

JULY
2025

Finch Elementary School

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ACTION PLAN



Acknowledgments

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Finch Elementary School Safe Routes to School Action Plan

Background

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national movement dedicated to ensuring that it is safer and more accessible for students to walk and bike to school. The goal of SRTS programs is to enhance the safety of school zones and the roads surrounding schools, thereby protecting our youngest and most vulnerable road users. **These programs are collaboratively developed and implemented by schools, community members, local leaders, transportation planners, and public health professionals.** Together, they create and promote activities that encourage students in Kindergarten through 12th grade to walk, bike, and roll to school, fostering healthier lifestyles and reducing traffic congestion around education.

Starting in the fall of 2024, the Atlanta Department of Transportation (ATLDOT) conducted outreach at Finch Elementary School. This Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Action Plan outlines the data and feedback collected through this process, and identifies recommendations to improve safety, reduce barriers, and inspire a culture of walking and biking. By encouraging students to use active transportation, SRTS Atlanta supports healthier lifestyles, reduces traffic congestion, and strengthens neighborhood ties. **The Program uses a Six Es framework, which considers Engagement, Encouragement, Equity, Education, Engineering, and Evaluation.** This report identifies recommendations around each of the Es to support the Finch Elementary community.

Planning Process

Led by ATLDOT, the project team conducted school outreach, including SRTS events, listening sessions, student arrival observations, a walk audit, and a digital survey. The Needs Assessment considered feedback received, as well as the active transportation network, project and plan review, and crash history.

What We Heard from the Finch Community

- ★ Driver behavior on Avon Ave is a top concern
- ★ Missing School Zone signage
- ★ Narrowed, cluttered bike lanes make biking unsafe
- ★ Lighting is absent
- ★ Community wants action and implementation for safety improvements

Key Strategies and Recommendations

The following recommendations are some priorities identified through this process:



EDUCATION

- ▶ Dog bite prevention education
- ▶ Pedestrian and bicycle safety education
- ▶ Traffic safety education including bike rodeos and traffic gardens



ENGAGEMENT

- ▶ Corner Captains or Greeters
- ▶ Responsible Dog Ownership campaign
- ▶ SRTS task force



ENCOURAGEMENT

- ▶ Walking and Biking School Buses and training
- ▶ Walk, Bike, and Roll to School Days
- ▶ Develop and promote a Suggested Routes to School map



ENGINEERING

- ▶ School zone signage on Princess Ave and Avon Ave
- ▶ Lighting on Princess Ave
- ▶ Install sidewalks on Wilmington Ave



EQUITY

- ▶ Partner with pedestrian/bike safety-focused organizations for program materials (bikes, helmets, reflective gear, etc)
- ▶ ATLDOT, APS prioritize Action Plan recommendations from Equity Priority schools such as Finch Elementary



EVALUATION

- ▶ Collect recommended data to track program implementation and outcomes

Next Steps

- ★ Implement high priority maintenance and tactical Engineering projects.
- ★ Plan events and begin implementing recommendations for Encouragement, Education, Engagement, Equity, and Evaluation starting Summer 2025 for 2025-2026 school year.

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Introduction and Background

What is Safe Routes to School?

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a global movement that makes it safer, easier, and more appealing for students of all ages and abilities to walk, bike, or roll to school.

In Atlanta, SRTS is led by the Department of Transportation (ATLDOT) and focuses on creating healthier, more connected communities through active school travel.

SRTS Atlanta works across K–12 schools to improve safety, reduce barriers, and inspire a culture of walking and biking. By encouraging students to use active transportation, the program supports healthier lifestyles, reduces traffic congestion, and strengthens neighborhood ties.



Finch Elementary School student with crossing guard during arrival on the first day of the 2024-2025 school year.

What are the benefits of SRTS?

SRTS helps students and communities thrive. When families choose to walk, bike, or roll to school, the benefits go far beyond the trip itself!



Finch Elementary School students are full of school pride during National Bike and Walk to School Day activities.

- ★ **HEALTHY BODIES, HEALTHY MINDS:**
Walking or biking gets kids moving which supports physical fitness and boosts mental health by reducing stress, improving mood, and enhancing focus.
- ★ **CLEANER AIR:**
Fewer cars mean less pollution around schools, creating healthier environments for students and neighbors alike.
- ★ **SHARPENED FOCUS:**
Students who move their bodies before the bell rings arrive more alert, energized, and ready to learn.
- ★ **CONFIDENT, INDEPENDENT KIDS:**
Navigating the trip to school, especially with a friend or group, builds confidence, responsibility, and real-world awareness.
- ★ **STRONGER COMMUNITIES:**
Walking and biking create opportunities to meet neighbors, share the journey, and provide a sense of belonging.
- ★ **SAFER STREETS FOR EVERYONE:**
Less congestion and slower speeds around schools protect not only students, but drivers, families, and the whole community.

What is the Six E's Framework?

By incorporating all of the elements of the Six E's framework, SRTS aims to foster a healthier, more active lifestyle for students and to contribute to the development of safer, more connected communities. Enhanced safety measures and educational programs not only improve the physical health and wellbeing of students but also to build a sense of community and environmental stewardship.



ENGAGEMENT

Meaningfully involve students, families, teachers, school leaders, and community organizations.



ENCOURAGEMENT

Host events and programs that make walking and biking fun and inviting.



EQUITY

Make sure every student, regardless of background, ability, or identity, can benefit from safe, healthy travel options.



EDUCATION

Equip students and families with the skills they need to travel safely whether walking, rolling, biking, or taking transit.



ENGINEERING

Design safer streets and crossings that protect students from traffic and create a welcoming environment.



EVALUATION

Measure what's working, learn what's not, and adjust to better serve the community.

History

SRTS originated in Denmark in the 1970s in response to concerns about child pedestrian and bicyclist safety. The program gained international traction in the 1990s, with notable implementations in the United Kingdom, Canada, and New York City. In 2005, the United States Congress recognized the importance of SRTS by passing the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU). A year later, the National Center for Safe Routes to School was created to oversee and coordinate these efforts. By 2012, SRTS funding was expanded to include other walking and cycling initiatives. The impact of these efforts became evident by 2015 when over 17,400 schools across all 50 states had participated in the program. Today, SRTS continues to encourage and facilitate safer, healthier commutes for children, leading to increases in walking and biking to and from school.

Atlanta Safe Routes to School

Building on the efforts of the Safe Routes to School program, the Atlanta Department of Transportation is integrating SRTS initiatives within the city, aligning with Atlanta's Vision Zero goal of eliminating vehicle-related traffic and pedestrian deaths and serious injuries.

Vision Zero

Atlanta's Vision Zero initiative, led by ATLDOT, seeks to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries through safer street design and citywide speed management, including a default 25 mph speed limit since April 2020.

High-Priority Schools

ATLDOT is focusing SRTS programming on Communities of Concern, which are equity priority areas traditionally underserved in transportation investments and disproportionately affected by pedestrian and bicyclist injuries.

Project Timeline



Action Planning Process

What is the purpose of the SRTS Action Plan?

The SRTS Action Plan is a clear, community-driven roadmap for improving how students and guardians safely walk, bike, and roll to Finch Elementary. Developed through robust engagement, data analysis, and a review of past planning efforts, the plan outlines actionable recommendations to address real safety challenges and support healthier, more accessible school commutes.

This plan is not just a document – it's a call to partnership. It's designed to guide ATLDOT, school leaders, local agencies, and community members in working together to create safer streets, stronger connections, and a school environment where active transportation is safe, supported, and celebrated.

Who was involved?

The Action Plan was shaped through ongoing collaboration with Finch's faculty and staff, guardians, students, and the broader community. The full engagement process is outlined in the Community Engagement chapter.



This plan is not just a document – it's a call to partnership.

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Existing Conditions

School Overview

- ★ Finch Elementary School is located in southwest Atlanta and serves the neighborhoods of Bush Mountain and Oakland City.
- ★ Finch is a Title 1 school receiving federal funding to provide additional support based on student economic needs.
- ★ Finch is part of the Carver Cluster and situated just west of the southside BeltLine trail.

Demographics

Finch Elementary has an enrollment of 200+ students and a racial make-up of 97% Black, 2% Hispanic, and 1% two or more races.

There are four census tracts (tracts 61, 62, 66.01, and 66.02) intersecting some portion of both the attendance zone and the half-mile general walking radius of

Finch Elementary School. The percentage of households with no vehicles in this set of tracts ranges from 7.1% to 18% according to American Community Survey 2019–2023 five-year summary data. On average, 12.9% of households in census tracts within one-half mile of Finch Elementary School have no access to vehicles.



200
students enrolled



~90%
(or ~186 students) reside
within the school's Parent
Responsibility Zone



7–18%
of households in census
tracts near the school don't
have access to vehicles



School Travel

School Arrival and Dismissal

Students at Finch Elementary School arrive between 7:15 AM and 7:45 AM. School bus riders are dropped off at the Lee Street entrance of the school. Car riders who arrive between 7:15 AM and 7:45 AM should be dropped in the parent drop-off area at the main entrance on Avon Avenue. School dismissal begins at 2:15 PM. This process coordinates walkers, bus riders, and car riders in pursuit of a safe and efficient arrival and dismissal at the school.

Crossing Guard Locations

The crossing guard is stationed at the intersection of Avon Avenue and Princess Street. This post is responsible for ensuring the safety of student pedestrians crossing Princess Street in both directions, as well as Avon Avenue.

Transportation Network

Nearby Road Network

- ★ Finch Elementary School is surrounded by US 29/SR-14/Lee Street to the east, Avon Avenue SW to the north, Princess Avenue to the west, and Oakland Lane to the south. Oakland Drive is a key north-south connecting road from Avon Avenue to Oakland Lane and Oakland City Park.
- ★ US 29/SR 14/Lee Street is a minor arterial roadway, with five lanes—three traveling southbound and two traveling northbound in the vicinity of Finch Elementary. However, Lee Street is the edge of the school attendance zone, and therefore students would not be expected to cross this street from their homes to attend Finch Elementary.

- ★ Avon Avenue is a local street with two lanes, as well as bike lanes that sometimes serve as parking areas and centerlines.
- ★ Princess Avenue is a two-lane residential, local street without centerlines.

- ★ Oakland Drive is a wide, two-lane residential, local street without centerlines.
- ★ On-street parking was observed within the bicycle lanes along Avon Avenue, as well as along Princess Avenue, Oakland Lane, and Oakland Drive.

Nearby Transit

- ★ MARTA bus route 81 operates in the neighborhood north of Finch Elementary, traveling along Almont Drive and Wyland Drive, crossing over Avon Avenue, and then traveling further south on Epworth Street.

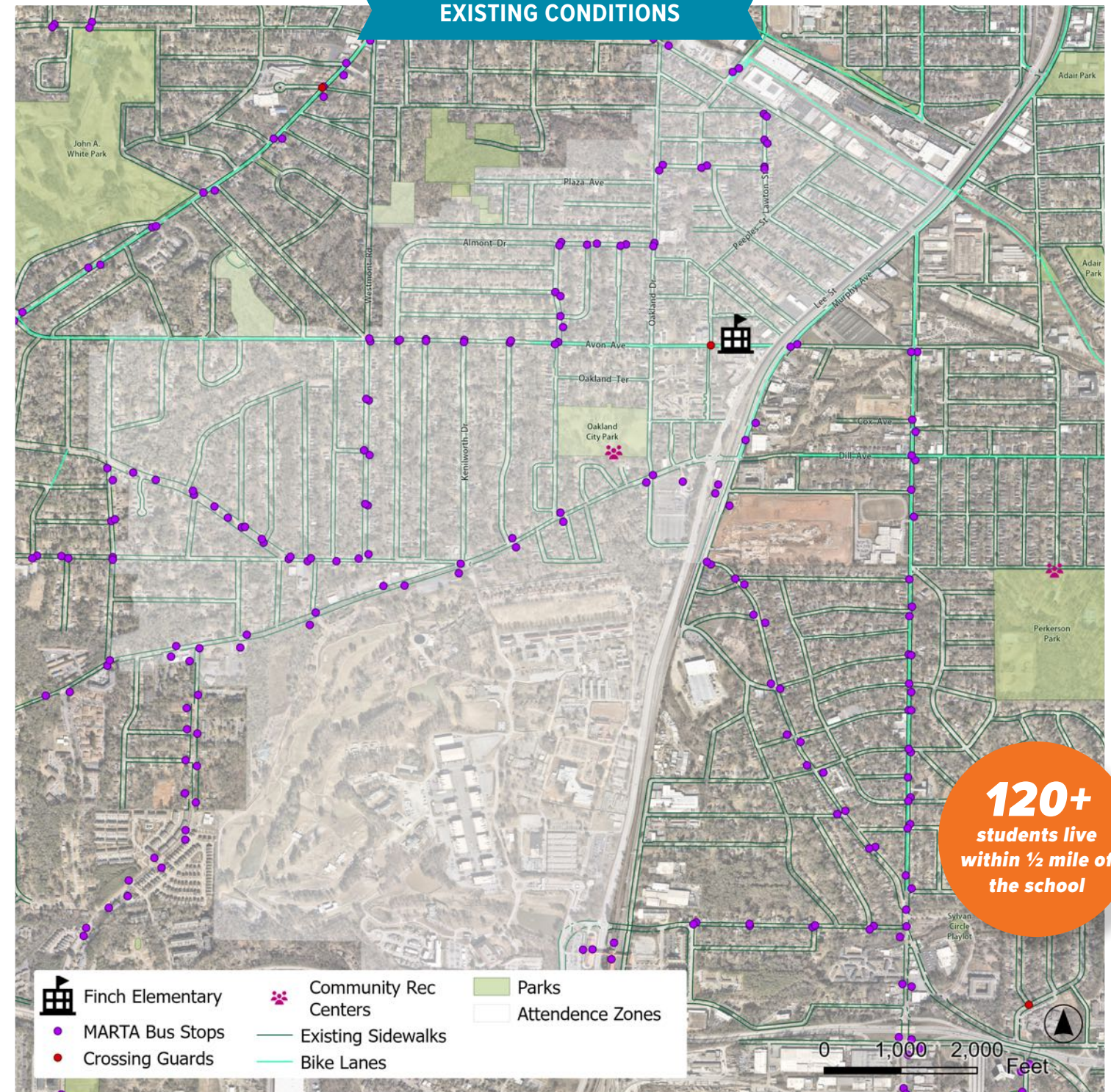
- ★ MARTA bus routes 83 and 162 travel along Campellton Road another block south of Finch Elementary, eventually reaching the Oakland City MARTA train station.

