



# Gideon Pond Elementary School

Burnsville, MN - East 130th St

*Safe Routes to School Demonstration Project: Summary and Evaluation*



DECEMBER 2021



## OVERVIEW

Demonstration projects are temporary, low-cost roadway projects used to test potential long-term solutions to improve walking, bicycling, and public spaces. Projects can include bike lanes, crosswalk markings, curb extensions, and median safety islands.

The demonstration project at the Gideon Pond Elementary campus originated from a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plan completed in 2020. In collaboration with school staff, MnDOT, project consultants, and volunteers, the City of Burnsville installed the demonstration project in the summer of 2021.

The goal of the project was to make it easier and safer for students to cross East 130th St, where there were concerns about crossing distances and driver speeds.

After multiple draft designs, the SRTS team decided on curb extensions across East 130th St at Oakland Dr and Portland Ave S. By reducing the distance to cross at intersections, the design aims to slow drivers and allow pedestrians to cross more efficiently and safely.



### PROJECT SUMMARY

**INSTALLATION DATE:** August 2021

**DAYS TO INSTALL:** 1

**MATERIAL COST:** ~\$11,000 (including pedestrian signs that can be reused on future projects)

**FEATURED ELEMENTS INSTALLED:**

- Curb extensions (5)
- Centerline hardenings (2)
- Pedestrian signs (4)
- High-visibility stop bar (1)

# LESSONS LEARNED AND NEXT STEPS

The SRTS team fielded a survey to capture feedback from the community about the project sites. A large majority of survey respondents reported that the demonstration projects made them feel safer using the street, made them more aware of people crossing the street, and improved safety for everyone, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities. Over 70% of respondents would like to see more projects like this one in the future.

## DRIVER AWARENESS:

Most survey respondents reported that the project increased visibility and awareness of pedestrians. In the words of one respondent: "It's annoying as a driver... which means it

is working to keep pedestrians safe= the whole point! So it's an annoyance I happily take to ensure that students and community members feel more safe in a high-traffic area."

## DRIVER SPEEDS:

Nearly 80% of survey respondents who drove through the sites reporting slowing down because of the installations, improving pedestrian safety and comfort.

## PEDESTRIAN COMFORT AND SAFETY:

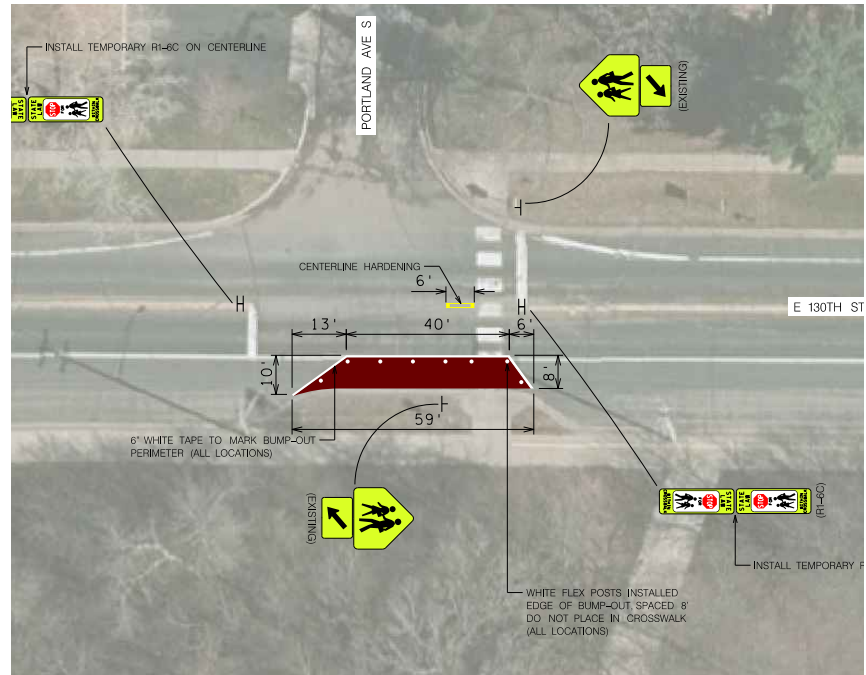
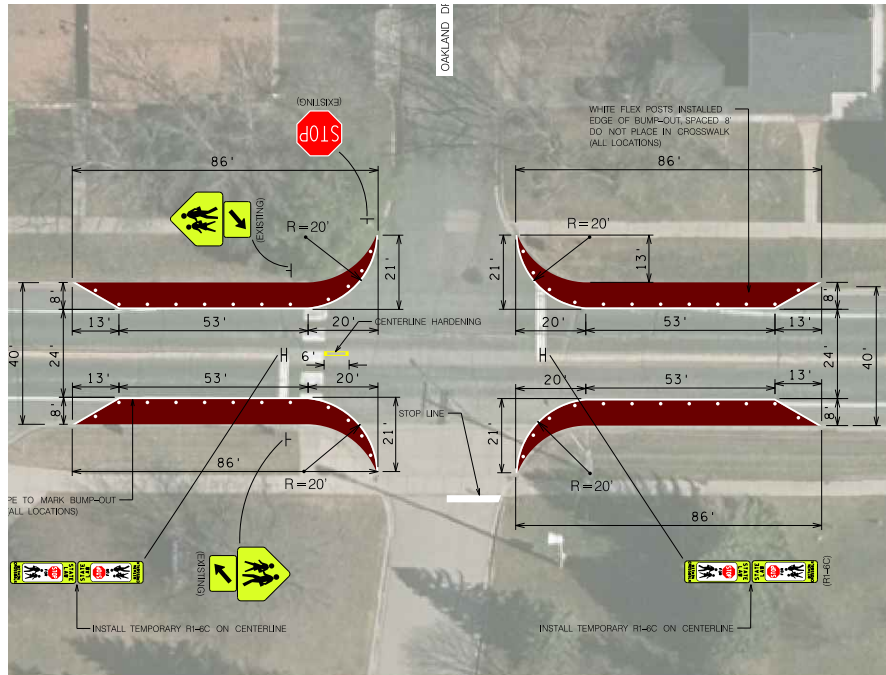
Most survey respondents drove through the project sites. Respondents who walked were positive about the project's impacts, though almost half of all respondents suggested the project was not likely to make them walk there

