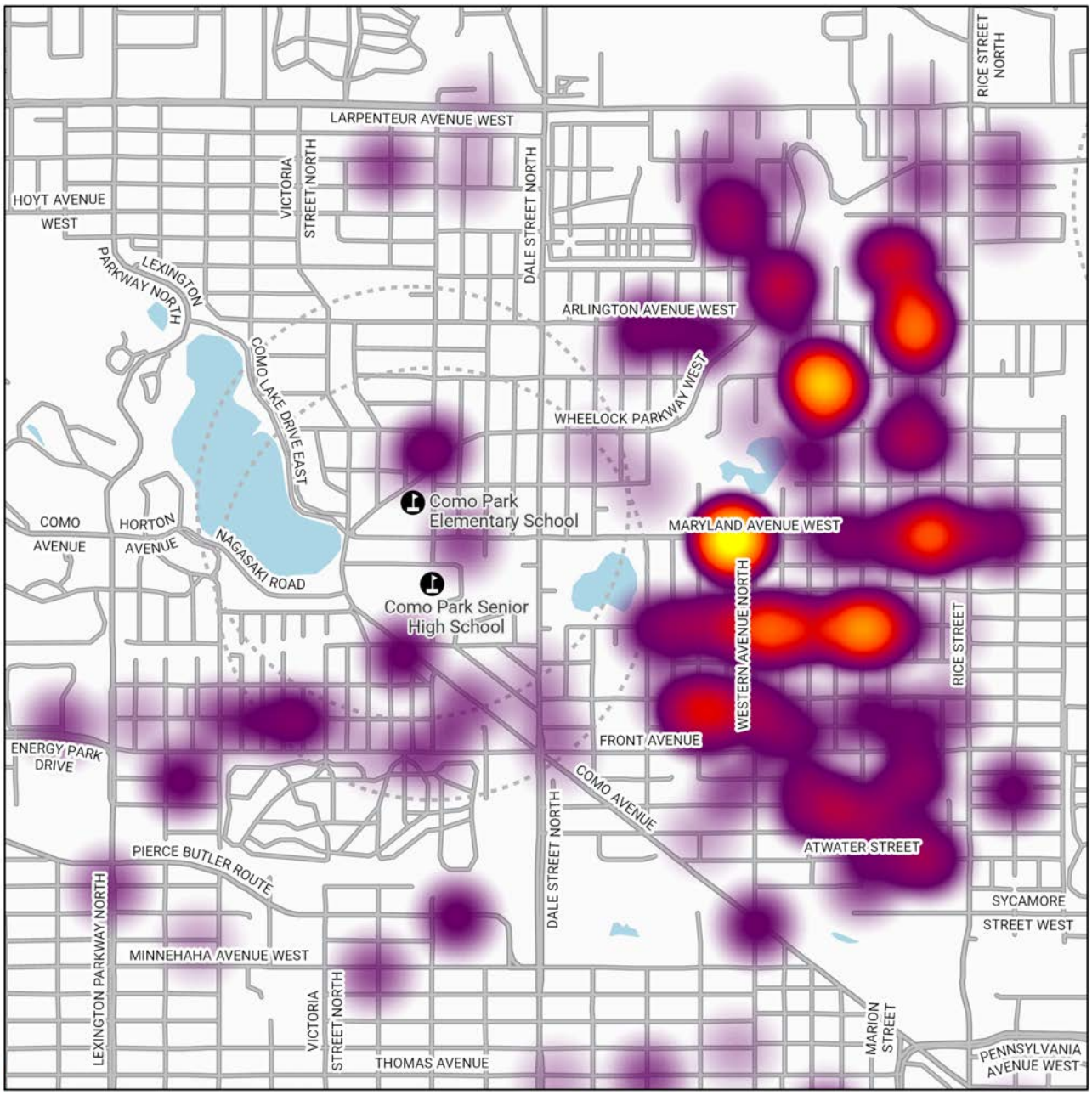
As members of the governments that own, regulate, and maintain the roads, city and county staff can be instrumental in reorienting transportation policies and infrastructure around walking and biking to schools and other destinations. City and county staff can leverage their expertise to identify, advocate for, and implement changes that contribute toward a more equitable transportation system. Key policies that staff can support include:

- Reducing lane widths and vehicular speed limits
- Reducing minimum parking requirements
- Revising land use regulations to promote denser and more integrated land uses that promote walkable and bikeable trips
- Prioritizing municipal maintenance and snow clearing of all pedestrian and bike facilities
- Requiring complete streets infrastructure as part of all road resurfacing and reconstruction projects
- Ensuring that the governing body has adopted subdivision regulations requiring new and proposed developments to have connected sidewalks and/or bicycle infrastructure. This is a requirement for SRTS funding eligibility for projects on city or county right-of-way

City staff can also use this report to support Safe Routes to School funding applications to programs such as MnDOT SRTS grants, federal infrastructure grants, and the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP).

05. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Student Residential Density - Como Park Elementary



STUDENT RESIDENTIAL LOCATIONS

CONCENTRATION OF STUDENTS

More Sparsely Populated

More Densely Populated

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0 0.6 1.2 MILE

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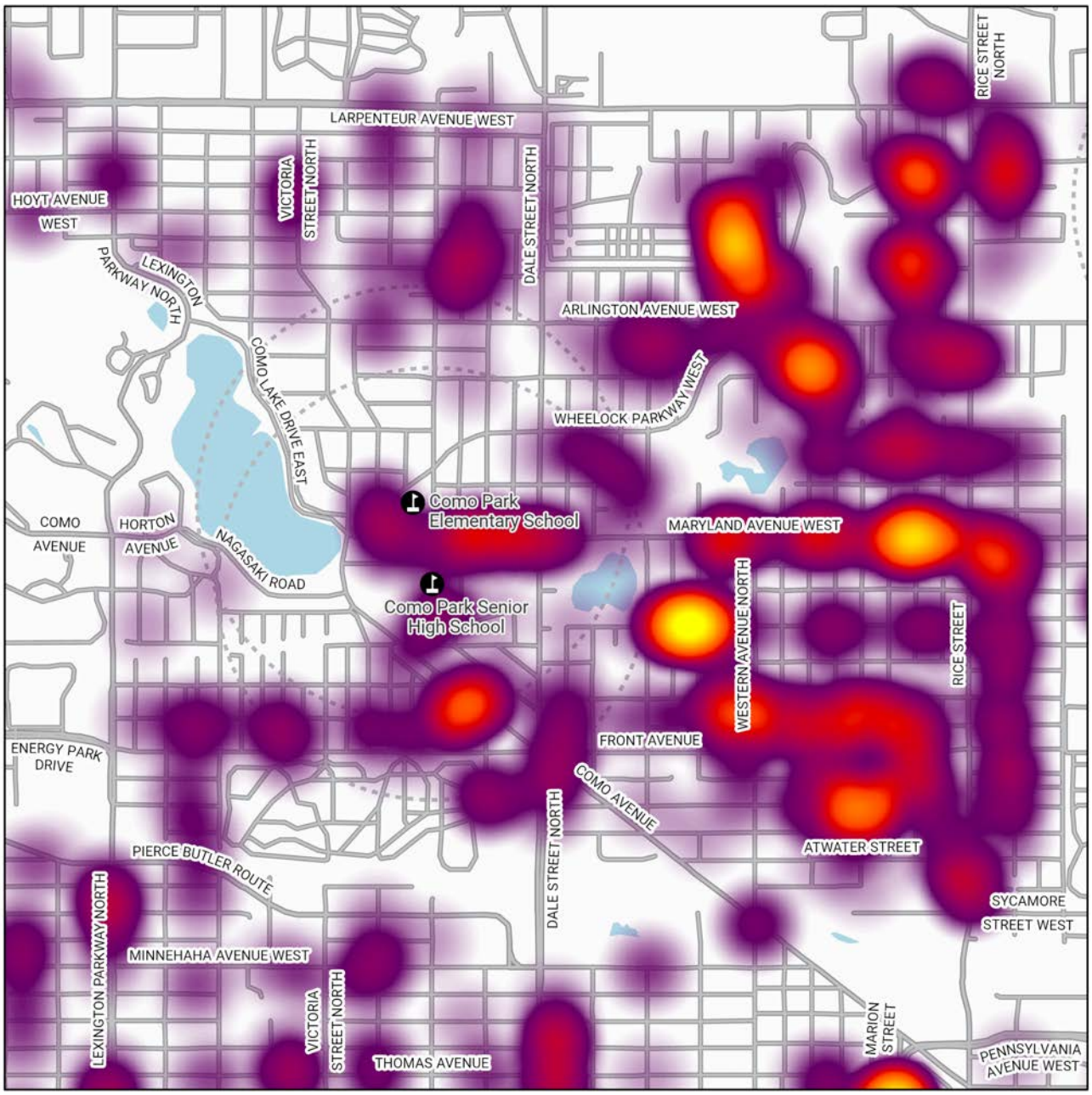
Refer to Appendix H for a description of the methods used to produce this map.