Active Transportation Network

- ★ There are bicycle lanes along Avon Avenue from Lee Street to approximately 200 feet west of Epworth Street.
- ★ There is no sidewalk on the northbound side of Lee Street, though there are pedestrian crossings to the northbound (east) side of the roadway at the Avon Avenue intersection. There is a wide sidewalk on the southbound/west side of Lee Street.
- ★ There is sidewalk on both sides of Avon Avenue with a grass landscaped buffer on both sides of the street west of the intersection with Princess Avenue.

- ★ There is a sidewalk on the northbound/east side of Princess Street, and incomplete sidewalk on the southbound/west side of Princess Street.
- ★ There is sidewalk on both sides of Oakland Lane, with on-street parking.
- ★ There is sidewalk on both sides of Oakland Drive, some on-street parking, and a grass landscaped buffer on both sides of the street.

EXISTING CONDITIONS



School Zone Limits

- ★ School zone signs are often obscured by vegetation or placed behind utility poles. Church signs appeared more prominent than school signs.
- ★ Markings such as crosswalks and school zone indicators are faded or missing in front of the school.
- ★ School zone signs display incorrect operational times.

Crash Analysis

The project team analyzed crashes within 100 feet of the attendance zone for Finch Elementary School, and also mapped crashes within the immediate vicinity of the school. Over the past 10 years, from 2014 to 2023, there were 2,276 crashes within this area. There were six bicycle-related and 60 pedestrian-related crashes in the dataset.

As is the pattern with crashes across Georgia, **bicycle-related crashes and pedestrian-related crashes are disproportionately more likely to involve serious injuries or deaths.** Serious injuries or deaths occurred in 13% of pedestrian-related crashes and only 2% of other crashes near Finch Elementary School. There were no bicycle or pedestrian crashes located along roadways directly adjacent to Finch Elementary school in the past 10 years.

CRASHES WITHIN 100 FEET OF THE SCHOOL'S ATTENDANCE BOUNDARY, 2014-2023



FATAL AND SERIOUS INJURY CRASHES NEAR THE SCHOOL, 2014-2023



2,276
total crashes in the school's immediate vicinity from 2014 to 2023

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND POTENTIAL BENEFITS



Recommendations are based on the AASHTOWare Numetric platform Safety Analysis of intersections near the school. Benefit information comes from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) estimation tool. *Benefits are estimated only for lighting improvements and lane reconfiguration, as traffic signal improvements is not an option in the GDOT tool.

Project and Plan Review

To support the development of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Action Plan, the project team conducted a comprehensive review of relevant planning efforts.

This review identified infrastructure projects, safety strategies, and planning priorities that have implications for SRTS efforts. The plans reviewed included:

- ★ Atlanta Transportation Plan (ATP)
- ★ Cycle Atlanta Plans (1.0 and 2.0)
- ★ Neighborhood and Small Area Plans
- ★ Corridor and BeltLine Subarea Plans
- ★ Atlanta City Design
- ★ Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Plans
- ★ ATLDOT Capital Delivery Projects
- ★ MARTA and GDOT infrastructure initiatives
- ★ Vision Zero Atlanta strategy



Relevant Capital Projects

Several capital projects already planned by the city overlap with the recommendations of this Action Plan. The following plans and programs included relevant projects:

- ★ **Citywide ADA Accessibility Improvements (2027–2028):** Construction of spot upgrades, enhanced pedestrian connectivity to transit at approximately 32 locations and ADA improvements at predetermined locations around Atlanta.
- ★ **Lee Street Multipurpose Trail (2028–2030):** Project which includes pedestrian crossing improvements and installation of a shared-use path along Lee St between the West End and Lakewood-Fort McPherson MARTA Stations.

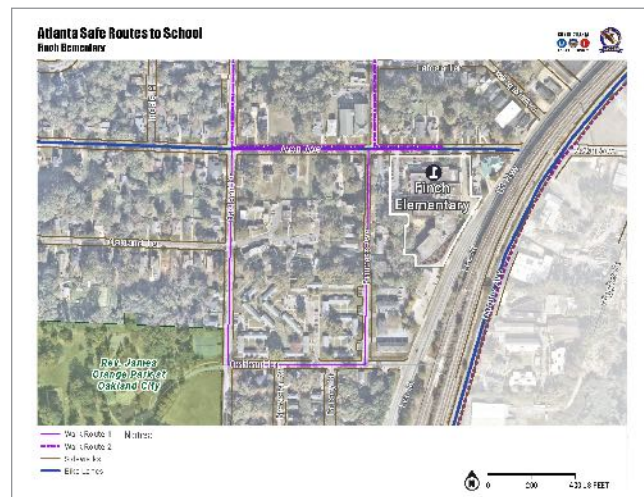
Vision Zero-Related Opportunities

- ★ Document and track projects that support Vision Zero, identify successful practices that can be included in future projects, and publish successes or challenges learned.
- ★ Identify streets with high bicycle level-of-stress that are located on the Combined Risk Network and prioritize bicycle network improvements.
- ★ Develop and implement community outreach materials to educate, inform, and incorporate community input on Vision Zero projects.
- ★ Prioritize Vision Zero investments (i.e. capital projects, transportation infrastructure and maintenance, and safer street designs) in low-income communities, communities of color, immigrant communities, and communities with fewer transportation options.
- ★ Develop processes and funding to support community-based organization participation in the development of safety efforts.
- ★ Conduct walking and bicycling safety education sessions at elementary schools.
- ★ Conduct bike ride events (i.e., bike buses, bike trains) to foster bicycle commuting, recreation, and engagement around safety.
- ★ Work with safety groups such as Atlanta Students Advocating for Pedestrians and Atlanta Public Schools to develop youth-focused programming for Vision Zero.

Walk Audit

Understanding how students travel to and from Finch Elementary meant seeing the journey through their eyes. To build a full picture of the challenges and opportunities, the project team took a holistic approach by combining on-the-ground student arrival observations, experiential walk audits, and a digital survey.

- ★ **Student Arrival Observation:** To capture how students arrive at school, the project team partnered with school administrators, staff, and the school crossing guard. Observers were stationed at key entry points to track arrival patterns, safety concerns, and student interactions with the environment.
- ★ **Experiential Walk Audit:** Community members joined the project team for a hands-on walk audit of the school’s surrounding streets. Split into two groups, participants walked **Route One** (This route began on Princess Avenue, continued along Oakland Lane and Oakland Drive, and wrapped up at Avon Avenue) and **Route Two** (Starting again on Princess Avenue, this path followed Wilmington Avenue and Oakland Drive before also connecting to Avon Avenue). Before leaving, attendees reviewed route maps and safety indicators. Afterward, the group debriefed to identify hazards and brainstorm improvements. Participants included ATLDOT’s SRTS project team, APS staff, Finch educators, parks and recreation personnel, and parents/guardians.
- ★ **Digital Survey:** To promote broad input, a geospatial survey invited families and community members to mark safety concerns on an interactive map of the school zone. The tool gave a voice to those unable to attend in person and gathered four responses from parents, guardians, staff, and neighbors.

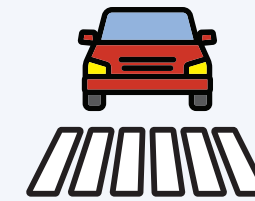


A full summary of the walk audit is included in the appendix.

Left: Map used for walk audit. Right: Photo taken during experiential walk audit.

Needs Assessment

In summary, key issues for Finch Elementary include:



TRAFFIC FLOW AND SAFETY ISSUES



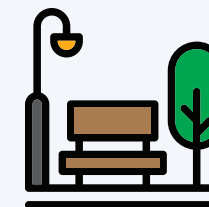
INSUFFICIENT/ INCONSISTENT SIGNAGE AND MARKINGS



PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLIST INFRASTRUCTURE GAPS



LIGHTING, SURVEILLANCE, AND SECURITY ISSUES



COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY AND PERCEPTION

3

Community Engagement



Community engagement is the heart of this plan.

From the very beginning, the team recognized that the people who make up the Finch school community—teachers, staff, parents and guardians, students, and local partners—are the ones who best understand the real challenges students face getting to and from school. Their insights, lived experiences, and ideas shaped every step of this process.

The sections that follow highlight the many ways we listened to and learned from Finch's community. We heard stories of barriers and concerns, but also visions for a safer, more supportive journey to school. These conversations revealed not only the obstacles but also the possibilities.

Thank you to everyone who took time to participate. Your voices made this plan stronger, more grounded, and more meaningful. We heard you, and this plan reflects your hopes for safer routes and a more connected school community.



Finch Elementary School faculty and staff joined the SRTS project team to conduct a site assessment of school arrival.

Listening Session Overview

The project team conducted a listening session to provide the Finch community with a meaningful opportunity to share their experiences and concerns. This session helped surface real, on-the-ground challenges students face when traveling to and from school.

The listening session lasted one hour and included a brief overview of the Atlanta SRTS program, the purpose of the Action Plan, and a facilitated discussion. The project team used Mentimeter, an interactive digital tool, to guide conversations and provide a private way for participants to contribute—especially those who preferred not to speak aloud.

After the session, the project team remained available with a detailed map of the school zone. This allowed participants to point out specific safety concerns or trouble spots on their routes in a more personalized, one-on-one setting. In addition to attending the sessions, participants were invited to:

- ★ Join the upcoming walk audit
- ★ Complete the online survey
- ★ Share feedback via email

The insights gathered from these sessions informed key aspects of this plan and are summarized in the What We Heard section of this chapter. Detailed notes from the listening session can be found in the appendix.

LISTENING SESSION – FEBRUARY 12, 2025

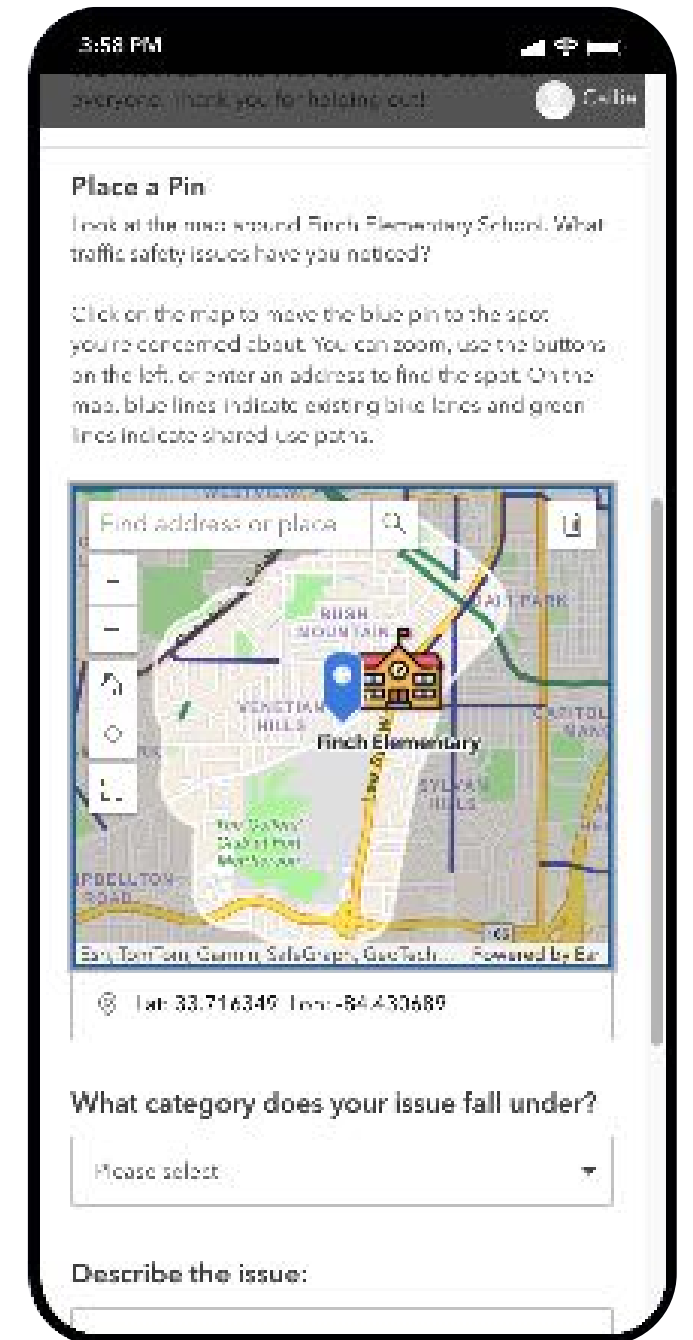
Hosted in a hybrid format both in the school’s media center and on Zoom, this session welcomed parents and guardians and a group of students. Guardians shared their students’ travel concerns, while students offered candid stories and showed enthusiasm for walking, biking, and other active ways to get to school.