more frequently, suggesting that other street and policy improvements may be needed to support more widespread walking and biking.

## SUGGESTIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS:

Most respondents were in favor of making the project permanent as currently designed, and some advocated for additional regulatory changes such as prohibiting parking on Portland and Oakland near the intersections at drop-off and pick-up. A recurring concern was that, even with improvements in driver behaviors as a result of the project, speeding and yielding remained significant issues. These are important considerations to address when stakeholders evaluate permanent design scenarios for the corridor.





## DESIGN

The demonstration project at the Gideon Pond Elementary school campus consisted of two pairs of curb extensions at the intersection of the 130th St E and Oakland Ave, as well as a curb extension on one side of 130th St E at Portland Ave. At both intersections, in-street pedestrian crossing signs and in-street centerline hardenings augmented the effects of the curb extensions. A high visibility stop bar was also added at the parking lot exit into the Oakland Ave intersection.

The curb extensions are intended to alert drivers to the presence of crossing pedestrians, reduce perceived lane widths and thereby encourage drivers to

slow down, and to shorten pedestrian crossing distances so that people walking and rolling have to spend less time in unprotected portions of the road. When successful, these temporary curb extensions can be made permanent with simple concrete curbs that connect with existing pedestrian facilities.

The centerline hardenings serve to better delineate lanes of traffic and reduce the perceived width of the roadway, slowing traffic speeds and increasing driver awareness and visibility of pedestrians. The in-street pedestrian signs enhance these effects by alerting drivers to the presence of pedestrians. Like with the curb extensions, these elements can be incorporated into a permanent design.

## EVALUATION

Safe Routes to School staff worked with the community to collect feedback about the demonstration project. This feedback helps describe the effects of the project and to identify opportunities to modify and improve the design if and when the project is constructed with permanent materials.

Speed data were collected before the project was installed and while it was in place in order to measure whether the project helped to reduce dangerous vehicle speeds. The project staff and community also fielded an online survey to collect input about how pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers felt about the project and to solicit ideas for improving the project in the future.



## RESULTS

Speed data and positive community feedback demonstrate the effects of the project. Average speeds decreased from 34 MPH to 31 MPH; 85th percentile speeds decreased from 39 MPH to 36 MPH; and the number of vehicles traveling over 40 MPH decreased by almost 60%.

### SURVEY RESPONDENTS AGREE THAT THE PROJECT...

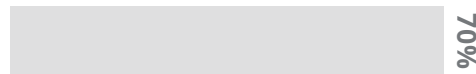
*Improved safety for everyone, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities.*



*Made them aware of crossing pedestrians.*



*Made them feel safer using the street.*



*Made the street feel more pleasant.*



*Made them more likely to walk or bike on the street.*



### AVERAGE SPEEDS DECREASED