Appendix A Continued: Student Residential Density - Como Park Senior High School



STUDENT RESIDENTIAL LOCATIONS

CONCENTRATION OF STUDENTS

More Sparsely Populated

More Densely Populated

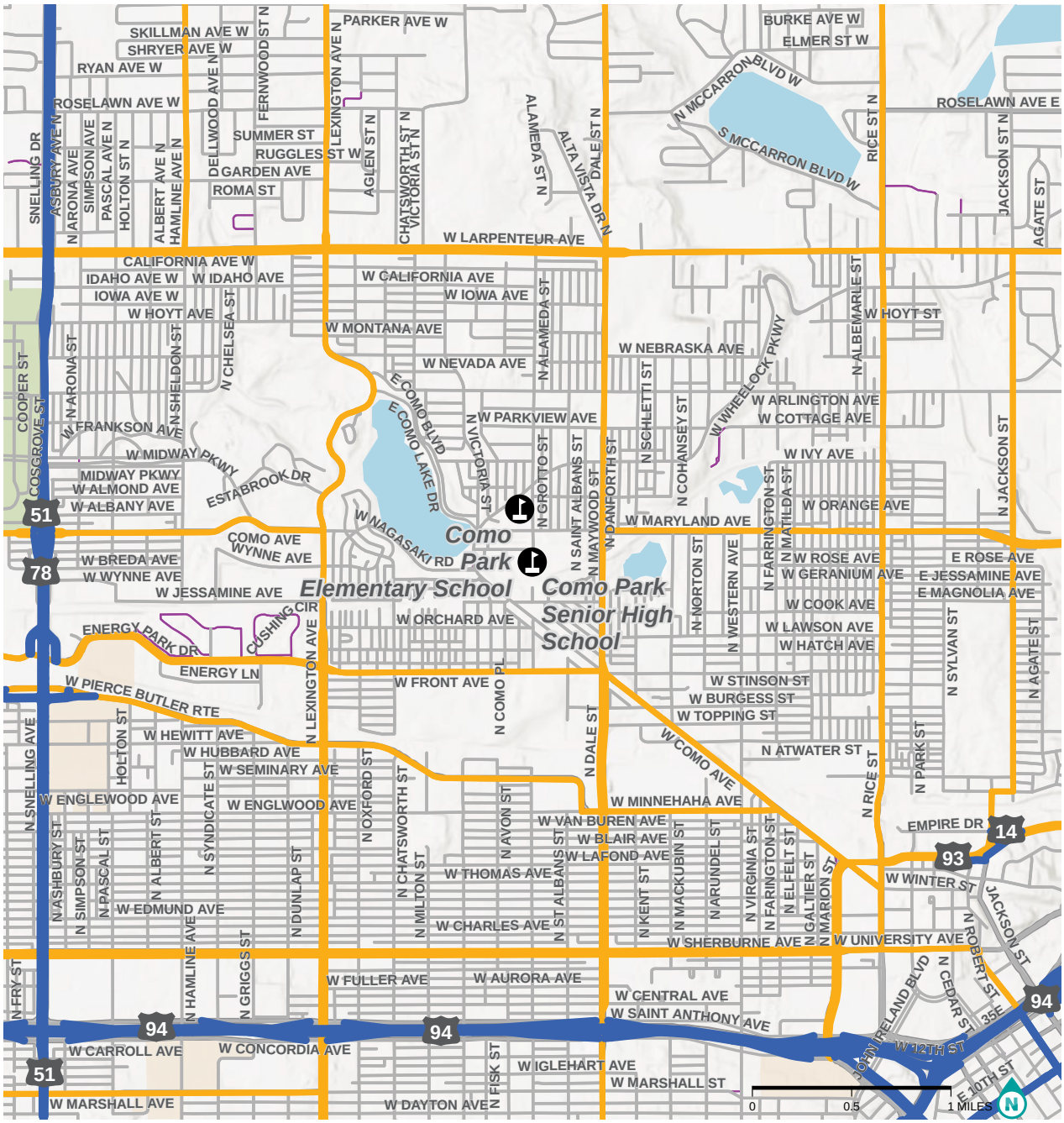
alta

0 0.6 1.2 MILE

N

Refer to Appendix H for a description of the methods used to produce this map.

Appendix B: Road Ownership



ROAD OWNERSHIP

COMO PARK SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PLAN

- Federal
- State
- County
- Tribal
- Local
- Other

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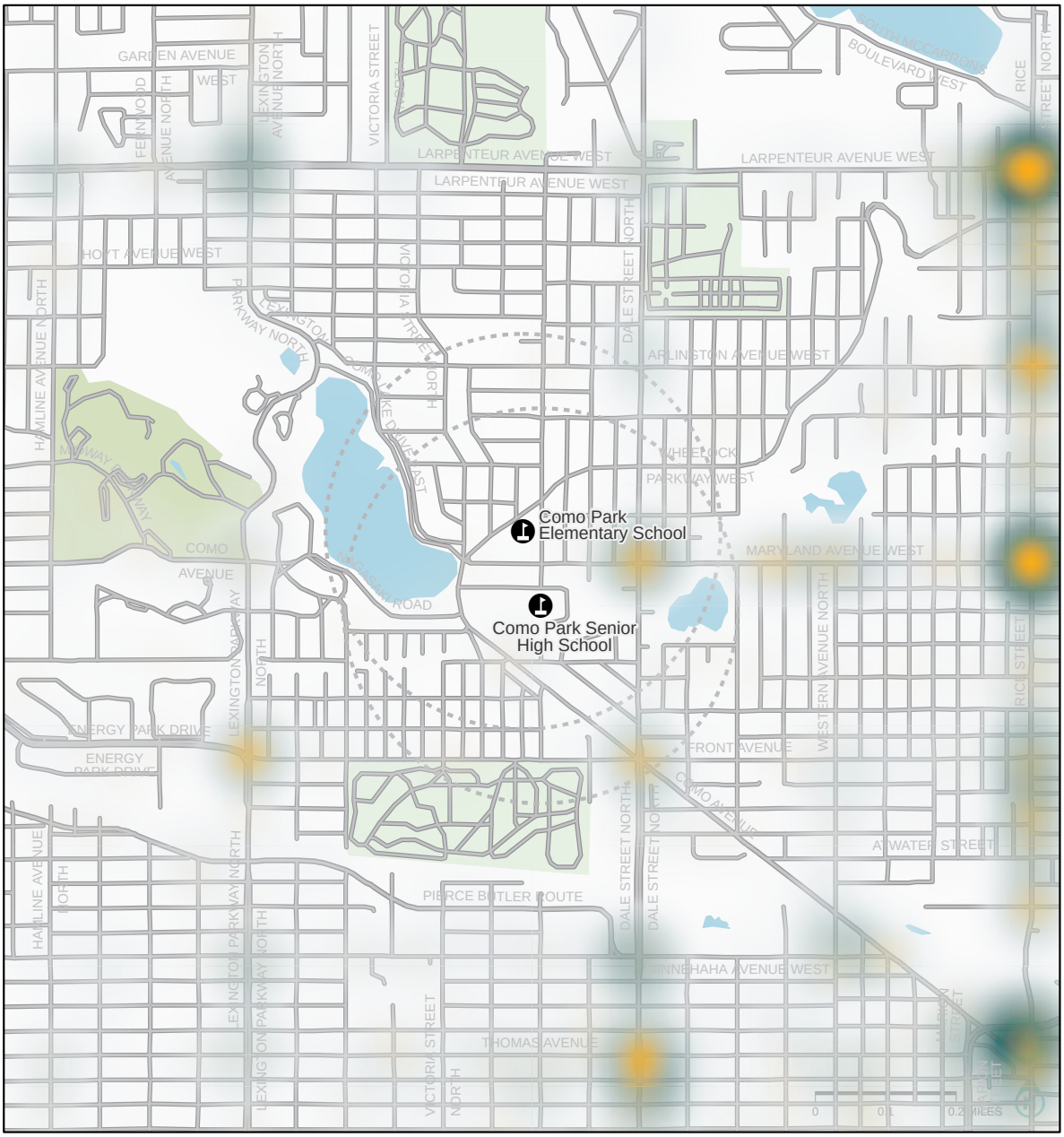
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Refer to Appendix H for a description of the methods used to produce this map.

Appendix C: Crashes by Road User Vulnerability (2008 - 2022)