Right: The Atlanta SRTS team provided print and digital outreach materials to promote engagement activities to guardians.

Online Survey

To broaden community input beyond those able to participate in person, a geospatial digital survey was developed for stakeholders of Finch Elementary School. This interactive tool allowed respondents to identify and comment on specific areas of concern within the school’s parent responsibility zone using an online map. The survey proved to be a convenient and accessible method for collecting feedback from parents, guardians, staff, and community members who could not attend in person. In total, four responses were received.



Mobile view of the SRTS digital survey for Finch Elementary School.

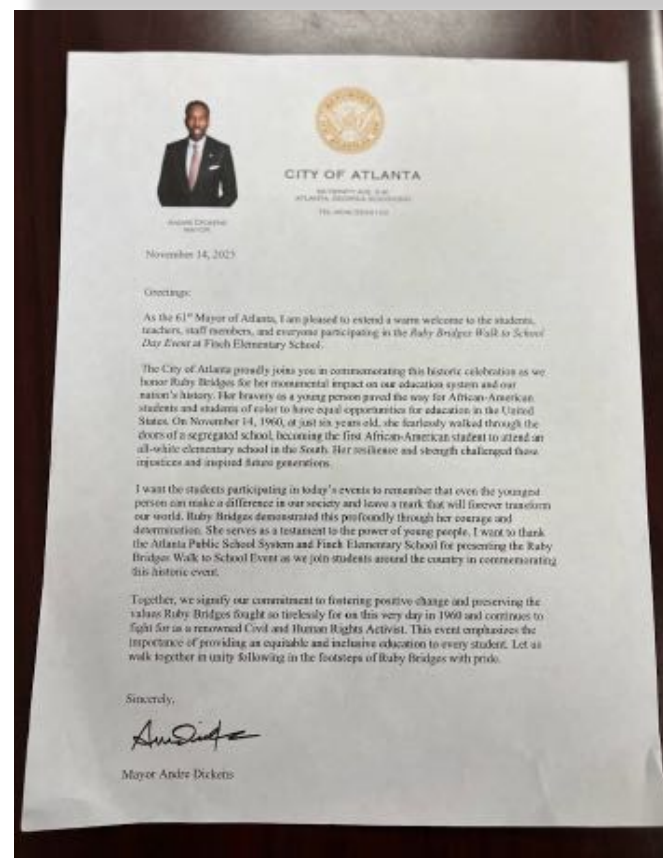
School Outreach Events

ATLDOT's Safe Routes to School team partnered with Finch Elementary to bring national and local SRTS events directly to students. These events not only raised awareness but also celebrated walking, biking, and rolling as fun, healthy, and community-building ways to get to school. This page includes several highlights.

NATIONAL WALK & ROLL TO SCHOOL DAY



RUBY BRIDGES WALK TO SCHOOL DAY



What We Heard: Engagement Feedback

Across listening sessions, walk audits, and surveys, one message was clear: getting to school shouldn't feel like a daily obstacle course.



Driver behavior on Avon dominates concerns.

Guardians, staff, and students described fast-moving cars, blind intersections, and drivers ignoring stoplights—especially at Oakland and Avon. With just one crossing guard supervising multiple corners, families said kids are often left to cross on their own.

“The speeding cars and no caution signs alerting the drivers to a school zone or pedestrians are a major concern for the students of Finch.”



Sidewalks are scarce, broken, and cluttered.

Participants reported broken, blocked, or missing sidewalks across key routes like Princess and Wilmington. Debris, trash cans, dead animals, and vegetation force students into the street. One parent called it “a gauntlet,” while others described weaving around utility poles, uneven pavement, and drainage grates just to make it to class.

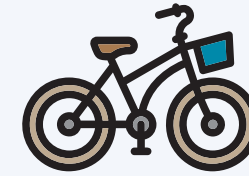
“My concerns for the walk are in general the sidewalks (if there were any at all) were broken and hard to walk on due to overgrown trees, limbs, and clutter. Often the kids would have to walk in the street instead.”



Signage is missing or inaccurate.

Participants were shocked to find school zone signs in the wrong places or showing the wrong times. Meanwhile, church signs were more visible than anything marking Finch as a school zone.

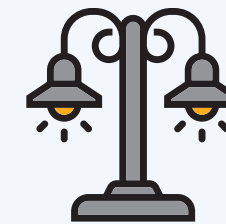
“Cars do not slow down as they approach the school zone. Refresh the paint and or repair the ‘school’ sign on the ground.”



Biking feels out of reach.

Guardians want their kids to bike, but the conditions aren't safe. Narrow bike lanes are frequently blocked by trash cans, cars, or clutter. One parent said she picks her child up by bike but won't let them ride independently until something changes. Others didn't even realize bike racks were an option because they've never seen one.

“I'm not comfortable with [my student] cycling on a separate bike due to the speeds on Avon to Westmont. If the light is green at Oakland, people just blow through. [I] would feel more comfortable if there were traffic calming on Avon up to and even west of Oakland with an actual bike lane.”



Lighting and visibility fall short.

Several routes are pitch-dark in the mornings, with broken streetlights and hidden walkways. The addition of stray dogs combined with a lack of trusted adults makes the thought of walking to school frightening.

“The route from Oakland onto Avon is not well lit, especially in the morning when it's very dark.”



Community members want action and accountability.

From requests for mounted police patrols to group walks with chaperones, the Finch community is eager to build a safer, more connected culture of walking and biking. But they're also realistic: they need support, infrastructure, and leadership to get there.

“[What benefit increasing walking/biking and reducing car/bus ridership would bring to the school community?] The health benefits and also if students were incentivized to walk or bike in groups, they may be tardy less often.”

4

Strategies and Recommendations

Strategies

The strategies and recommendations outlined in this section aim to comprehensively address the school's specific needs using the 6 Es framework. Through this holistic approach, Finch can move the needle in improving access and safety for school commutes.



ENGAGEMENT

Bring together community partners to foster a shared sense of ownership for walking and biking safety.



ENCOURAGEMENT

Host Walk-to-School Days and other programs that make walking and biking fun and inviting.



EQUITY

Prioritize improvements in underserved areas and inclusive educational campaigns.



EDUCATION

Equip students and families with the skills they need through workshops and traffic safety campaigns.



ENGINEERING

Focus on infrastructure improvements, including quick-wins and more resource intensive projects.



EVALUATION

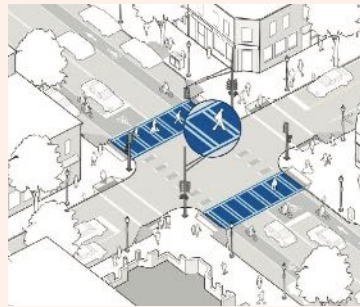
ATLDOT and school leadership measure what's working, learn what's not, and adjust to better serve the community.



Engineering Recommendations

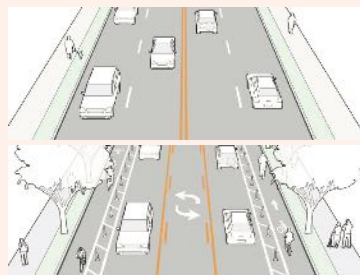
Infrastructure Glossary

The following infrastructure improvements may be used to help reduce fatal and serious injury crashes at Finch Elementary. This infrastructure glossary was built from the City's Vision Zero plan.



High Visibility Crosswalks

- ★ Increases visibility and driver awareness of pedestrians crossing the road.



Lane Reconfiguration

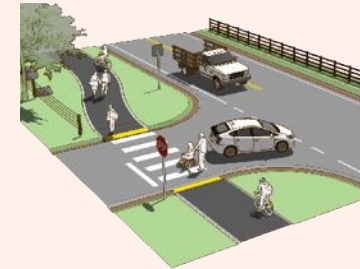
- ★ Reducing the number of travel lanes and/or lane reassignment.



Raised Crossing

- ★ A raised crosswalk that is ramped with a flat top similar to a speed table.

Source: City of Atlanta Vision Zero Action Plan



Shared Use Path

- ★ A physically separated pathway wider than a separated bike lane, shared by both pedestrians and cyclists.



Sidewalks

- ★ Paved pathways alongside streets for pedestrian use.

Source: City of Atlanta Vision Zero Action Plan

Recommendations

Building upon work completed in the Walk Audit report and the Atlanta Vision Zero Plan, as well as incorporating insights from community engagement and an analysis of existing conditions, recommendations were developed aimed at making walking and biking to school safer and more accessible for all students.

Project Categories

The engineering recommendations for Finch Elementary are organized by category. Each recommendation fits into one of the broad categories described below:

- ★ **NEW PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE FACILITIES:** Projects aimed at providing new facilities to improve the movement and safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.
- ★ **PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS:** Projects focused on upgrading existing infrastructure to enhance the safety and movement of pedestrians and bicyclists.
- ★ **PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS:** Installation and improvement of pedestrian crossing locations.
- ★ **ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS:** Projects addressing historical traffic trends or aiming to prevent fatal and serious-injury crashes along roadways.
- ★ **SIGNING AND PAVEMENT MARKING:** Projects to increase driver awareness and recognition of potential conflicts.
- ★ **SCHOOL ZONE IMPROVEMENTS:** Projects that increase awareness of school zones to enhance safety.
- ★ **SPEED MANAGEMENT:** Projects aimed at reducing travel speeds along a roadway.
- ★ **TRAFFIC SIGNAL IMPROVEMENTS:** Projects to improve efficiency, accessibility, and safety at signalized intersections.
- ★ **LIGHTING:** Projects that recommend the installation of new lighting or improvements to existing lighting to increase visibility during low-light conditions.
- ★ **MAINTENANCE (OTHER):** Projects ensuring the upkeep and functional performance of infrastructure, excluding sidewalk, drainage, and utility maintenance.

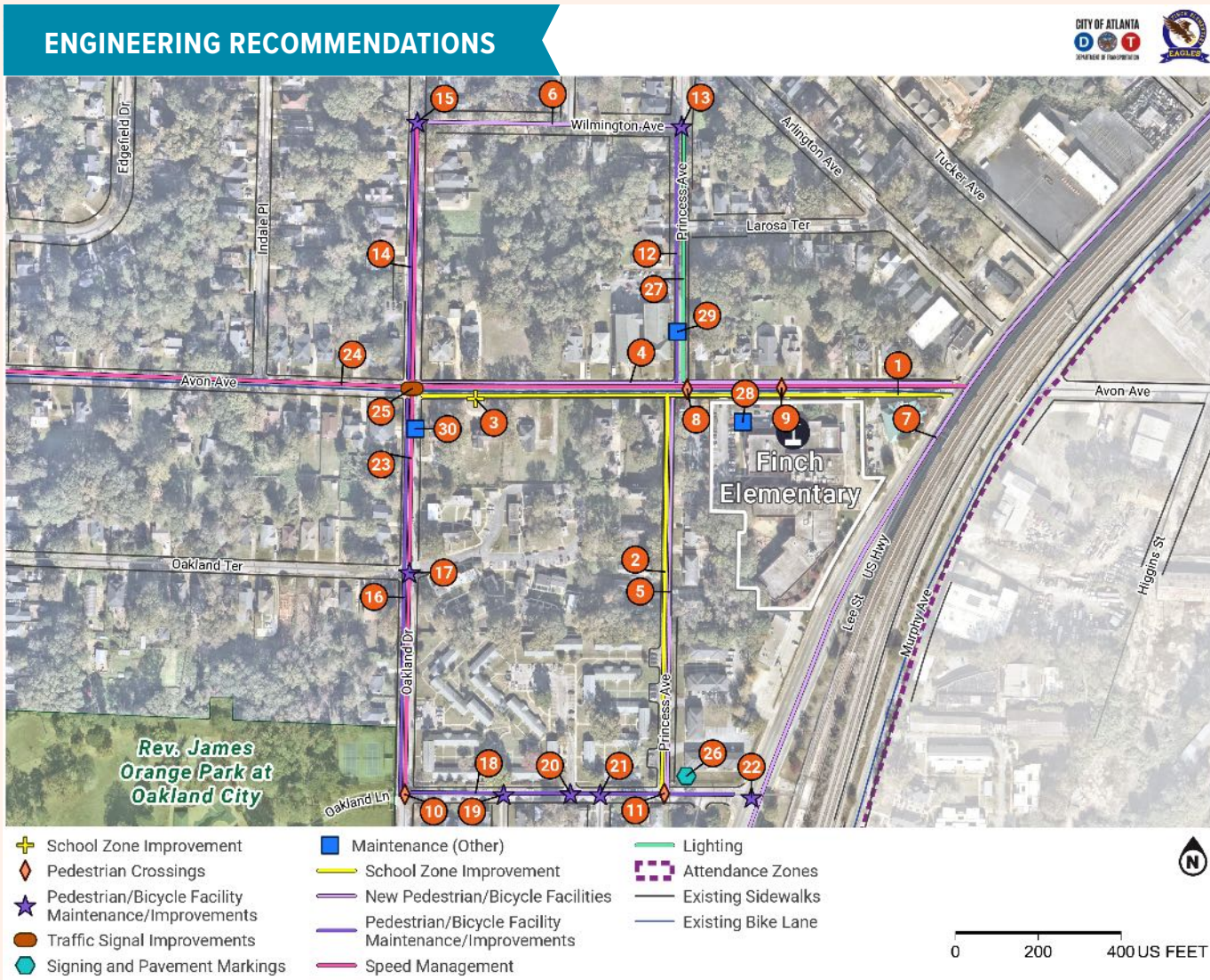
Implementation Groups

Recommendations were also categorized into three implementation groups, based on the City's programming methods and associated cost:

- ★ **TACTICAL/MAINTENANCE:** Projects that can be completed by City Maintenance staff within one year
- ★ **MINOR CAPITAL PROJECTS:** Projects that can be programmed and completed by the City's on-call contractors within one to three years
- ★ **MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS:** Projects with higher construction costs that may require right-of-way acquisition, inter-agency partnerships, and more than three years to program and complete
- ★ **PROGRAM:** Programmatic or policy initiatives and activities designed to promote and support the SRTS program

Recommendations Map

This map shows the route followed by the walk audit team and resulting recommendations for engineering improvements. The numbers correspond to the project IDs in the [Recommendations Table](#).



Recommendations Table

The following recommendations build on observations from the walk audit and community input.

SEE ALSO:

- ▶ The [Recommendations Map](#) on the previous page shows the locations of these projects.
- ▶ The [Engineering Field Observations](#) section that follows contains photos from the walk audit that correspond to the recommendations in this table.

ID	CATEGORY	LOCATION	RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY
1	School Zone Improvements	Avon Ave SW (Between Oakland Dr SW and Lee St SW)	Refresh or replace signing and striping for school zones, speed limit signs and school warning signs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: ATLDOT • Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance • Priority: High
2	School Zone Improvements	Princess Ave SW (Between Oakland Ln SW and Avon Ave SW)	Refresh or replace signing and striping for school zones, speed limit signs and school warning signs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: ATLDOT • Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance • Priority: High
3	School Zone Improvements	Avon Ave SW (E of Oakland Dr SW)	Clear vegetation from all existing school warning signage. Add or replace all school warning signage to make the school zone clear and prominent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: ATLDOT and DPW • Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance • Priority: High

ID	CATEGORY	LOCATION	RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY
4	New Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facilities	Avon Ave SW (Between Oakland Dr SW and Lee St SW)	Construct a shared use path on one side and a sidewalk on the other, each separated by two-foot buffer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Major Capital Project Priority: Medium
5	New Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facilities	Princess Ave SW (Between Oakland Ln SW and Avon Ave SW)	Install sidewalks with buffer zone on both sides.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Major Capital Project Priority: Medium
6	New Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facilities	Wilmington Ave SW (Between Oakland Dr SW and Princess Ave SW)	Install sidewalks on both sides.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Major Capital Project Priority: High
7	New Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facilities	Lee St SW (Between Womack Ave and Oglethorpe Ave SW)	As programmed in ATLDOT Lee St Trail Safe Street Project, add physically separated shared use path along Lee St with pedestrian crossing improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Major Capital Project Priority: High

ID	CATEGORY	LOCATION	RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY
8	Pedestrian Crossings	Avon Ave SW / Princess Ave SW	Short-term: Use tactical urbanism treatments to install crosswalk art to increase visibility at crossings. Long-term: Construct raised crosswalk on east leg of intersection. Include special considerations for drainage in design. Relocate school crossing warning sign to the edge of the crossing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Minor Capital Project Priority: Medium
9	Pedestrian Crossings	Avon Ave SW in front of Finch ES (Existing Marked Crosswalk)	Short-term: Use tactical urbanism treatments to install crosswalk art to increase visibility at crossings. Long-term: Construct raised crosswalk to improve visibility and provide traffic calming for neighborhood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Minor Capital Project Priority: Medium
10	Pedestrian Crossings	Oakland Ln SW / Oakland Dr SW	Construct ADA accessible ramps northeast and southeast corner of Oakland Ln and Oakland Dr. Add crosswalk across Oakland Ln and across Oakland Dr. Consider new lighting and timing of the lighting for the intersection for pedestrians, especially for winter months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency: ATLDOT/Georgia Power Project Type: Minor Capital Project Priority: Medium
11	Pedestrian Crossings	Princess Ave SW / Oakland Ln SW	Add sidewalk ramps at intersection and crosswalks across Oakland Ln at Dorsey St.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Minor Capital Project Priority: Medium

ID	CATEGORY	LOCATION	RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY
12	Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facility Maintenance/ Improvements	Princess Ave SW (Between Avon Ave SW and Wilmington Ave SW)	Review existing and install or replace sidewalk, as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: ATLDOT • Project Type: Major Capital Project • Priority: Medium
13	Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facility Maintenance/ Improvements	Wilmington Ave SW / Princess Ave SW	Add or update curb ramps to facilitate ADA access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: ATLDOT • Project Type: Minor Capital Project • Priority: Medium
14	Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facility Maintenance/ Improvements	Oakland Dr SW (Between Avon Ave SW and Wilmington Ave SW)	Review existing and install or replace sidewalk, as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: ATLDOT • Project Type: Major Capital Project • Priority: High
15	Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facility Maintenance/ Improvements	Oakland Dr SW / Wilmington Ave SW	Add or update curb ramps to facilitate ADA access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: ATLDOT • Project Type: Minor Capital Project • Priority: Low
16	Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facility Maintenance/ Improvements	Oakland Dr SW (Between Oakland Ln SW and Avon Ave SW)	Review existing and install or replace sidewalk as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: ATLDOT • Project Type: Major Capital Project • Priority: Medium

ID	CATEGORY	LOCATION	RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY
17	Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facility Maintenance/ Improvements	Oakland Dr SW / Oakland Terrace SW	Add or update curb ramps to facilitate ADA access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: ATLDOT • Project Type: Minor Capital Project • Priority: Low
18	Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facility Maintenance/ Improvements	Oakland Ln SW (Between Oakland Dr SW and Lee St SW)	Update sidewalk and pavement to allow for drainage and have an adequate height differential. Close sidewalk gaps and repair substandard sidewalk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: ATLDOT • Project Type: Major Capital Project • Priority: Low
19	Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facility Maintenance/ Improvements	Oakland Ln SW / Brewster St SW	Update corners to provide curb ramps and facilitate ADA access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: ATLDOT • Project Type: Minor Capital Project • Priority: Low
20	Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facility Maintenance/ Improvements	Oakland Ln SW / Driveway to Oakland City West End Apartments	Update corners to provide curb ramps and facilitate ADA access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: ATLDOT • Project Type: Minor Capital Project • Priority: Low
21	Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facility Maintenance/ Improvements	Oakland Ln SW / Dorsey St SW	Update corners to provide curb ramps and facilitate ADA access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: ATLDOT • Project Type: Minor Capital Project • Priority: Low

ID	CATEGORY	LOCATION	RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY
22	Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facility Maintenance/ Improvements	Oakland Ln SW Lee St SW	Update corners to provide curb ramps and facilitate ADA access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: ATLDOT • Project Type: Minor Capital Project • Priority: Low
23	Speed Management	Oakland Dr SW (Between Oakland Ln SW and Wilmington Ave SW)	Construct horizontal and vertical deflection for traffic calming especially approaching the park entrance and school zone. Consider location and visibility of existing Speed Limit and Children at Play signage and consider moving or replacing, if needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: ATLDOT • Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance • Priority: Low
24	Speed Management	Avon Ave SW (Between Cascade Ave SW and Lee St)	Change speed limit signs to 25 MPH for consistency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: ATLDOT • Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance • Priority: High
25	Traffic Signal Improvements	Oakland Dr SW / Avon Ave SW	Install pedestrian signals, add pedestrian phasing to signal timing, add pedestrian warning signage ahead of each approach, and upgrade traffic signal heads.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: ATLDOT • Project Type: Minor Capital Project • Priority: High

ID	CATEGORY	LOCATION	RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY
26	Signing and Pavement Markings	Princess Ave SW / Oakland Ln SW	Repair or replace street sign at Princess Ave and Oakland Ln	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: ATLDOT • Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance • Priority: High
27	Lighting	Princess Ave SW (Between Avon Ave SW and Wilmington Ave SW)	Refresh or replace lighting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: Georgia Power (link) • Project Type: Major Capital Project • Priority: High
28	Maintenance (Other)	Avon Ave SW	Construction of a new fence in this section of the school, which is resistant to damage. Also, consider if a gate or access point is needed at this location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: School • Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance • Priority: Low
29	Maintenance (Other)	Princess Ave SW (N of Avon Ave SW)	Clear and repair drainage structures which are too low and create a hazard to bicyclsts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: Department of Watershed Management • Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance • Priority: High
30	Maintenance (Other)	Oakland Dr SW (S of Avon Ave SW)	Engage utility to consider moving natural gas obstruction to sidewalk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency: ATLDOT • Project Type: Major Capital Project • Priority: Low

ID	CATEGORY	LOCATION	RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY
31	Maintenance (Other)	Avon Ave SW	Coordinate with Cathedral of Faith Church and surrounding residents to understand the community's need for on-street parking, discuss the importance of keeping bike lanes and sidewalks clear, and develop improvements. After implementing identified improvements (such as signage, vertical bike lane elements, etc), conduct ongoing coordination with stakeholders and enforcement of bike lanes and sidewalks (warning tickets, tickets).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency: ATLDOT/APS Police Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance Priority: High
32	Maintenance (Other)	Avon Ave SW	New plan for afternoon school pick-up for car riders, could utilize Avon Ave to slow traffic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency: Finch Elementary, APS Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance Priority: Low
33	Maintenance (Other)	Study Area	Code enforcement for bin placement by residents and public waste.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency: School or Local Church Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance Priority: High
34	Maintenance (Other)	Study Area	Repair and replace utility poles along the corridor, as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency: Georgia Power Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance Priority: Low

Engineering Field Observations

The photos in this section document infrastructure needs and provide context for the engineering recommendations. The numbers correspond to the project IDs in the **Recommendations Table**. (Note: Not all recommendations from the table are shown in the following photos.)



1 Faded striping, crosswalks, and pavement markings, including "SCHOOL" markings on Avon Ave SW.



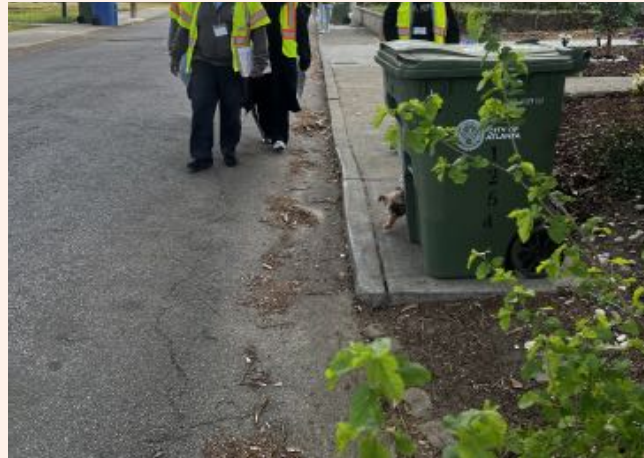
2 School signs obscured and markings are faded on Princess Ave SW.



3 School zone signage frequently obscured by vegetation on Avon Ave SW.



4 Bike lane on Avon Ave SW is too narrow and substandard.



5 Broken and missing sidewalks along the corridor, lack of accessibility.



6 Missing sidewalks and ramps on Wilmington Ave SW.



11 Wide road, no crossings, limited ADA accessibility if traveling from school southward to residences or the Oakland MARTA train station.



12 Historic hex-paver sidewalks are in disrepair, and community members report that it is unclear whether this is a private or public walkway.



7 Uncomfortable walking and biking environment along Lee St, a five-lane roadway.



8 Missing sidewalk ramp on southeast corner at crosswalk, crosswalk ends at curb, and school pedestrian crossing sign obstructed.



13 Missing sidewalks and ramps on Princess Ave SW.



14 Sidewalk in disrepair on Oakland Dr SW.



9 Existing crossing near school on Avon Ave SW needs safety improvements.



10 Corridor is not well lit. No crosswalk at the all-way stop from Oakland Ln across Oakland Dr. Students play in the park and participate in sports on the premises.