COLLISIONS BY ROAD USER VULNERABILITY

COMO PARK SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PLAN

15-Minute Walk Buffer

Fewer Vehicle Crashes

More Vehicle Crashes

Fewer Bike/Ped Crashes

More Bike/Ped Crashes

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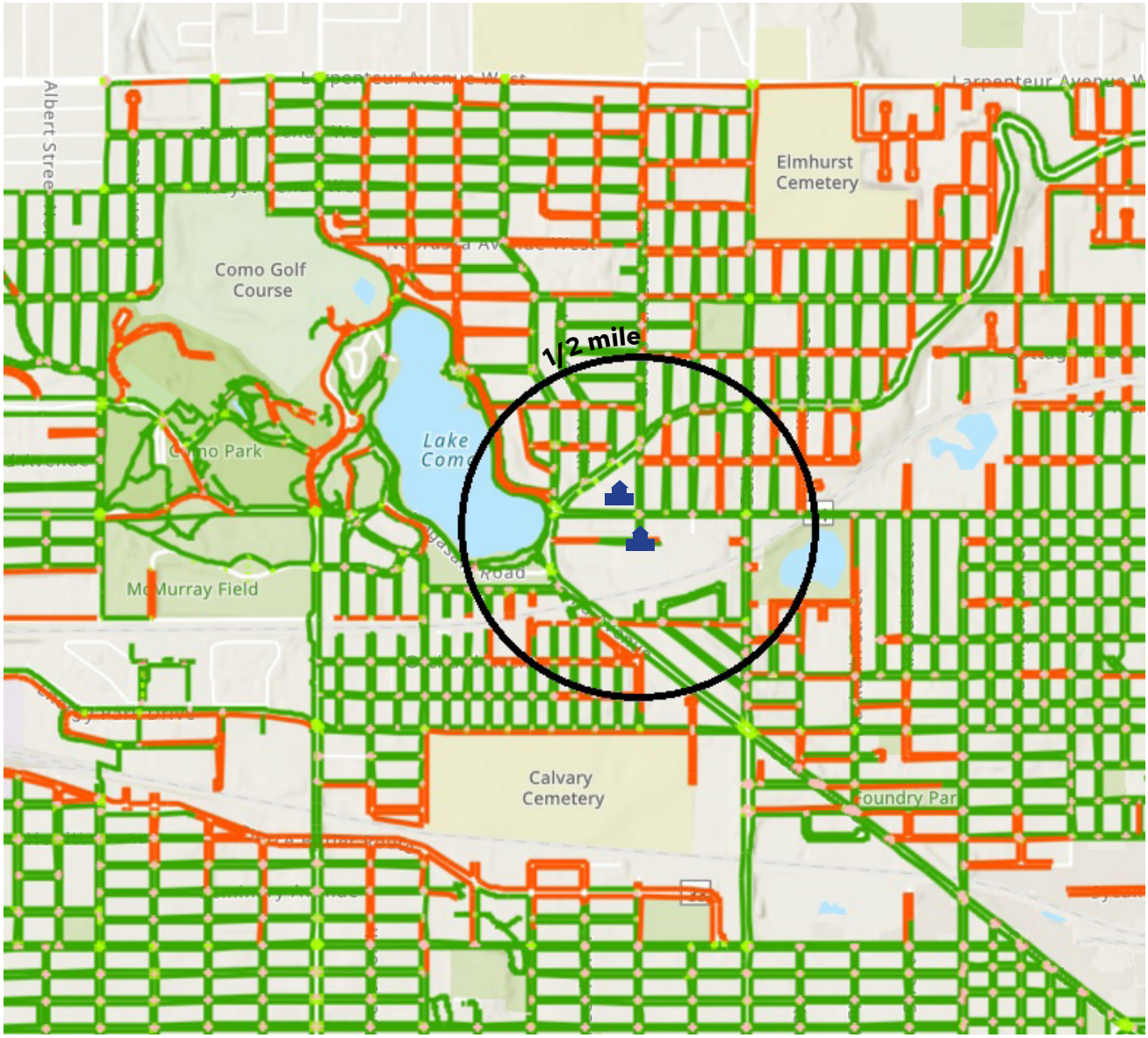
MINNESOTA SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Refer to Appendix H for a description of the methods used to produce this map.

Appendix D: Sidewalk Network

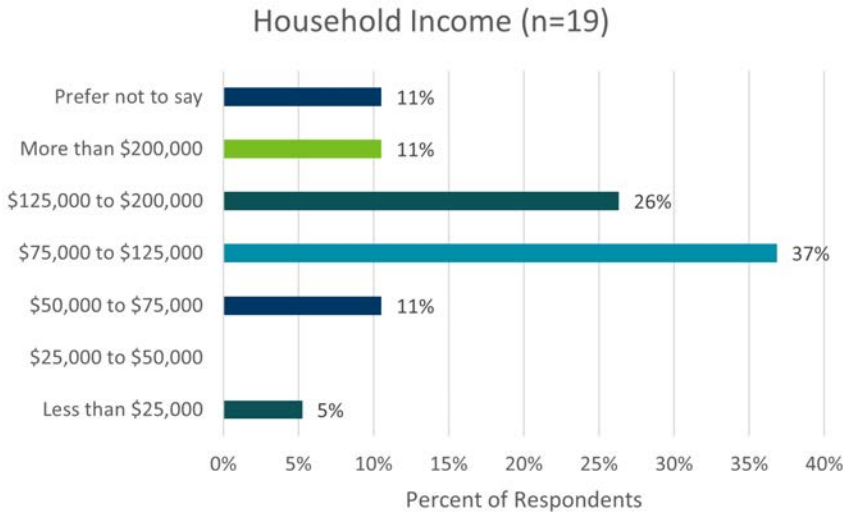


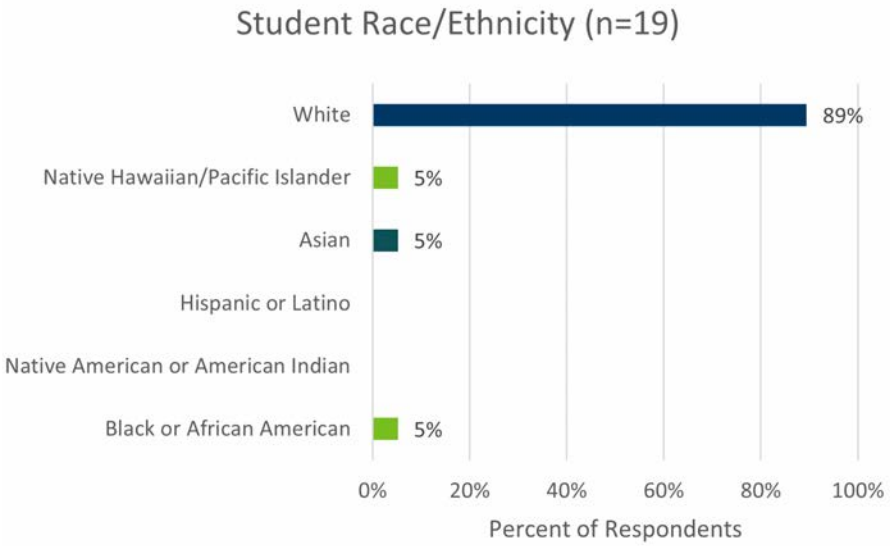
data provided by City of Saint Paul Department of Public Works, August 2023

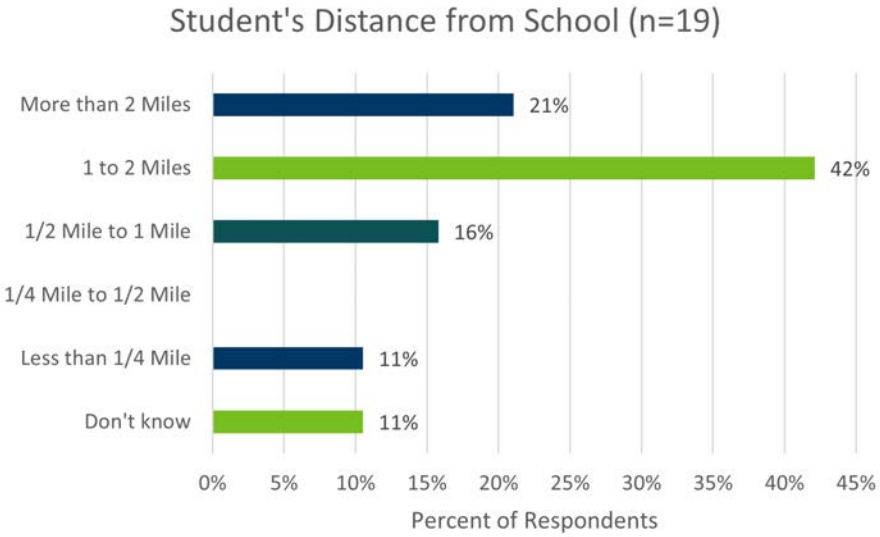
Sidewalk Network
Como Park High School and Como Park Elementary

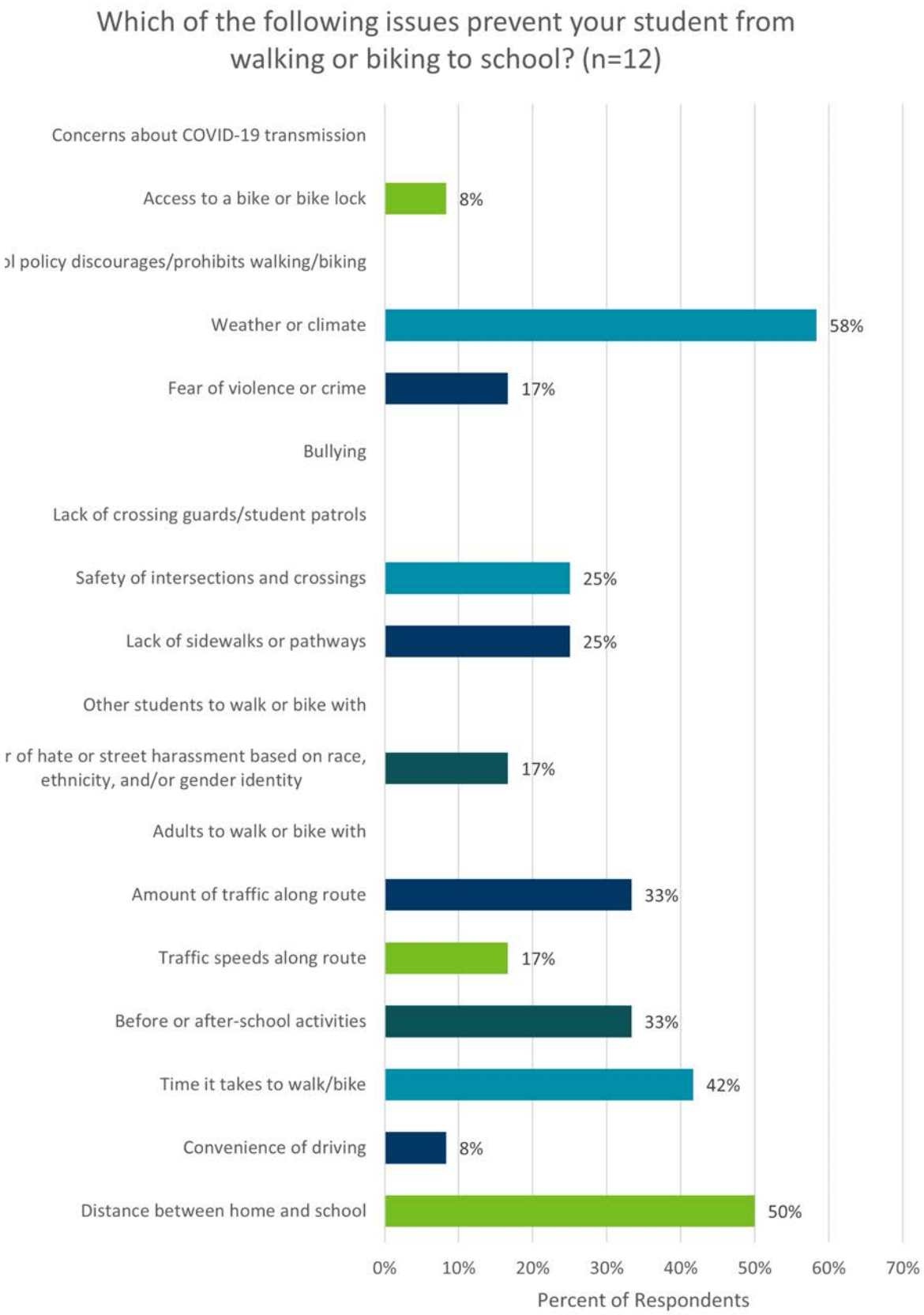
- Sidewalk present
- Sidewalk missing
- School location

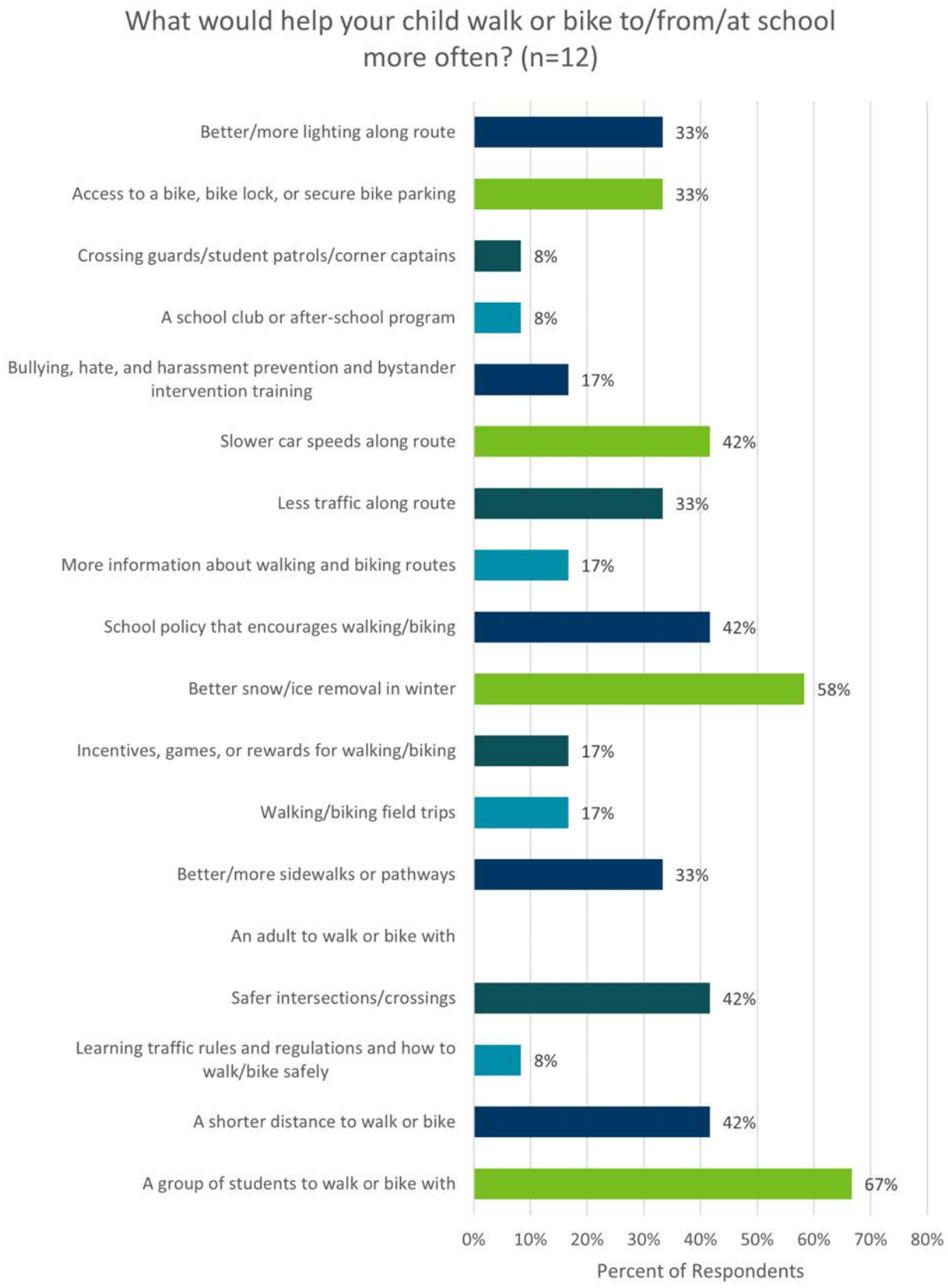
Appendix E: Caregiver Survey Results








Which of the following issues prevent your student from walking or biking to school? (n=12)
Concerns about COVID-19 transmission
Access to a bike or bike lock
8%
ol policy discourages/prohibits walking/biking
Weather or climate
58%
Fear of violence or crime
17%
Bullying
Lack of crossing guards/student patrols
Safety of intersections and crossings
25%
Lack of sidewalks or pathways
25%
Other students to walk or bike with
r of hate or street harassment based on race, ethnicity, and/or gender identity
17%
Adults to walk or bike with
Amount of traffic along route
33%
Traffic speeds along route
17%
Before or after-school activities
33%
Time it takes to walk/bike
42%
Convenience of driving
8%
Distance between home and school
50%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
Percent of Respondents


What would help your child walk or bike to/from/at school more often? (n=12)
Better/more lighting along route
33%
Access to a bike, bike lock, or secure bike parking
33%
Crossing guards/student patrols/corner captains
8%
A school club or after-school program
8%
Bullying, hate, and harassment prevention and bystander intervention training
17%
Slower car speeds along route
42%
Less traffic along route
33%
More information about walking and biking routes
17%
School policy that encourages walking/biking
42%
Better snow/ice removal in winter
58%
Incentives, games, or rewards for walking/biking
17%
Walking/biking field trips
17%
Better/more sidewalks or pathways
33%
An adult to walk or bike with
Safer intersections/crossings
42%
Learning traffic rules and regulations and how to walk/bike safely
8%
A shorter distance to walk or bike
42%
A group of students to walk or bike with
67%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
Percent of Respondents

Appendix F: Project Process and Timeline

Intro Call: SRTS staff and consultants meet with local SRTS team lead(s), review the timeline of the planning process, talk through the responsibilities of the different stakeholders, and identify short-term next steps, such as scheduling the kick-off meeting and finalizing stakeholders for the SRTS team, including local community members and staff from the school(s), city and county governments, and MnDOT.

Kick-off Meeting: the SRTS team, including SRTS staff and local and county participants, reviews the planning process and discusses high-level goals.

Engagement + Data Collection: SRTS staff and consultants work with the schools, non-profits, and the broader community to build awareness of the planning process, solicit input, and identify opportunities for programs and infrastructure improvements.

Rapid Planning Workshop: the SRTS team discusses past efforts around walking and biking in the community, identifies areas of need, and brainstorms possible resources, collaborations, and opportunities to implement new programs and infrastructure improvements.

Technical Meeting: SRTS staff speak with local, county, and MnDOT staff about existing studies, projects, and other opportunities and constraints relating to pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure within the planning area.