15 Missing sidewalk ramps on Oakland Dr SW.



17 Missing sidewalk ramps on Oakland Dr SW/Oakland Terrace SW.



19 Missing sidewalk ramp and sidewalk in poor condition at Oakland Ln SW/Brewster St SW.



20 Missing sidewalk ramps at Oakland Ln SW/ Driveway to Oakland City West End Apartments.



25 No pedestrian signal or phasing at Oakland Dr SW/Avon Ave SW, and traffic light is broken.



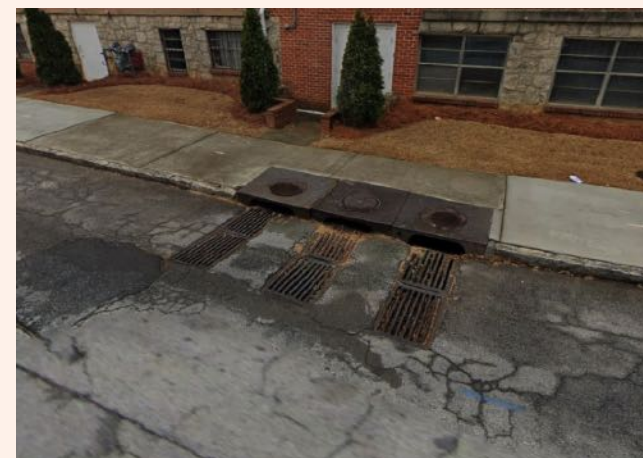
26 Damaged street sign post Princess Ave SW/ Oakland Ln SW.



21 Missing sidewalk ramps at Oakland Ln SW/ Dorsey St SW.



22 Existing sidewalk ramps not ADA compliant at Oakland Ln SW/Lee St SW.



29 North of intersection of Princess at Avon, several drainage grates are hazardous for bicycling.



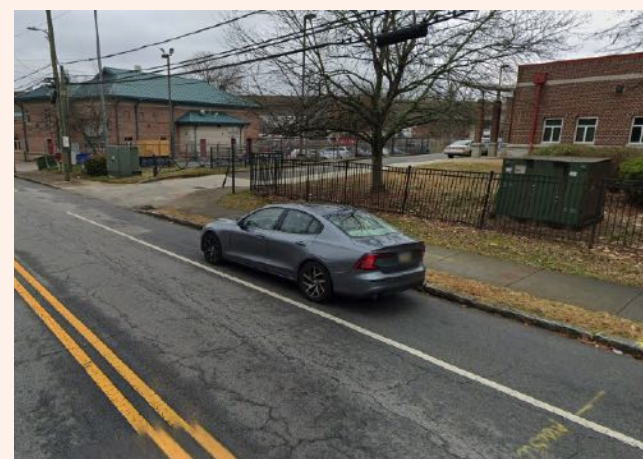
30 Utility box obstructs the sidewalk on Oakland Dr SW.



23 Lack of signage (school zone, children at play) along Oakland Dr SW; concerns with speeding.



24 Inconsistent speed limit signs along the corridor (25 and 35 mph). Speed was a factor in two recent fatal/serious injury crashes in this corridor.



31 Parking in bike lane.



32 The parking lane is used for storage length when the afternoon pick-up begins to queue.



33 *Trash cans obstructing the sidewalk.*



34 *Broken utility poles throughout study area.*



Education Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Education: Consider implementing pedestrian and bicycle education during school hours for all students (e.g., during a School Safety Assembly or PE classes) or as after-school or summer camp programming. Curriculum can be developed for health, PE, and other educators to build pedestrian safety skills, typically for grades K–5.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Jurisdiction: School

Partners: Teachers, PTA or parent groups, after-school programs, community-based organizations, parks and recreation department, ATLDOT’s Safe Routes to School program

Level of Effort: High

Resources and Best Practices:

- [Oregon DOT SRTS Pedestrian Drill Guide](#)
- [Alameda County’s Educator’s Guide](#)
- [California Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Curriculum for Grades 4 & 5](#)
- [NHTSA Child Pedestrian Safety Curriculum](#)

RECOMMENDATION

Dog Bite Prevention Education: Dog bite prevention education could be delivered during school assemblies, once or twice a year with reminders to parents and guardians.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Jurisdiction: City, School

Partners: PTA or parent groups, association of residents, local dog clubs and shelters, parks and recreation department, public health department, neighborhood association

Level of Effort: Medium

Resources and Best Practices:

- [Atlanta Kennel Club Responsible Dog Ownership event](#)



Encouragement Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION

Traffic Gardens and Bike Rodeos: Traffic gardens (also called traffic playgrounds) and bike rodeos create fun, interactive environments that mimic real roadway conditions to help children practice safe walking, biking, and rolling. Traffic gardens are often implemented as "pop-ups" using with temporary materials such as tape, paint, and traffic cones, but some can be permanent installations. Bike rodeos are typically held as special events and use temporary materials to create different stations to practice skills.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Jurisdiction: School

Partners: PTA or parent groups, teachers, police, fire or public health departments, Safe Kids Georgia/Fulton, ATLDOT's Safe Routes to School program

Level of Effort: High

Resources and Best Practices:

- [Bike Rodeo Station Guide](#)
- [Traffic Gardens Teach and Inspire Kids](#)
- [Traffic Gardens at Schools Promote Health, Safety, and Lots of Fun](#)

RECOMMENDATION

Distribute free safety equipment to students during school events such as helmets, flashing lights, and reflective stickers to promote walking and biking safety. Police, fire or public health departments, and Safe Kids Coalition can sometimes provide the equipment.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Jurisdiction: School

Partners: PTA or parent groups, police, fire or public health departments, Safe Kids Georgia/Fulton, ATLDOT's Safe Routes to School program

Level of Effort: Medium

Resources and Best Practices:

- [Child Pedestrian Safety | Safe Kids Georgia](#)

RECOMMENDATION

Community-based events: Consider participating in existing community-based events or hosting an annual community event to connect with community members, raise awareness around SRTS (e.g., National Walk and Roll to School Day, Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day, spring clean-up, Earth Day Festival, or Halloween Parade). City programs like Love Your Block, Adopt-a-Spot, and Keep Atlanta Beautiful can provide resources and funding to local initiatives.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Jurisdiction: School, City

Partners: City Department, Libraries, Churches, PTA or parent groups, Community-based organizations, neighborhood associations

Level of Effort: High

Resources and Best Practices:

- [Spring Cleanup: A Classic Community-Builder](#)
- [Neighborhoods | Atlanta, GA](#)

RECOMMENDATION

Develop and Promote a Suggested Routes to School Map. These maps show preferred routes to school for walking and biking and provide safety tips to encourage better travel behavior.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Jurisdiction: School

Partners: PTA or parent groups, City, ATLDOT's Safe Routes to School program

Level of Effort: Medium

Resources and Best Practices:

- [Guide to Creating Walking Route Maps for Safe Routes to School](#)

RECOMMENDATION

Walking School Bus and Training: A Walking School Bus is a group of students walking with trusted adults along designated routes. Walking School Bus programs may include the distribution of safety materials (e.g., high-visibility vests, pedestrian flags, first aid kits, or lights) and volunteer training. Volunteer training may include pedestrian safety and dog bite prevention.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY:

Jurisdiction: School
Partners: ATLDOT's Safe Routes to School program
Level of Effort: Medium
Resources and Best Practices:

- [East Central Wisconsin SRTS Walking School Bus Program](#)
- [Alameda County Walking School Bus Toolkit](#)

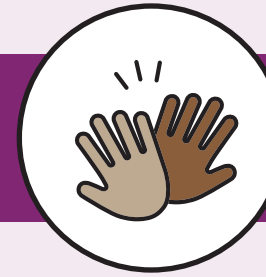
RECOMMENDATION

Biking School Bus and Training: A Biking School Bus is a group of students biking with trusted adults along designated routes. Biking School Bus programs may include the distribution of safety materials (e.g., high-visibility vests, pedestrian flags, first aid kits, or lights) and volunteer training. Volunteer training may include pedestrian safety and dog bite prevention.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY:

Jurisdiction: School
Partners: ATLDOT's Safe Routes to School program
Level of Effort: Medium
Resources and Best Practices:

- [Bike Buses: Let's Bike to School Together](#)
- [Bike PGH: How to Start a Bike Bus](#)



Engagement Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION

Responsible Dog Ownership Campaign: Neighbor outreach and community meetings can promote responsible dog ownership.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Jurisdiction: City, School
Partners: PTA or parent groups, association of residents, local dog clubs and shelters, parks and recreation department, public health department, neighborhood association
Level of Effort: Medium
Resources and Best Practices:

- [Atlanta Kennel Club Responsible Dog Ownership event](#)

RECOMMENDATION

Lawn Sign Safety Campaign to address specific driving behaviors (e.g., speeding, failing to yield to pedestrians) and raise awareness on school routes and in the school zone.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Jurisdiction: School District
Partners: PTA or parent groups
Level of Effort: Medium
Resources and Best Practices:

- [King County School Pool Back to School Traffic Safety Campaign](#)
- [East Central Wisconsin Traffic Safety Campaign](#)

RECOMMENDATION

Corner Captains or Greeters, or Safe Passage Programs: Corner Captains or Greeters are adults stationed at designated locations along school routes during the school commute. Corner Captains or Greeters may have training in traffic safety, bystander intervention, anti-hate strategies, and adult-youth interactions. They also can be parents, grandparents, school staff, or community members.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Jurisdiction: School District

Partners: PTA or parent groups, police department, churches, community-based organizations (such as Atlanta Walks), businesses, after-school programs, neighborhood association

Level of Effort: High

Resources and Best Practices:

- [Chicago's Safe Passage Program](#)
- [Los Angeles Safe Passage](#)

RECOMMENDATION

SRTS Task Force: An SRTS Task Force is a group of community members who work to support and implement the SRTS program at the school, city, or district level. A task force can bring together different groups interested in SRTS and provide structure and implementation accountability, which are essential steps in helping students walk and bicycle safely to school.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Jurisdiction: School

Partners: PTA or parent groups, police department, churches, community-based organizations (such as Atlanta Walks), businesses, after-school programs, neighborhood association, elected officials

Level of Effort: Medium

Resources and Best Practices:

- [Defining Roles and Partnerships for Safe Routes to School](#)



Equity Recommendations

Including equity as a key focus during the implementation of the action plan is crucial to its success. Ensuring all students, regardless of background or circumstances, have equal access to the plan's benefits and opportunities is essential. Strategies will address potential barriers to ensure initiatives are inclusive and fair. By prioritizing equity, the action plan aims to foster a supportive environment where everyone can thrive and fully participate in the school's goals for safety and active transportation.

Equity-Focused Actions

- ★ Continue equity-based prioritization process.
- ★ Distribute ATLDOT-branded safety giveaways at student events: flashing lights, reflective stickers, and helmets.
- ★ Distribute SRTS materials in multiple languages.
- ★ Prioritize Action Plan recommendations based on community and stakeholder feedback, emphasizing improvements for walking, biking, or rolling to school.
- ★ Offer SRTS resources in both digital and print versions, and explore options to offer additional resources for parent participation in the SRTS program such as parent stipends.
- ★ To increase participation in the program, partner with local CBOs or other existing events/organizations that help to meet a need for the school community such as school food pantry events.



Evaluation Recommendations

The following table lists suggested metrics and data (qualitative and quantitative) to collect to keep track of the progress of the SRTS plan. The schools will be leading the data collection, supported by the ALTDOT’s SRTS program. Coordination and collaboration between the ATLDOT’s SRTS program, schools, and volunteers is essential to support data collection.

Student travel tallies and parent/guardian surveys are two collection methods used nationwide by SRTS programs to collect information on how families travel to and from school. These surveys also help administrators understand the challenges and barriers to walking and biking to school, parent’s concerns and attitudes about active transportation and identify opportunities for implementing SRTS programs.

School administrator and parent/guardian surveys gather feedback on the SRTS program and on ways to improve the SRTS program from the adults who help host events and coordinate with greater SRTS efforts citywide.

Participation surveys are distributed during or after an event or activity to keep track of the participation and the reach of the event, e.g., number of participating schools, numbers of students reached, etc.

Consider providing survey translations when needed and proposing different collection methods, for example paper copies of the parent and guardian surveys, meet and greet tables during the school arrival period or other school-related events to create opportunities for all families to provide feedback on the SRTS program.

DATA COLLECTION AND METRICS

DATA	COLLECTION METHOD	FREQUENCY
Mode split	Student travel tallies, parent and guardian survey	Once a year
School participation and number of students reached	Event Participation Survey	For each event
Number of walking school buses or bike buses	Event Participation Survey	Once a year
Number of encouragement events held	School administrator and champion survey	Once a year
Perception of safety and challenges to active and shared transportation	Parent and guardian survey	Once a year or every two years
Barriers to implementing SRTS programs	School administrator and champion survey	Once a year
Number of pedestrian and bicycle lessons delivered and number of participants	Event Participation Survey	For each event

School Leadership Actions

The following are additional recommendations for leadership actions by the school administration and school district.