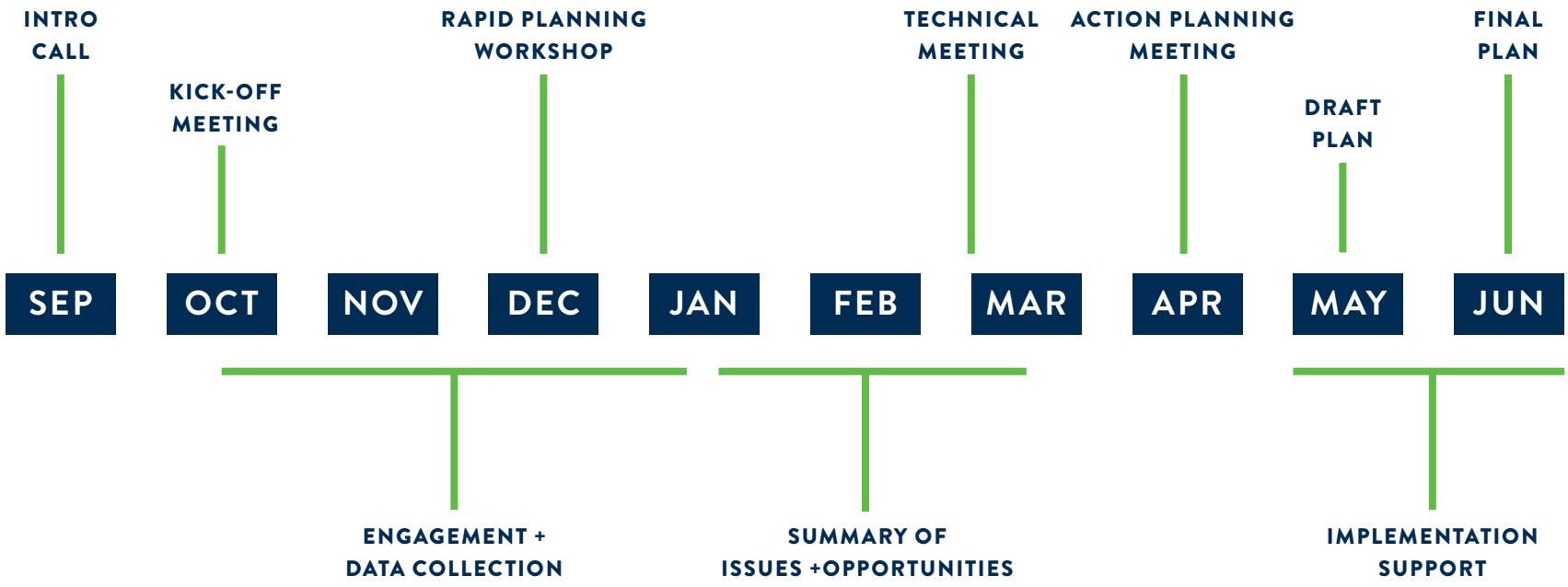
Summary of Issues + Opportunities: building on input from community engagement, data collection, the rapid planning workshop, and the technical meeting, SRTS staff and consultants compile identified program opportunities and locations where infrastructure improvements could support walking and biking to school.

Action Planning Meeting: the SRTS team reviews the summary of issues and opportunities and discusses possible actions to take in response to issues/ opportunities.

Draft Plan: the SRTS team reviews and provides feedback on a draft of the full plan.

Implementation Support: SRTS staff and consultants assist the community with short-term actions, such as designing a concept for a demonstration project to test improvements at a problematic intersection near the school.

Final Plan: the completed plan is published online and in print and is formally adopted to guide future SRTS efforts.



Appendix G: Engagement Summary

INTRODUCTION

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) staff provided community engagement support to collect ideas on walking and biking from the Como Park community. SRTS staff assisted local Como Park Safe Routes to School staff by using multiple strategies such as hosting an interactive engagement website, requesting feedback through caregiver and student surveys, tabling during back to school events at Como Park Elementary and Como Park Senior High (Figure 1), and activities including an interactive trivia board, a roll plot map of the school's neighborhood, and a sticker survey.

The purpose of the engagement was to:

1. Identify walking and biking challenges
2. Understand where people would like to go
3. Provide information about walking and biking safety
4. Build excitement for the Como Park Safe Routes to School plan

Figure 1: Staff talk with a student during a Back to School event at Como Park Elementary.

TABLE 1: ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

DATE	STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	COUNT
October 7, 2022 - January 20, 2023	Interactive map	Interactive online map provided for residents to leave comments and match them to the exact locations.	19
October 7, 2022 - January 20, 2023	Caregiver survey	Survey to identify why families walk and bike and what would help make it safer to walk and bike. The survey was available online as well as in paper-pencil upon request and available in English, Spanish, Somali, and Chinese.	24
November 9, 2022 - January 20, 2022	Student survey	Survey using student-friendly language to help identify why they walk and bike and what would help make it safer to walk and bike. All but one of the respondents to the survey were high school students.	266
September 1, 2022	Pop-up table	Tabling at the Como Park Elementary open house. Activities included an interactive trivia board, a roll plot map of the school's neighborhood, and a sticker survey.	47

DATE	STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	COUNT
September 1, 2022	Pop-up table	Tabling at the Como Park Senior High School open house. Activities included an interactive trivia board, a roll plot map of the school's neighborhood, and a sticker survey.	9
October 11, 2022	Pop-up table	Tabling at the Como Park Senior High School conferences. Activities included a roll plot map of the school's neighborhood and survey.	24
December 2, 2022	Equity scorecard	An equity analysis was completed with local staff during the Rapid Planning Workshop and used to guide engagement strategies.	13
November 18, 2022	Student discussion	Como Park Senior High School student discussion during the Rapid Planning Workshop included questions to understand their successes and challenges with walking and biking in their community.	7

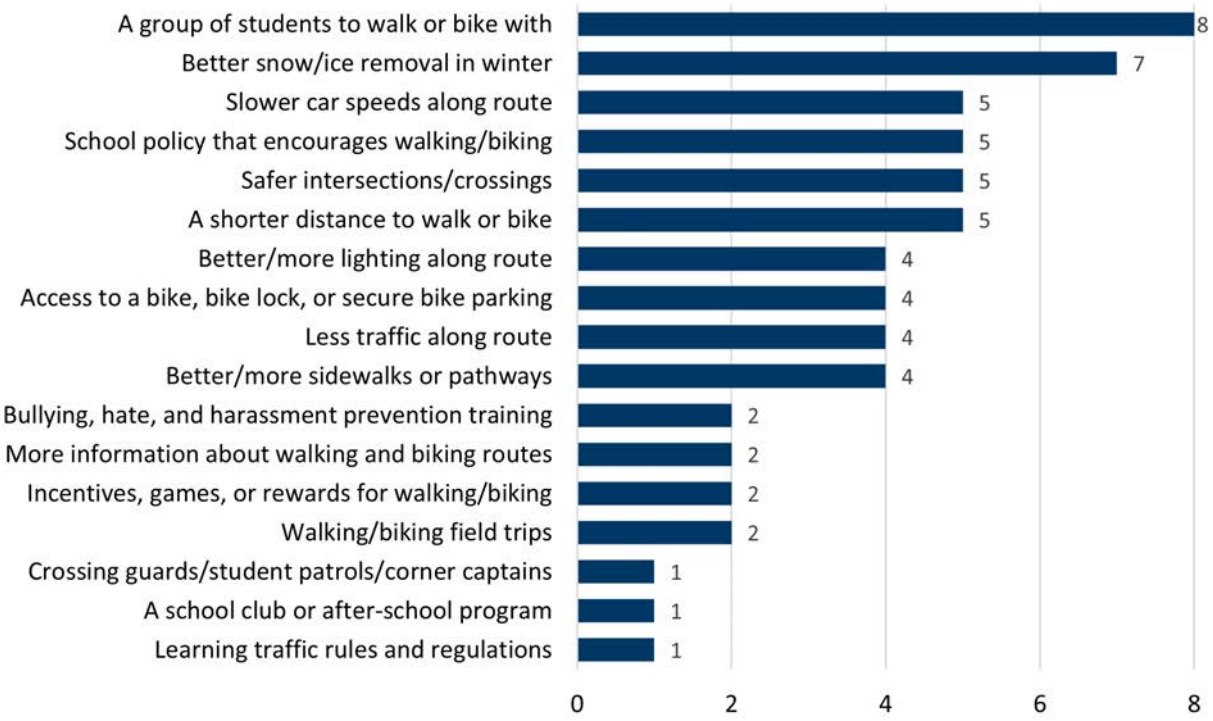
The engagement strategies listed in Table 1 were chosen to make it easy for the Como Park communities to talk to staff and provide feedback for the plan.

ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Key takeaways from engagement include:

- Personal security is a major concern for Como Park students and families and would need to be considered when planning for safe routes to school infrastructure and programs. For example, some families that live on or near Dale Street report experiencing gun violence in their neighborhood and high school students that use the Metro Transit bus and light rail recalled numerous unsafe interactions. A Bus Stop and Walk program could alleviate caregiver concerns about personal security by allowing students to walk in a group to school. The option "A group of students to walk or bike with" was the top selection for the question "What would help your child walk or bike to school more often?" on the caregiver survey (Figure 2).
- Access to bikes should be considered when evaluating SRTS programs and infrastructure improvements. Some students do not have access to a bike. Some students who own bikes note that their bikes have been stolen and bike locks are ineffective at mitigating the issue. A bike rodeo could encourage more students to learn how to ride a bike and could be accompanied by a bike giveaway.
- SRTS programs should consider translations and interpreters to cater to all families. Many caregivers who have limited English proficiency rely on their children to translate when speaking with English-speaking staff.
- The most noted intersection near Como Park Elementary School is the 5-legged intersection at Como Boulevard, Wheelock Parkway, and Maryland Avenue. People say it is a confusing area for drivers and pedestrians and prevents caregivers from feeling comfortable allowing their students to walk and bike to school.

Figure 2: Caregiver responses to survey questions: "What would help your child walk or bike to/from/at school more often? Check all that apply."



EQUITY

Many of the caregivers at the September 1 Open House had limited English proficiency. Caregivers had their children help translate to communicate with English-speaking staff at the open house (Figure 3). Many of these families said that they would be interested in the Bus Stop and Walk program.

Many people said they do not walk or bike to school or do not allow their students to walk or bike because the area feels dangerous. One caregiver did not feel safe having their children playing outside due to the volume of gun-related incidents in her apartment's courtyard and on nearby side streets. When asked if other students reside in the building and experience the same issue, they said they do not know their neighbors due to personal safety concerns. This caregiver indicated that they live near Orange Street and Dale Street.

Multiple students shared that they have been in unsafe situations on the bus and train and wouldn't recommend riding. Instead of having students go out of their way and risk harassment, students suggest implementing designated shuttle buses catered toward students to connect them closer to school. The majority of participants at the Como Park Senior High open house on September 1 were 9th graders starting high school or new transfers and taking the city bus was new to them. The majority of high school student participants at the event said they would ride the city bus or use their family/friend's car to get to school.

PROGRAMS

Many families that attend Como Park Elementary School live in the Saint Anthony Park neighborhood, which is the biggest barrier to their ability to walk or bike to school because it is too far from the school for students to walk or bike at their age. Weather and distance to school were the most frequent answers caregivers gave when asked what issues prevent their child from walking or biking to and from school on the caregiver survey. "Takes too long" and "too far to go" were the top answers in response to

the question, "What keeps you from walking or biking to school?" on the student survey (Figure 4).

Elementary students who live near school have had specialized school bus service since the 2020-2021 school year, which families perceive to be the easiest and safest way to get their children to and from school. High school students, on the other hand, use the city bus. Some high school caregivers say they do not feel comfortable letting their child take the bus alone while some students say taking the city bus is confusing and requires too many transfers to get to school in a reasonable amount of time.

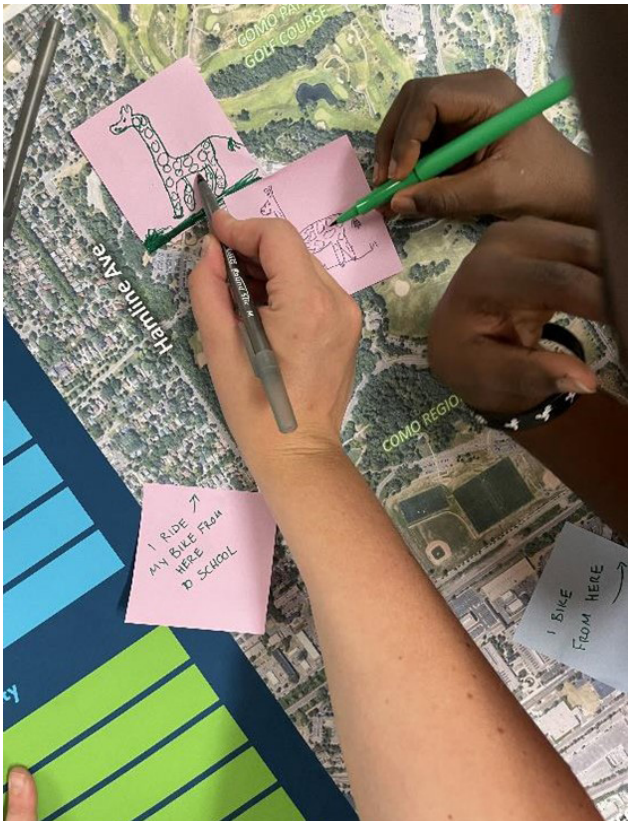
Nearby, Lake Como is an excellent place to encourage students to walk and bike, according to a teacher. However, Saint Paul Public Schools has disallowed school-sponsored activities, in and out of class, to take place in this area without additional safety measures like having a lifeguard supervising students at all times. The teacher mentioned hoping to reopen this channel of dialogue with the school district or find alternative measures to get students to bike in this beautiful space without school sponsorship.

The following programs are suggestions from students, caregivers, and teachers for what they would like to see in order to encourage higher rates of walking and biking to and from school.

BUS DROP AND WALK

Many elementary students who live nearby take the school bus. According to a teacher, school bus service increased for nearby residents during the 2020-2021 school year. While caregivers commented that they would not feel comfortable letting their child walk to school alone, there were some who said they would feel comfortable having students walk in a group. Students answered similar; "Someone to walk with" was the third highest answer by students to the question, "What would make you more likely to walk or bike to school?" (Figure 5). Families may be interested in a program like Bus Drop and Walk where students who take a school bus are dropped off at a designated spot further from school and students to walk in a group with adults the rest of the way.

Figure 3: Students leave feedback at an SRTS table during an open house event at school.



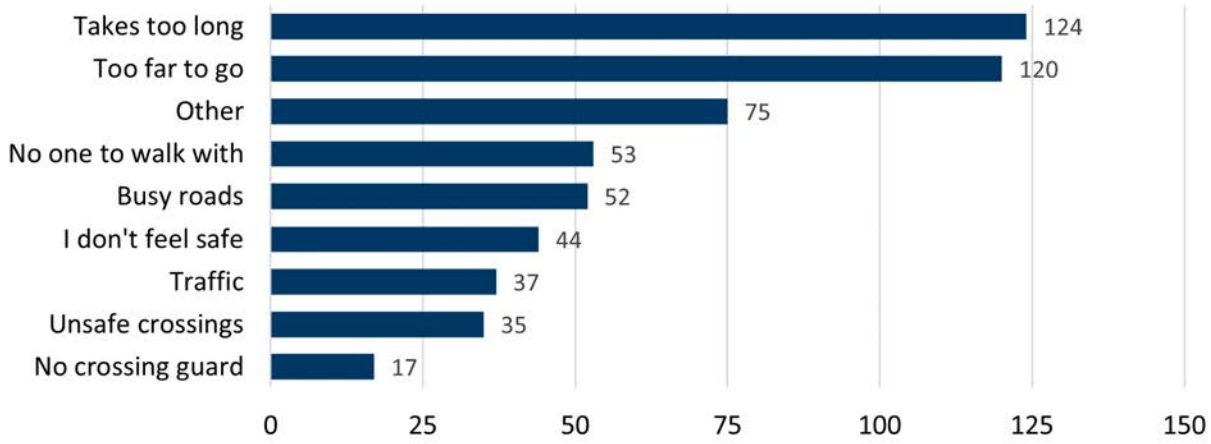
CROSSING GUARDS

One teacher mentioned that there used to be a crossing guard for elementary students crossing Wheelock Parkway. This program does not exist anymore. Re-introducing crossing guards could allow students and caregivers to feel more confident in their abilities to walk or bike to school.

BIKE RODEO

Como Park Elementary School is installing a bike rack out front of the school. There is a large parking lot on the northeast side of the school's property that would provide excellent space for students to practice their biking skills. A handful of students surveyed mentioned that they do

Figure 4: Student responses to the question, "What keeps you from walking or biking to school? Select all that apply."



not know how to ride a bike or do not own a bike, and this event would give them space to practice a new skill and potentially allow for some giveaways. Some Como Park Senior High School students said bike theft is an ongoing issue so bike locks and bike lock training could also be useful. There could also be an opportunity for high school students to help run the bike rodeo to teach some of the skills to elementary students.

WALK AND BIKE TO SCHOOL DAY

The Saint Paul Public School District has hosted a district-wide walk or bike to school event once per year. Participating would encourage families to consider walking and biking as an option to get to school at other times of the school year outside of the one-day event.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Students, caregivers, and teachers noted multiple intersections and sections of roadways that are dangerous for people to cross. These include vehicle traffic and general negligence that they have observed in these areas. The roads surrounding the school are the main points of contention for walkers and bikers. One teacher shared that most students who use the city bus live South of Maryland and North of Front Avenue.

INTERSECTION OF COMO BOULEVARD, WHEELOCK PARKWAY, AND MARYLAND AVENUE

Families say that this is a confusing intersection for drivers, and families mentioned that the confusion leads to driver stress that would create unsafe conditions for their children to bike or walk. Students must also cross Wheelock to access their bus stop, and it is a dangerous barrier. Students shared that better signage for traffic and pedestrians would help.

A high school student who mainly uses Metro Transit to commute to and from school said that the area near Maryland Market, along Maryland Avenue between Western Avenue N and Grotto Street feels unsafe to use alone.

COMO PARK ELEMENTARY PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF ZONE

A teacher explained that the pick-up and drop-off zone at Como Park Elementary is located in the school parking lot at the main doors where students flow in and out. Drivers do not always look before they pull away from the curb and it is dangerous for students to bike and walk in this area, as their height makes it especially difficult for drivers to see them.

DALE STREET

Caregivers say Dale Street is a hub for violence, which is perceived to be gang-related. One caregiver, who lives in an apartment complex on this street said they do not feel comfortable letting their students walk to the bus stop, let alone ride their bikes or walk to school unsupervised. They mentioned that the bus stop recently moved further from their apartment complex, which has made Dale Street an even bigger barrier for them. Another caregiver described Dale Street as the dividing line between the safer western part of the neighborhood and the more unsafe eastern part of the neighborhood.

Locations of concern along Dale Street include:

- Maryland Avenue: The intersection of Maryland Avenue and Dale Street is dangerous to cross for students. One 10th grader wrote, "The intersection between Maryland Avenue W and Dale St. N produces a lot of crashes, and almost always has broken glass on one of the sidewalks."
- Como Avenue: The intersection of Como Avenue and Dale Street was described as wide and busy. Furthermore, there is a hill students must climb near this intersection that makes it difficult to walk or bike to school. A 9th grader wrote, "Walking from Minnehaha Avenue north on Dale street and northwest up Como Avenue is a difficult hill to climb in the winter when it's cold and icy."
- Front Avenue: A teacher advised that the intersection at Front Avenue and Dale Street is a high-traffic area and is also heavily policed.
- Wheelock Parkway: This intersection was noted to be difficult to cross in the student survey.

COMO AVENUE

A caregiver noted that these intersections have high-speed traffic and they would not feel safe having their children bike or walk to school from the southern side of the neighborhood.

- Snelling Avenue: A few students mentioned this intersection in the survey. One 9th grader wrote, "I would have to walk across a bridge designed for cars to move fast, where there is only a thin sidewalk and no guarding from traffic."
- Jessamine Avenue: Many students who walk to and from school share that the train tracks on Jessamine Avenue can be hard to cross.
- Other Intersections: In the student survey, Nagasaki Road (Horton Avenue), Chatsworth Street, Hamline Avenue, and Lexington Parkway were noted as difficult crossings.