- ★ **Integrate SRTS language in the school district policies** (e.g., wellness and safety policies) to promote and facilitate bike and pedestrian education.
- ★ **Build local partnerships** with churches, community-based organizations, businesses, parks and recreation and police departments, and other key partners to create SRTS programs and advocate for safer streets.
- ★ **Create a contact list** with key contacts, roles, level of involvement, scheduled meetings, and resources to share.
- ★ **Share safety and encouragement messaging** to students and families using existing communications channels such as school newsletters, emails, school announcements, assemblies, and social media.
- ★ **Identify opportunities to incorporate SRTS education and encouragement** in the school calendar.
- ★ **Build volunteer capacity** to help with Walk and Roll to School days, Walking School Buses, and Bike Buses.
- ★ **Explore opportunities to deliver bike and pedestrian safety education** in schools with groups such as [Propel ATL](#), Safe Kids Fulton County, or Bearings Bike Works.

Federal Funding Opportunities

A comprehensive review of available funding programs was conducted for the recommended projects. It is advised to package these projects together to create greater opportunities for funding. Several federal funding sources were identified that could support these initiatives, including:

- ★ **TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP):**
Federal funding for smaller transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities and safe routes to school.
- ★ **TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT (TE):**
Federal program, now part of TAP, for projects enhancing transportation experiences like trails and historic preservation.
- ★ **HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (HSIP):**
Federal program aimed at reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries on public roads.
- ★ **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (STBG):**
Federal program providing flexible funding for roads, bridges, transit, and bicycle-pedestrian infrastructure.
- ★ **SAFE STREETS AND ROADS FOR ALL (SS4A):**
Federal initiative to improve road safety and reduce roadway fatalities and injuries.
- ★ **AREAS OF PERSISTENT POVERTY PROGRAM (AOPP):**
Federal funding for transportation projects in areas with persistent poverty to improve access and mobility.
- ★ **RECREATIONAL TRAIL PROGRAM AND OUTDOOR RECREATION LEGACY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (RTP):**
Federal funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) that aims to support outdoor recreation in urban areas, particularly those that are underserved or lack sufficient access to outdoor recreation opportunities.

Funding Opportunities by Project

This table highlights projects from the Engineering Recommendations section that may be eligible for the federal funding sources described on the previous page.

			ELIGIBLE FUNDING SOURCES*					
ID	CATEGORY	LOCATION	TAP	TE	HSIP	STBG	SS4A	AOPP
4	New Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facilities	Avon Ave SW (Between Oakland Dr SW and Lee St SW)	✓				✓	
			<i>This project is also eligible for funding from the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program.</i>					
5	New Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facilities	Princess Ave SW (Between Oakland Ln SW and Avon Ave SW)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
6	New Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facilities	Wilmington Ave SW (Between Oakland Dr SW and Princess Ave SW)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
8	Pedestrian Crossings	Avon Ave SW / Princess Ave SW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Pedestrian Crossings	Oakland Ln SW / Oakland Dr SW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Pedestrian Crossings	Princess Ave SW / Oakland Ln SW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facility Maintenance/ Improvements	Wilmington Ave SW / Princess Ave SW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

*See full descriptions in previous section

ELIGIBLE FUNDING SOURCES*

ID	CATEGORY	LOCATION	TAP	TE	HSIP	STBG	SS4A	AOPP
15	Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facility Maintenance/ Improvements	Oakland Dr SW / Wilmington Ave SW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
17	Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facility Maintenance/ Improvements	Oakland Dr SW / Oakland Terrace SW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
19	Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facility Maintenance/ Improvements	Oakland Ln SW / Brewster St SW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
20	Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facility Maintenance/ Improvements	Oakland Ln SW / Driveway to Oakland City West End Apartments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
21	Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facility Maintenance/ Improvements	Oakland Ln SW / Dorsey St SW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
22	Pedestrian/ Bicycle Facility Maintenance/ Improvements	Oakland Ln SW Lee St SW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
24	Traffic Signal Improvements	Oakland Dr SW / Avon Ave SW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

*See full descriptions in previous section

CONCLUSION

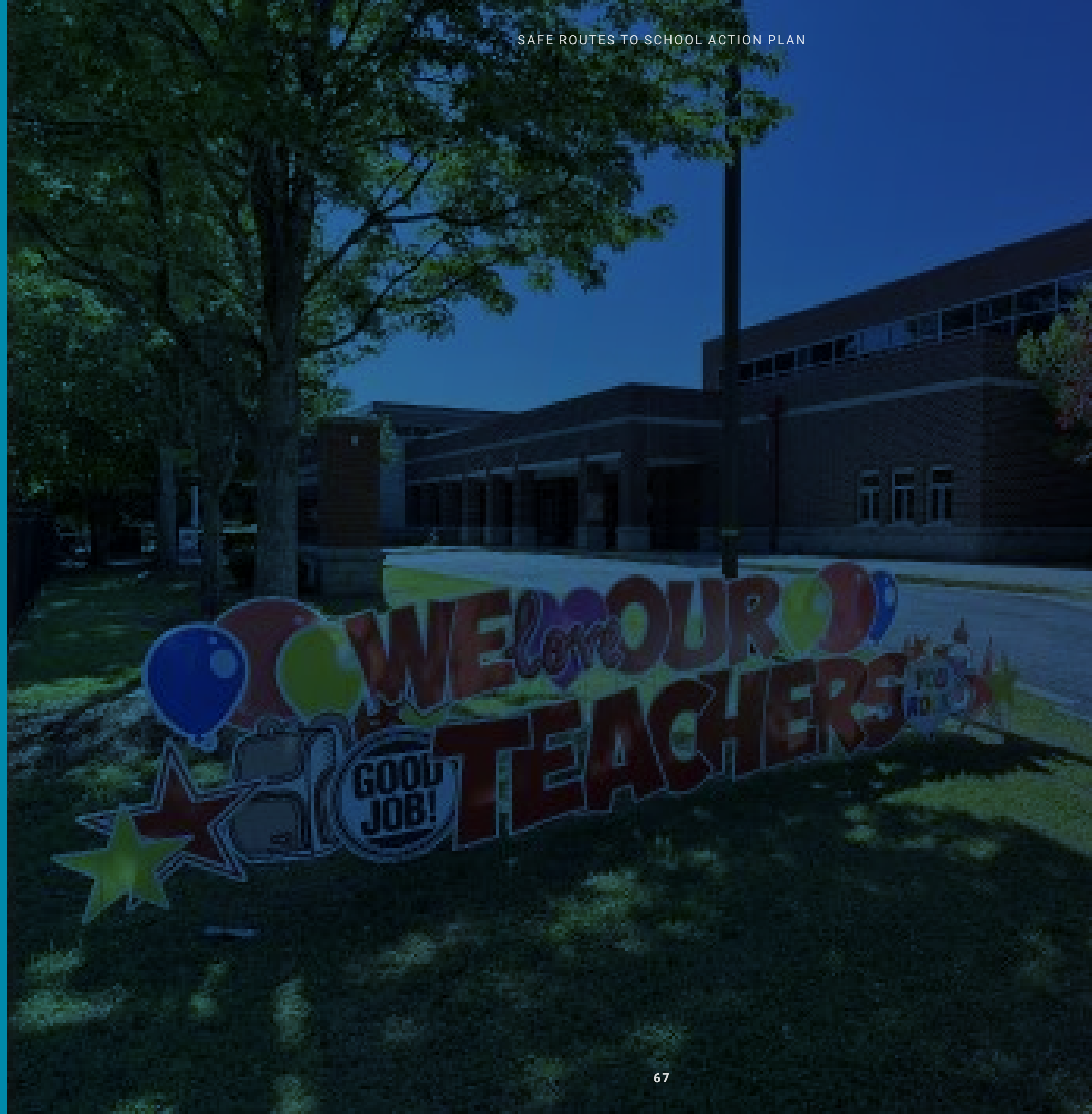
The Finch Elementary School Safe Routes to School Action Plan is an important milestone in creating safe, accessible and healthy commutes for students, parents/guardians and staff. The collaborative effort, led by the ATLDOT in close partnership with school leadership, emphasizes safety and equity. The recommendations were formed by existing conditions analysis, a community participatory walk audit and significant community and stakeholder input. The Plan extends Atlanta's Vision Zero initiative, underscoring the commitment to reduce traffic-related fatalities and injuries among our youngest and most vulnerable road users.

By prioritizing historically undeserved areas and leveraging the Six Es Framework to promote walking and biking to school, this plan aims to create lasting positive impacts, promoting healthier, more active lifestyles, and ultimately fostering a flourishing, safer and more inclusive environment for all residents of Atlanta.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Walk Audit Report

Appendix B: Listening Session Summary



Appendix **A**

JUNE
2025

Finch Elementary School

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL WALK AUDIT REPORT



Prepared by Kimley-Horn and Alta Planning + Design



Background

Safe Routes to School Atlanta (SRTS) is a K–12 program led by the Atlanta Department of Transportation (ATLDOT) that seeks to make it safer and more inviting for students to walk, bike, and roll to school. Through education, infrastructure improvements, and community engagement, the program encourages youth to use active transportation modes as they travel within the City of Atlanta.

Existing Conditions

Finch Elementary School is located in southwest Atlanta and serves the neighborhoods of Bush Mountain and Oakland City. Finch is part of the Carver Cluster and situated just west of the southside BeltLine trail. The school holds a SRTS Safety Ranking of 4, indicating it is a high safety priority school within the Atlanta Public Schools (APS) district. Approximately 186 students, or 90% of the student population, reside within the school's Parent Responsibility Zone. Since 2013, this area has experienced 17 traffic-related fatalities, 101 serious injuries, and includes 3.32 miles of High Injury Network (HIN) roadways, underscoring the need for focused pedestrian safety improvements.

In 2023, Propel ATL and the Alta Planning + Design team conducted a walk audit in this community as part of a broader neighborhood study funded by a tactical urbanism grant. Although not school-specific, this earlier effort engaged residents around Finch Elementary and helped identify infrastructure and safety priorities. Insights from that project, including recommended improvements, have been integrated into this evaluation to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the neighborhood's mobility challenges.

Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the school walk audit for Finch Elementary. This audit was conducted in two key phases

1. Student Arrival Observation – a structured observation of student travel behaviors during morning arrival.
2. Experiential Walk Audit – a participatory assessment of the walking environment in and around the school zone.

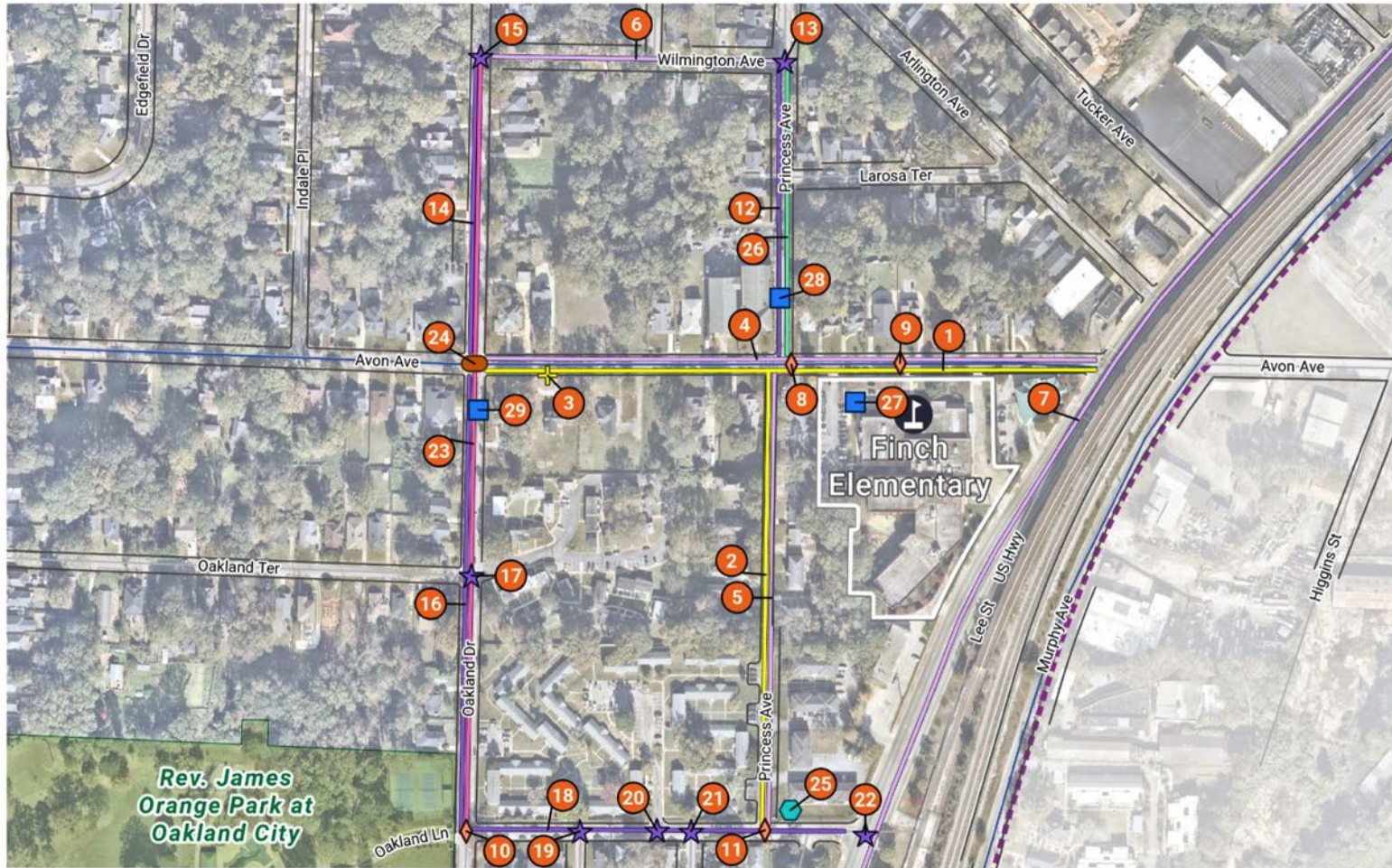
Recommendations

The following map and table present a comprehensive set of infrastructure, maintenance, and community program recommendations identified through the walk audit, student arrival observations, and digital survey responses. Each recommendation addresses specific barriers to safe and comfortable travel for Finch Elementary School students, staff, and families. Observations were organized by location and category, and the corresponding recommendations are intended to guide coordinated action by the Atlanta Department of Transportation (ATLDOT), Atlanta Public Schools (APS), Finch Elementary School, and other relevant stakeholders. These proposed improvements reflect both immediate needs and long-term investments to enhance walkability, bike access, and overall safety in and around the school zone.

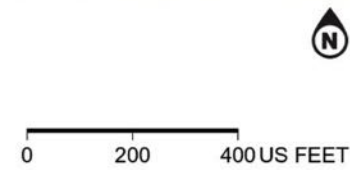
**ATTACHMENT A:
RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE**

FINCH ELEMENTARY WALK AUDIT REPORT

Atlanta Safe Routes to School Finch Elementary



- | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--------------------|
| + | School Zone Improvement | ■ | Maintenance (Other) | — | Lighting |
| ◇ | Pedestrian Crossings | — | School Zone Improvement | ⋈ | Attendance Zones |
| ★ | Pedestrian/Bicycle Facility Maintenance/Improvements | — | New Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities | — | Existing Sidewalks |
| ● | Traffic Signal Improvements | — | Pedestrian/Bicycle Facility Maintenance/Improvements | — | Existing Bike Lane |
| ◐ | Signing and Pavement Markings | — | Speed Management | | |



FINCH ELEMENTARY WALK AUDIT REPORT

PROJECT ID	LOCATION	RECOMMENDATION	CATEGORY	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
FES-01	Avon Ave SW (Between Oakland Dr SW and Lee St SW)	Refresh or replace signing and striping for school zones, speed limit signs and school warning signs.	School Zone Improvements	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance Priority: High
FES-02	Princess Ave SW (Between Oakland Ln SW and Avon Ave SW)	Refresh or replace signing and striping for school zones, speed limit signs and school warning signs.	School Zone Improvements	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance Priority: High
FES-03	Avon Ave SW (E of Oakland Dr SW)	Clear vegetation from all existing school warning signage. Add or replace all school warning signage to make the school zone clear and prominent.	School Zone Improvements	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance Priority: High
FES-04	Avon Ave SW (Between Oakland Dr SW and Lee St SW)	Construct a shared use path on one side and a sidewalk on the other, each separated by two-foot buffer.	New Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Major Capital Project Priority: Medium
FES-05	Princess Ave SW (Between Oakland Ln SW and Avon Ave SW)	Install sidewalks with buffer zone on both sides.	New Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Major Capital Project Priority: Medium
FES-06	Wilmington Ave SW (Between	Install sidewalks on both sides.	New Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Major

FINCH ELEMENTARY WALK AUDIT REPORT

	Oakland Dr SW and Princess Ave SW)			Capital Project Priority: High
FES-07	Lee St SW (Between Womack Ave and Oglethorpe Ave SW)	As programmed in ATLDOT Lee St Trail Safe Street Project, add physically separated shared use path along Lee St with pedestrian crossing improvements	New Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Major Capital Project Priority: High
FES-08	Avon Ave SW / Princess Ave SW	Construct raised crosswalk on east leg of intersection. Include special considerations for drainage in design. Relocate school crossing warning sign to the edge of the crossing.	Pedestrian Crossings	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Minor Capital Project Priority: Medium
FES-09	Avon Ave SW in front of Finch ES (Existing Marked Crosswalk)	Construct raised crosswalk to improve visibility and provide traffic calming for neighborhood.	Pedestrian Crossings	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Minor Capital Project Priority: Medium
FES-10	Oakland Ln SW / Oakland Dr SW	Construct ADA accessible ramps northeast and southeast corner of Oakland Ln and Oakland Dr. Add crosswalk across Oakland Ln and across Oakland Dr. Consider new lighting and timing of the lighting for the intersection for	Pedestrian Crossings	Agency: ATLDOT/Georgia Power Project Type: Minor Capital Project Priority: Medium

FINCH ELEMENTARY WALK AUDIT REPORT

		pedestrians, especially for winter months.		
FES-11	Princess Ave SW / Oakland Ln SW	Add sidewalk ramps at intersection and crosswalks across Oakland Ln at Dorsey St.	Pedestrian Crossings	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Minor Capital Project Priority: Medium
FES-12	Princess Ave SW (Between Avon Ave SW and Wilmington Ave SW)	Review existing and install or replace sidewalk, as needed.	Pedestrian/Bicycle Facility Maintenance/Improvements	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Major Capital Project Priority: Medium
FES-13	Wilmington Ave SW / Princess Ave SW	Add or update curb ramps to facilitate ADA access.	Pedestrian/Bicycle Facility Maintenance/Improvements	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Minor Capital Project Priority: Medium
FES-14	Oakland Dr SW (Between Avon Ave SW and Wilmington Ave SW)	Review existing and install or replace sidewalk, as needed.	Pedestrian/Bicycle Facility Maintenance/Improvements	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Major Capital Project Priority: High
FES-15	Oakland Dr SW / Wilmington Ave SW	Add or update curb ramps to facilitate ADA access.	Pedestrian/Bicycle Facility Maintenance/Improvements	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Minor Capital Project Priority: Low
FES-16	Oakland Dr SW (Between Oakland Ln	Review existing and install or replace sidewalk as needed.	Pedestrian/Bicycle Facility Maintenance/Improvements	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Major Capital Project

FINCH ELEMENTARY WALK AUDIT REPORT

	SW and Avon Ave SW)			Priority: Medium
FES-17	Oakland Dr SW / Oakland Terrace SW	Add or update curb ramps to facilitate ADA access.	Pedestrian/Bicycle Facility Maintenance/Improvements	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Minor Capital Project Priority: Low
FES-18	Oakland Ln SW (Between Oakland Dr SW and Lee St SW)	Update sidewalk and pavement to allow for drainage and have an adequate height differential. Close sidewalk gaps and repair substandard sidewalk.	Pedestrian/Bicycle Facility Maintenance/Improvements	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Major Capital Project Priority: Low
FES-19	Oakland Ln SW / Brewster St SW	Update corners to provide curb ramps and facilitate ADA access.	Pedestrian/Bicycle Facility Maintenance/Improvements	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Minor Capital Project Priority: Low
FES-20	Oakland Ln SW / Driveway to Oakland City West End Apartments	Update corners to provide curb ramps and facilitate ADA access.	Pedestrian/Bicycle Facility Maintenance/Improvements	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Minor Capital Project Priority: Low
FES-21	Oakland Ln SW / Dorsey St SW	Update corners to provide curb ramps and facilitate ADA access.	Pedestrian/Bicycle Facility Maintenance/Improvements	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Minor Capital Project Priority: Low
FES-22	Oakland Ln SW Lee St SW	Update corners to provide curb ramps	Pedestrian/Bicycle Facility Maintenance/Improvements	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Minor

FINCH ELEMENTARY WALK AUDIT REPORT

		and facilitate ADA access.		Capital Project Priority: Low
FES-23	Oakland Dr SW (Between Oakland Ln SW and Wilmington Ave SW)	Construct horizontal and vertical deflection for traffic calming especially approaching the park entrance and school zone. Consider location and visibility of existing Speed Limit and Children at Play signage and consider moving or replacing, if needed.	Speed Management	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance Priority: Low
FES-24	Oakland Dr SW / Avon Ave SW	Install pedestrian signals, add pedestrian phasing to signal timing, add pedestrian warning signage ahead of each approach, and upgrade traffic signal heads.	Traffic Signal Improvements	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Minor Capital Project Priority: High
FES-25	Princess Ave SW / Oakland Ln SW	Repair or replace street sign at Princess Ave and Oakland Ln	Signing and Pavement Markings	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance Priority: High
FES-26	Princess Ave SW (Between Avon Ave SW and Wilmington Ave SW)	Refresh or replace lighting.	Lighting	Agency: ATLDOT/Georgia Power Project Type: Major Capital Project Priority: High

FINCH ELEMENTARY WALK AUDIT REPORT

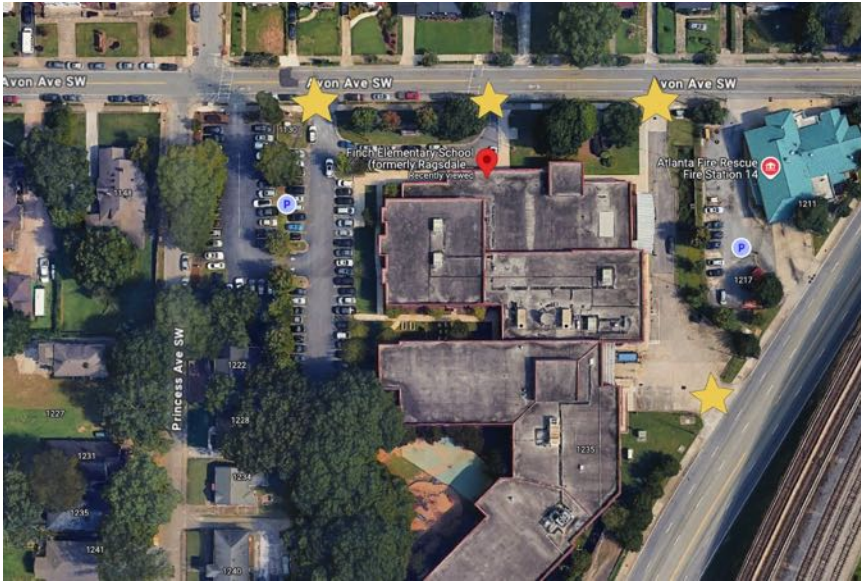
FES-27	Avon Ave SW	Construction of a new fence in this section of the school, which is resistant to damage. Also, consider if a gate or access point is needed at this location.	Maintenance (Other)	Agency: School Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance Priority: Low
FES-28	Princess Ave SW (N of Avon Ave SW)	Clear and repair drainage structures which are too low and create a hazard to bicyclists.	Maintenance (Other)	Agency: Department of Watershed Management Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance Priority: High
FES-29	Oakland Dr SW (S of Avon Ave SW)	Engage utility to consider moving natural gas obstruction to sidewalk.	Maintenance (Other)	Agency: ATLDOT Project Type: Major Capital Project Priority: Low
FES-30	Avon Ave SW	Coordinate with Cathedral of Faith Church, as well as surrounding neighborhood residents, to understand the community's need for on-street parking, discuss the importance of keeping bike lanes and sidewalks clear, and develop improvements. After implementing identified improvements	Maintenance (Other)	Agency: ATLDOT/APS Police Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance Priority: High

FINCH ELEMENTARY WALK AUDIT REPORT

		(such as signage, vertical bike lane elements, etc.), conduct ongoing coordination with stakeholders, as well as enforcement of bike lanes and sidewalks (warning tickets, tickets).		
FES-31	Avon Ave SW	New plan for afternoon school pick-up for car riders, could utilize Avon Ave to slow traffic.	Maintenance (Other)	Agency: Finch Elementary, APS Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance Priority: Low
FES-32	Study Area	Code enforcement for bin placement by residents and public waste.	Maintenance (Other)	Agency: School or Local Church Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance Priority: High
FES-33	Study Area	Repair and replace utility poles along the corridor, as needed.	Maintenance (Other)	Agency: Georgia Power Project Type: Tactical/Maintenance Priority: Low

**ATTACHMENT B:
WALK AUDIT MEETING SUMMARY**

Student Arrival Observation Logistics



The morning observation phase was a coordinated effort between consultants, ATLDOT project management, and key school personnel, including the crossing guard, safety patrol officer, and teachers assigned to morning bus duty. Participants were strategically positioned at main access points to the school campus to observe student arrival behaviors and interactions with traffic, sidewalks, and crossings.

Before the arrival observation began, the group gathered to review goals, roles, and specific

FIGURE 1. MORNING OBSERVATION STAFFING LOCATIONS observation locations (Figure 1). After the arrival period, team members reconvened to debrief and share initial impressions, noting traffic conditions, points of congestion, and any recurring safety concerns observed during the process.

Experiential Walk Audit Logistics

The experiential walk audit was conducted to assess infrastructure conditions, walkability, and safety across the school's surrounding streets. Unlike other audits where participants split into route-based subgroups, the entire audit team remained together to walk both proposed routes in full. This approach was adopted in response to feedback from guardians during a listening session held the previous day, which emphasized the importance of viewing both routes. The walk audit took place on March 28, 2025, from 8:30AM to 10:30AM.

Route One

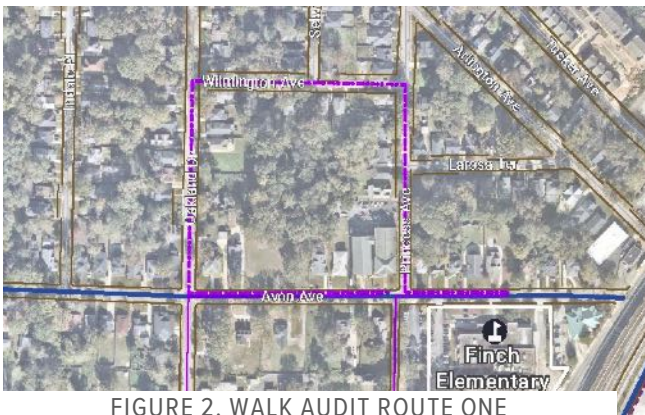
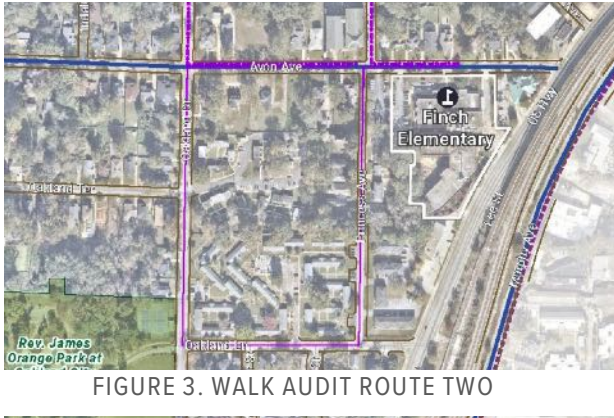


FIGURE 2. WALK AUDIT ROUTE ONE

The first route followed Princess Avenue, continued along Oakland Lane and Oakland Drive, and concluded at Avon Avenue (Figure 2).

FINCH ELEMENTARY WALK AUDIT REPORT



Route Two

The second route began again at Princess Avenue, then moved through Wilmington Avenue and Oakland Drive before also ending at Avon Avenue (Figure 3).

Audit participants included a diverse mix of stakeholders, such as representatives from the consultant and ATLDOT project management teams, the school crossing guard, guardians, school staff, Parks and Recreation personnel, and even animal control staff, reflecting the multi-agency approach needed to tackle student travel safety holistically.

The audit began with a briefing to review the proposed walking route and discuss safety protocols. As the group navigated the area, participants documented observations related to sidewalk conditions, crossing safety, driver behavior, visibility, and environmental challenges. A post-walk discussion allowed attendees to reflect on findings and discuss immediate and long-term recommendations for improving travel safety around the school.

Digital Survey

To broaden community input beyond those able to participate in person, a geospatial digital survey was developed for stakeholders of Finch Elementary School. This interactive tool allowed respondents to identify and comment on specific areas of concern within the school's parent responsibility zone using an online map. The survey proved to be a convenient and accessible method for collecting feedback from parents, guardians, staff, and community members who could not attend in person. In total, 4 responses were received.

Walk Audit Findings

Together, the student arrival observation, experiential walk audit, and digital survey activities generated insights into the safety and accessibility of Finch Elementary. The data and reflections collected from these efforts is summarized below.

Traffic Flow and Safety Issues

- Parent drivers were observed speeding and weaving, particularly along Oakland Drive and Avon Avenue. Unsafe interactions occurred at South Princess and Avon due to right-of-way confusion. Several near-miss incidents and aggressive driving behaviors were documented.
- The intersection of Oakland Drive and Avon lacks protected pedestrian signals or ADA ramps, while others, like Oakland Lane and Oakland Drive, are poorly marked and often ignored by drivers.
- Students enter the school property through a broken section of fencing.
- Parking lanes on Avon are underutilized or misused, often appearing as turn or bike lanes and contributing to confusion.

Insufficient/Inconsistent Signage and Markings

- School zone signs are often obscured by vegetation or placed behind utility poles. Church signage appeared more prominent than school signs.

FINCH ELEMENTARY WALK AUDIT REPORT

- Markings such as crosswalks and school zone indicators are faded or missing in front of school.
- School zone signs display incorrect operational times.

Sidewalk and Pedestrian Safety Concerns

- Sidewalks throughout the walk audit loop are cracked, broken, obstructed by vegetation, or completely absent, especially along Princess Avenue and Wilmington Avenue.
- Multiple corridors lack ramps or feature infrastructure that dead-ends into obstacles like signage or vegetation.
- Trash, broken utility poles, pine straw on sidewalks, and roadkill create an unsafe and unpleasant walking experience.

Biking Infrastructure Gaps

- The bike lane on Avon is reportedly too narrow which leads to riders feeling uncomfortable and failing to accommodate safe cycling.
- Low drainage grates and misaligned street furniture pose dangers to cyclists.
- Child-sized bikes were observed, but parents report biking is too dangerous for commuting.

Lighting, Surveillance & Security Issues

- Streetlights are present but non-functional on multiple corridors.
- Gaps in fencing, aggressive dogs, and an obstructed pedestrian path create psychological and physical safety concerns.

Community Connectivity & Perception

- Several students walk in the street due to sidewalk gaps, especially on Princess Avenue where vegetation or neglect obscures potential walkways.
- Students and audit participants reported incidents of harassment and felt unsafe walking on unmaintained routes.
- Some participants were surprised at the abundance of school zone signage on Princess Avenue while noting the absence of similar signage on busier streets like Avon Avenue and Lee Street.

Conclusion

The findings of this walk audit underscore the need for targeted infrastructure upgrades, better maintenance, and programming strategies to improve student travel safety in the Finch Elementary School zone. The audit's participatory approach helped surface local knowledge and lived experience, providing a clearer picture of the community's mobility challenges. Implementing the outlined recommendations will require sustained interagency coordination and community involvement. By addressing the physical and perceptual barriers to walking and biking, these improvements can help create a safer environment for all who travel to and from Finch Elementary.

Appendix **B**



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March 27, 2025

Finch Elementary School Safe Routes to School Engineer's Report

Listening Session

Notes:

- Session demographics:
 - Seven participants report driving to school
 - Two participants report walking to school
 - One participant reports cycling to school but does not allow her student to ride on her own bike
 - One participant reports riding the bus
- Participants report they are concerned about the potential for vehicular collisions due to the following stressors:
 - Drivers not paying attention while rushing to get to work early
 - Traffic moving quickly on Avon where there is no flashing school zone light and signage is lacking or obscured¹
 - Participant expressed that they would like to see signage directing people to slow down and also school zone signage on Avon at the intersection of Avon, Wyland and Epworth as well as Oakland and Avon
- Participants reiterated that right in front of the school, people are driving very fast with no signage to indicate the school zone
 - Crossing guard observed that the signage and flashing signal are actually present in the direction coming from Oakland (near the Madea House) but are covered by vegetation²
 - APS shared that while they can cut back trees, the Madea House is out beyond their area of jurisdiction
- Participants shared that pickups are congested due to people getting off work or going to second shift around 2-3 PM; local traffic appears to use Avon as an alternative route to avoid traffic on Lee or Cascade
- Participants shared that the bus drop-off location behind the school is working well
- Participants shared that Avon is small and not designed for so many cars at drop off
- Participants shared that Finch has only one crossing guard who will run back and forth between multiple crossings to intercept students prepare to cross, but while the guard is away, students will not wait and instead will cross without the guard

¹ There are flashing school zone signs located within 200-500 feet of school property in each direction.

² This sign is located 500' from school property.



- The principal shared that staffing the crossing guard position was difficult until Finch hired this guard and that the budget for hiring crossing guards is limited due to Finch’s small school population and lower amount of walking children compared to other schools
- One participant was surprised to learn that crossing guards in Georgia are paid and shared that in Illinois crossing guards all volunteer and frequently are students themselves
- The principal mused that finding volunteer crossing guards is not a bad idea
- One student, Isa, walks to school. Isa shared that he is frightened by the possibility of being kidnapped³, to which his mother immediately reassured him that he is safe when he walks with her.
- Participants were asked to list their biggest concerns which are as follows:
 - Congestion on Avon
 - Speeding – other schools have speed radar and police
 - Speeding, obstacle-free protected cycling spaces – one parent regularly picks up her student on a bike and the student wants to bike independently. The parent is not comfortable with her student cycling on a separate bike due to the speeds on Avon to Westmont. If the light is green at Oakland, people just blow through. The parent would feel more comfortable if there were traffic calming on Avon up to and even west of Oakland with an actual bike lane⁴. The parent would allow her student to bike on the sidewalk except she finds it uneven as well as too narrow with lots of congestion. Frequently residents leave their trash cans in the bike lane or sidewalk causing obstacles and fail to remove them in a timely manner. Also, the DPW will leave the trash cans in the bike lane or sidewalk after emptying them causing obstacles.
 - Lighting – the principal reports taking different routes to school to make sure routes are clean and has noted that the route from Oakland onto Avon is not well lit, especially in the morning when it’s very dark. The principal suggested that more streetlights are needed.
 - Animals – on Oakland in the Orange Park area, stray animals frequently roam and dogs will follow pedestrians for a block or more
 - The team shared that animal services participated in the Stanton walk audit last week and could be invited to the Finch walk audit as well
 - Parent behavior – while carpool lines do not interfere with walking and biking, drivers will block driveways. One participant requested a police car at drop-off and pick-up to sit in the school zone to deter bad behavior.
 - The principal and crossing guard shared that in the past an officer has done just that and even yelled at the cars exhibiting bad or illegal behaviors, but expressed that unfortunately, it did not seem to help.

³ Five days prior to this listening session, a man was kidnapped roughly 10 blocks from Isa’s home.

⁴ Avon is a marked cycle route with shared lanes in both directions except between Lee and Wyland in the west direction which has a dedicated 4’ bike lane.



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- Speeding – one participant enthusiastically requested speed bumps in the area and shared that they were recently installed in her neighborhood on Langston and are so effective that she now avoids Langston entirely.
- Speed enforcement – participants requested a tag camera for the school zone. There was immediate but playful pushback from other participants joking that the teachers will be mad when they're late for work.
- Participants were asked to discuss an ideal commute:
 - Participants reflected that the walking commute with a parent chaperone feels comfortable but most people would not allow younger students to walk commute, especially alone
 - A group walk would be good with a chaperone of at least 16 years of age to make sure children aren't harassed; participants feel very uncomfortable with level of homeless activity in the area, especially because one man lives on the corner of Lee and Avon semi-permanently
 - A group bike would also help with level of comfort but participants suggested that a route with a "magical side street" would be nice, indicating that even in a group, Avon is unsafe
 - Participants realized while discussing a group bike that they were unaware of the bike storage options upon arrival at the school.
 - Currently, there are no bike storage options, but the principal suggested that they could request APS facilities to install bike rack.
 - Participants shared their belief that biking to school is always dangerous because students will bike in the street instead of on the sidewalk and they feel that the roads are not safe.
 - Participants requested a stronger police presence, specifically horse-mounted and bike patrol officers.
 - Students were asked directly to comment
 - Walking with friends or family would make students want to walk.
 - A perfect trip to school would include a Lamborghini.
 - One student would prefer to ride the bus but resides in the walk-zone and his family walks. He doesn't like to walk because his feet hurt!
 - One student who arrives by car, would prefer to take the bus to be with friends.
 - Participants shared that they would like to see more trusted people at every crossing
 - Participants observed that many drivers run the red light at Oakland and Avon which does/could leave students stranded, waiting multiple cycles to make a safe crossing⁵
- When asked what benefit increasing walking/biking and reducing car/bus ridership would bring to the school community, participants emphasized the health benefits and also suggested that if students were incentivized to walk or bike in groups, they may be tardy less often
- APS Transportation comments

⁵ There is no pedestrian signal at the intersection of Oakland and Avon.



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- APS transportation wished there were a way to implement pedestrian bridges to fully eliminate the threat of unsafe crossing
- APS transportation shared their regret that they do not have capacity for more bus riders and shared that while speed cameras may be taken away due to pending legislation, fines for passing buses will increase to \$1000
- Participants were asked for feedback on the walk audit loops:
 - The crossing guard suggested that both loops have benefit because the Wilmington loop has the 4 walkers which have to cross Avon on Princess. The crossing guard observed that most walkers overall use Oakland lane loop and strongly encouraged the group to do both
- Additional comments
 - The crossing guard has to monitor multiple crosswalks and frequently runs back and forth between them. Two crosswalks are located on the same corner but the mid-block crossing is significantly farther away. Students cross at the midblock primarily because they like to stop at the corner store at the intersection of Avon and Lee
 - Participants observed that this corner store is a popular illegal cut-through for drivers who use it to avoid waiting at the stop light. This creates an unsafe condition for students walking through that lot since the drivers frequently execute this maneuver in an aggressive manner.
 - Participants shared that this intersection overall is problematic from their perspective not less because the semi-permanent homeless man has claimed the corner opposite
 - Participants would like to make commuters in the neighborhood aware of these issues and their consequences via local news and radio
- school for events like teacher appreciation.