Figure 5: Student responses to the question, "What would make you more likely to walk or bike to school? Select all that apply."

MARYLAND AVENUE

Many students use Maryland Avenue on their trips to and from school, whether walking and biking or in a vehicle.

- Dale Street: One caregiver noted that "Dale and Maryland is an extremely dangerous intersection. Cars run red lights a lot. Our neighbor was hit crossing Dale to get to Como High for class five or so years ago." A handful of students also mentioned this intersection as difficult to cross.
- Maryland Market/Marydale Park: One student noted "drug dealing starting at the Maryland supermarket and shooters near that area." Other students mentioned these areas as dangerous.
- Other Intersections: In the student survey, Rice Street, Grotto Street, Arcade Street, Victoria Street, and Arundel Street were noted as difficult crossings.

OTHER AREAS

These areas were mentioned by a handful of students and caregivers.

- Rose Avenue: Rose Avenue is difficult to cross for walkers and bikers. People tend to drive quickly. One student noted that near the ball field at the high school, there is no sidewalk.
- Fulton Street and Grotto Street: Students walk north of Fulton Street near Grotto Street to the city bus stop.
- Arlington Avenue: Students who ride the city bus walk along Arlington Avenue to get to their bus stop. Noted in survey.
- Lexington Parkway: One student wrote, "It has a very thin sidewalk under train tracks." The intersections at Hoyt Avenue and Front Street were also mentioned in the student survey.
- University Avenue: This area is crowded, according to a student when asked about difficult or dangerous areas on their commute to and from school.
- Wheelock Parkway: One 11th grader wrote, "Wheelock Parkway after Marion gets really creepy. Lots of men who catcall and are gross."
- Other: These intersections were mentioned in the student survey as difficult or dangerous: Larpenteur Avenue and Hamline Avenue, Payne Avenue, Greenbrier Street, and Saint Anthony Avenue.

Appendix H: Methods and Data Sources

CRASHES BY ROAD USER VULNERABILITY

Visualized crashes are taken from a crash database that spans from January 2008 to October 2022. Pedestrian- and bike-involved crashes were those events with "Crash Type Description" values of either "Pedalcycle (bike)" or "Pedestrian."

ROAD OWNERSHIP

Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) data from 2021 were visualized on the basis of each road segment's "Ownership" value. These values were consolidated from 26 categories down to six for visualization purposes; these six categories were "Federal," "Tribal," "State," "County," "Local," and "Other."

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT CHARACTERISTICS

School year 2022-2023 enrollment data were downloaded from the Minnesota Department of Education Data Center.

PRIORITY EQUITY AREAS

Data representing priority populations used for this report is from MnDOT's Active Transportation Equity application. This process used a set of data inputs to assign an equity score to half-mile hexagons across the state of Minnesota, for use in awarding Active Transportation Program grants.

Scores range from 0 to 13 out of a possible 15 points (note that no hexagon received 15/15 points). Higher numbers of points indicate areas with greater equity needs that will receive more points in the equity section of grant solicitation.

Input data sets used to create the scores include:

- Life expectancy lower than MN average (CDC U.S. Small-area Life Expectancy Estimates Project 2010-2015)
- Presence of transit (Metropolitan Council, 2019; MnDOT Office of Transit and Active Transportation)
- Presence of pedestrian-generating jobs (On the Map LEHD 2017)
- Presence of schools (Minnesota Department of Education SY 2019-2020)
- Two or more pedestrian crashes within 5 years (DPS Crash Data, 2014-2018)
- Tribal government areas (MnDOT Tribal Government Areas)
- Foreign born population greater than MN average (American Community Survey 2017 5-year estimates)
- More people 17 and under than MN average (American Community Survey 2017 5-year estimates)

(Continued on next page)

- More people 65 and older than MN average (American Community Survey 2017 5-year estimates)
- More people with disabilities than MN average (American Community Survey 2017 5-year estimates)
- More people of color than MN average (American Community Survey 2017 5-year estimates)
- More people with low incomes than MN average (American Community Survey 2017 5-year estimates)
- More people without vehicle access than MN average (American Community Survey 2017 5-year estimates)
- More people who do not speak English than MN average (American Community Survey 2017 5-year estimates)
- More people without high school diplomas than MN average (American Community Survey 2017 5-year estimates)

Appendix I: Bike Parking for Schools

Bicycle parking at schools does more than just provide space for storage during the school day. Depending on design, bicycle parking can actually encourage students and staff to choose to ride their bikes to school. Here are some things to think about when planning bicycle parking at school.

HOW MUCH PARKING SHOULD BE PROVIDED?

The amount of bike parking needed will depend on the capacity of your school, the ages of students, and the number of staff. But remember: be aspirational! Provide parking for the number of students and staff you'd like to see biking! The following are some guidelines:

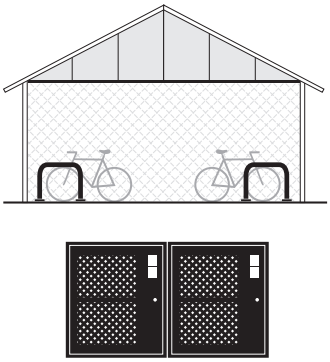
- Aim for 25% of the maximum student capacity of the school.
- Provide additional parking to encourage staff and faculty to bike to school.

For example, if each classroom has a max capacity of 20 students, and there are 10 classrooms, space for 50 bicycles should be provided. Don't forget to add some for faculty and staff!

WHERE SHOULD PARKING BE LOCATED?

Well-located bike parking will be:

- Visible to students, staff, and visitors
- Near the primary school entrance/exit
- Easily accessed without dismounting
- Clear of obstructions which might limit the circulation of users and their bikes
- Easily accessed without making a rider cross bus and car circulation
- Installed on a hard, stable surface that is unaffected by weather
- Often found near kindergarten and daycare entrance, which allows caregivers to conveniently pick up their children on their bikes



CAN MY SCHOOL PROVIDE ADDITIONAL AMENITIES?

Bike parking shelters and lockers provide extra comfort and security for those choosing to ride to school. They're also a great project for a shop class. Both can be very simple in construction and go a long way toward making biking attractive and prioritized!

RECOMMENDED RACKS

INVERTED U

WHEELWELL SECURE

POST & RING

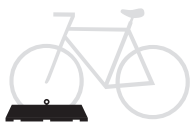
These racks provide two points of contact with the bicycle, accommodate varying styles of bike, allow for at least one wheel to be U-locked, and are intuitive to use!

RACKS TO AVOID

WAVE

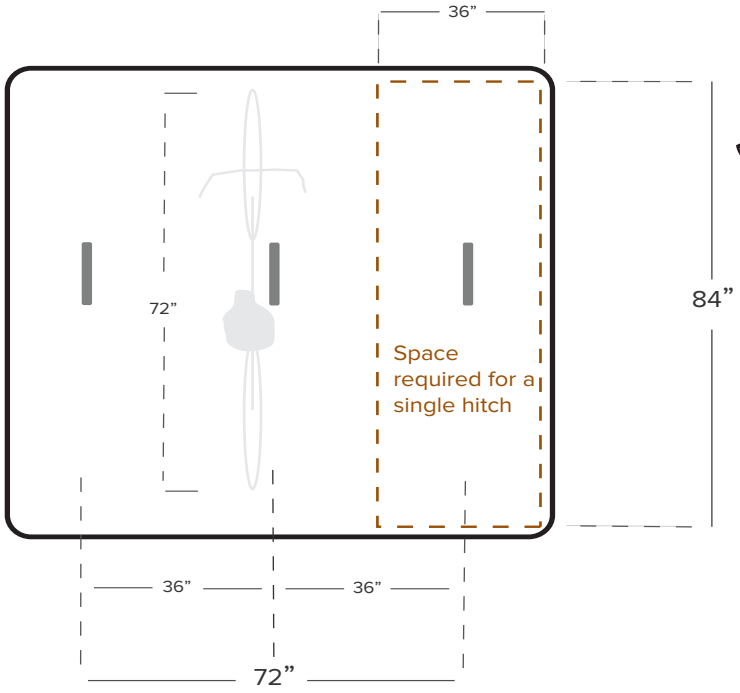
COMB

SPIRAL



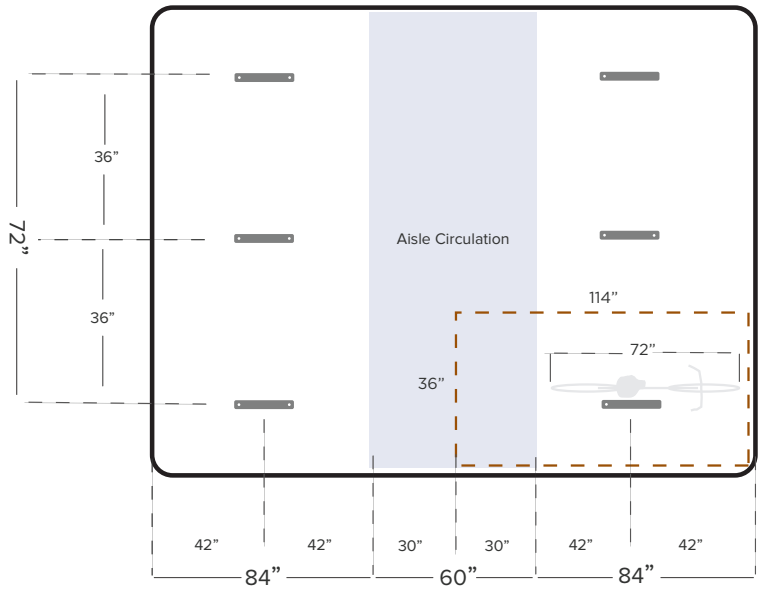
WHEELWELL

SPACE REQUIREMENTS



The space requirements shown here assume a person parking their bike would have open access forward and from behind.

The space requirements shown here assume the area is confined on either side (left and right). Access is located at the top and bottom of the image, requiring a center aisle for circulation.



Space required for a single hitch

MORE INFORMATION

[APBP Essentials of Bike Parking]

[Bike Shelter Development Guide - Portland Public Schools]

RESOURCES FOR EQUIPMENT

[Dero]

[Sportworks]

[Urban Racks]

Graphics courtesy of Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals Essentials of Bike Parking report (2015).

Appendix J: Student Travel Tally

BACKGROUND

This report contains information from Como Park Elementary School and Como Park Senior High School about students' trip to and from school. The data shown here were collected using the in-class Student Travel Tally questionnaire from the National Center for Safe Routes to School.

Results from Como Park Elementary School reflect responses from 17 classrooms and an average of 289 respondents (of the 386 students enrolled in the school). Travel surveys were provided for the morning and afternoon commute over two days in December 2021.

Results from Como Park Senior High School reflect responses from 28 classrooms and an average of 331 respondents (of the 1,164 students enrolled in the school). Travel surveys were provided for the morning and afternoon commute over two days in January 2022.

Figure 1: Results from Como Park Elementary School travel tally.

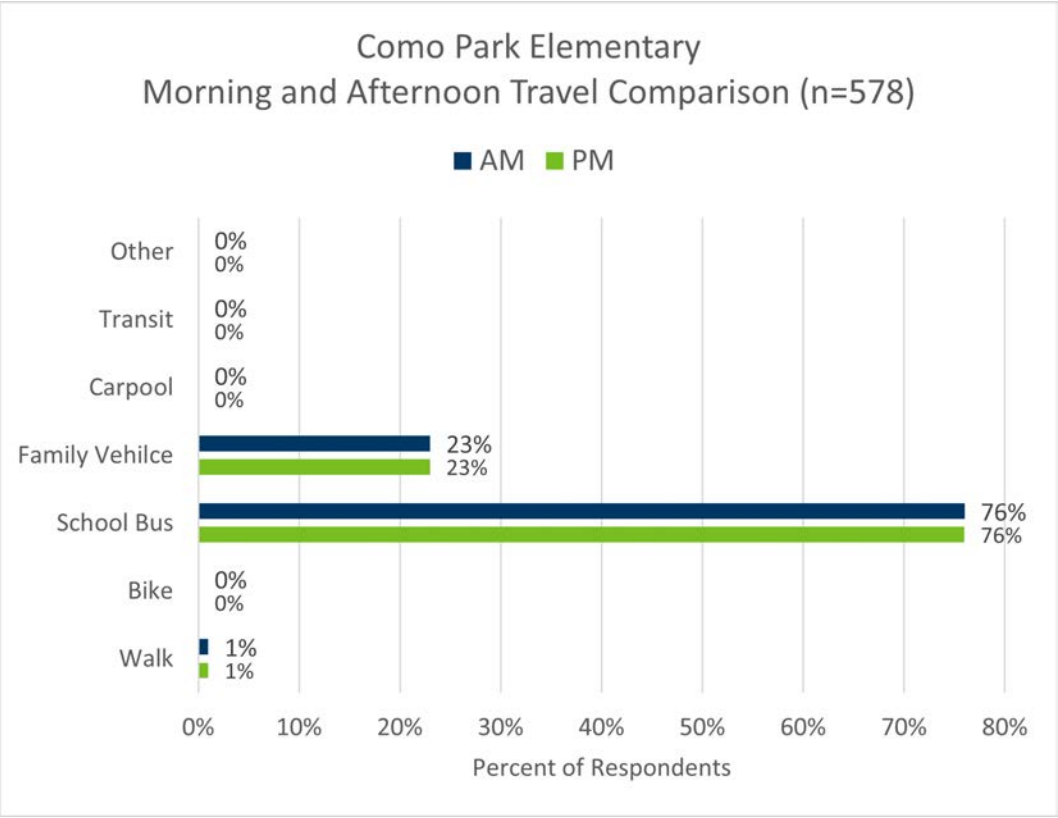
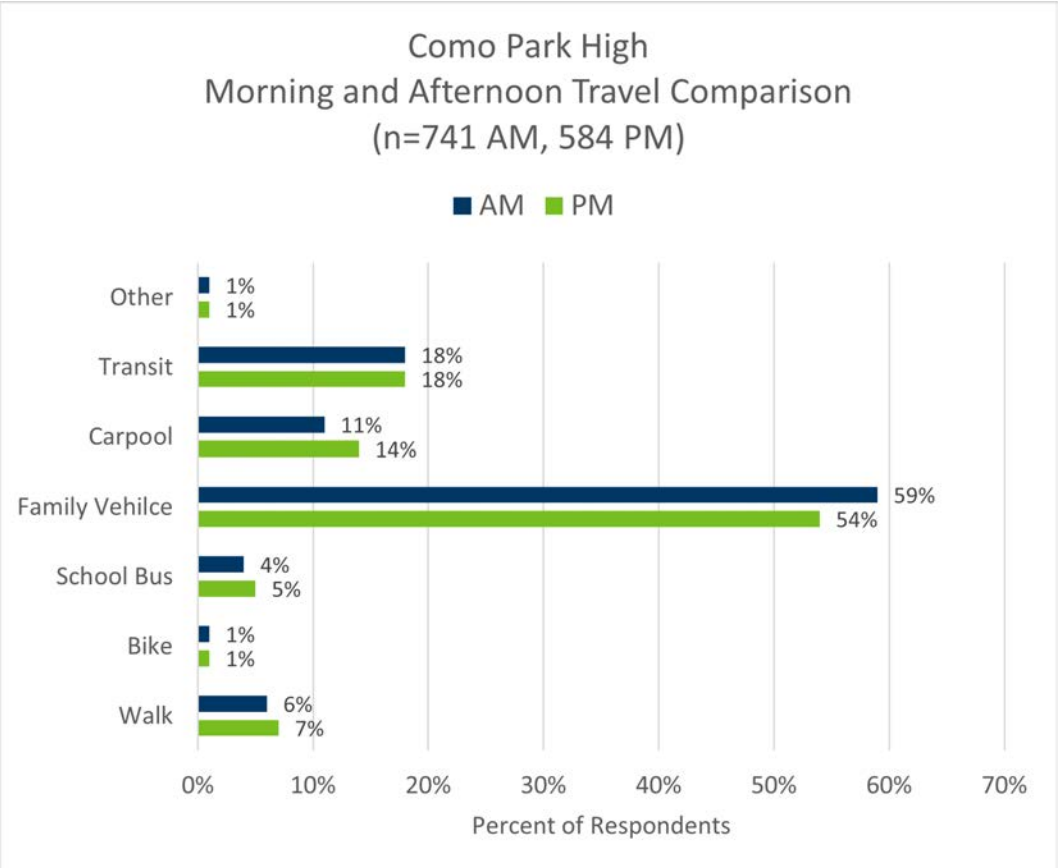


Figure 2: Results from Como Park Senior High School travel tally.



Appendix K: Personal Safety Recommendations

BACKGROUND

Addressing personal safety and street harassment is a top priority for the SPPS SRTS team and stakeholders. Some students, school staff, and other SRTS team members have stated that they feel unsafe taking transit, walking or biking to school due to personal safety concerns, and that this needs to be addressed alongside the traditional traffic safety focus of SRTS.

Addressing the root causes of street harassment and violence is a substantial charge that requires a multi-sector collaborative effort. Developing a strategy to root out street harassment is beyond the scope of this report. Below are recommended strategies the school district or individual schools could take to create safer environments for walking and biking to school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Public safety in SRTS can be applied in a variety of contexts. The following are program options aimed specifically at making students feel comfortable and enthusiastic about the idea of walking and/or biking to school:

- Develop and implement a **personal safety curriculum**
- **Walking school buses and bike trains:** Walking or biking to school in a group and/or with an adult can be safer than students walking alone. Having an adult lead or accompany the group can increase the number of "eyes on the street."
- **Lawn or window sign campaign:** Identify safe places along the route, in support of walking school buses/ bike trains, or to send the message that there are eyes on the street
- **Safe Passage program:** Volunteers, paid workers, and/or neighborhood residents stand at assigned corners to help create a safe environment for walking to school, leading to increased adult presence along the route, more "eyes on the street," and encouragement for students as they walk or bike past. Successful examples include Safe Passage programs in San Francisco's Tenderloin, Seattle's Rainier Beach, and through Chicago Public Schools.
- **Safety analysis and planning:** Hire a consultant or community based organization with expertise in violence prevention to conduct an in-depth safety analysis and create a safe passage action plan.
- **Grassroots neighborhood safety organizing:** Parent and/or community volunteers from individual schools or neighborhoods conduct neighborhood safety audits, develop a neighborhood safety report card, and work together to brainstorm grassroots solutions
- **Partner with neighborhood organizations, local public health, and other community organizations** to leverage access to resources, funding, and staff time to implement programs like Safe Passage or grassroots organizing.

Appendix L: Draft Project Concept

MINNESOTA

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL