



Lincoln High School

Lake City, MN - Prairie St S and Lakewood Ave W

Safe Routes to School Demonstration Project: Summary and Evaluation



DECEMBER 2022



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 Lincoln High School 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 Lake City installed the demonstration project in the spring of 2022.

The goal of the project was to make it easier and safer for students to cross Prairie St S and Lakewood Ave, where there were concerns about congestion, visibility, crossing distances, and driver speeds.

After multiple draft designs, the SRTS team decided on curb extensions across Lakewood Ave at Prairie St S, and curb extensions and a raised crosswalk on Prairie St S at the high school entrance. The design aims to reduce crossing distances for pedestrians, calm traffic, increase pedestrian visibility, and provide pedestrian accessibility improvements.



PROJECT SUMMARY

INSTALLATION DATE: May 2022

DAYS TO INSTALL: 1

MATERIAL COST: ~\$12,000 (including temporary signs that can be reused on future projects, not including raised crosswalk provided with funding from Minnesota Department of Health)

FEATURED ELEMENTS INSTALLED:

- Raised crosswalk (1)
- Curb extensions (4)
- School crossing signs (2)
- Speed Hump Ahead signs (2)
- In-road pedestrian crossing signs (2)

LESSONS LEARNED AND NEXT STEPS

The SRTS team fielded a survey and had conversations with school and city staff to capture feedback from the community about the project sites. A majority of survey respondents reported that the demonstration projects made them more aware of people crossing the street.

DRIVER SPEEDS AND AWARENESS:

Most survey respondents reported that the project increased visibility and awareness of pedestrians. In the words of one respondent: "It was amazing to see how much it slowed vehicle traffic. I've seen multiple vehicles brake and slow down at both of these demonstration sites."

60% of survey respondents who drove through the sites reported slowing down because of the installations, improving pedestrian safety and comfort. Also, many people who walked through the sites noticed that people driving were going more slowly with the projects in place.

PEDESTRIAN COMFORT AND SAFETY:

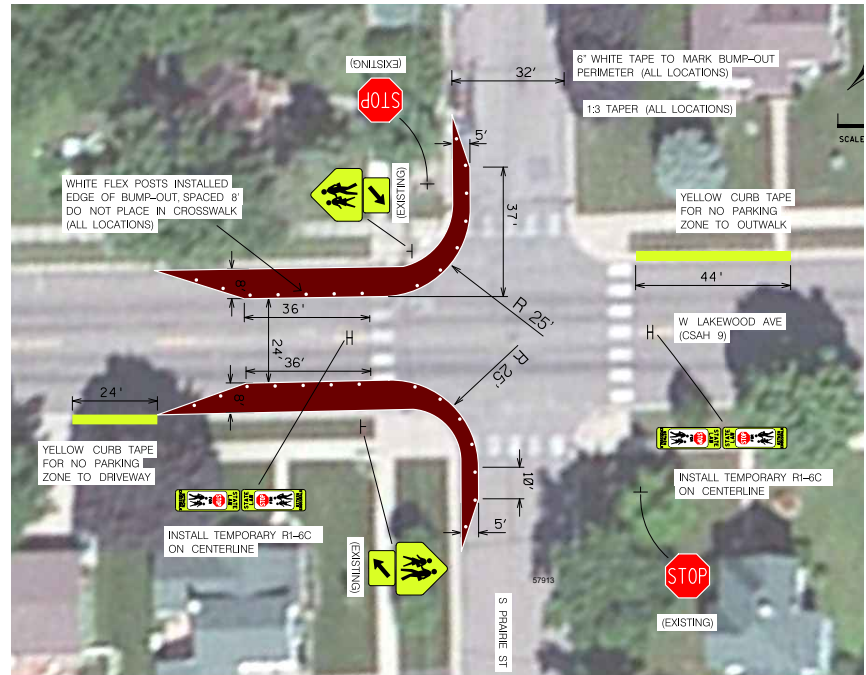
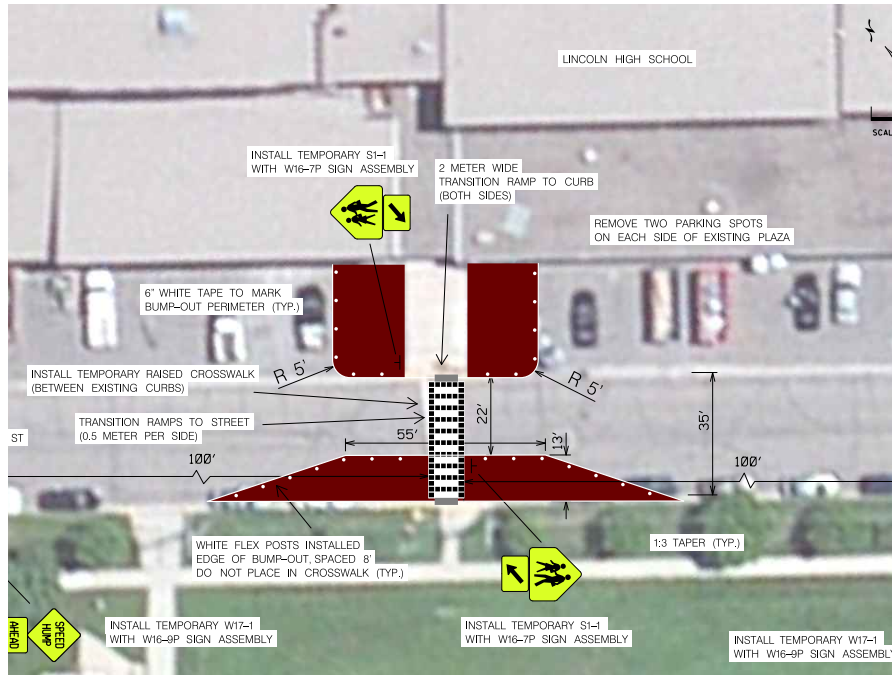
There were fewer than 30 responses to the survey, and most survey respondents drove through the project sites, while half walked. There were mixed results from the survey, suggesting that additional street and policy improvements may be needed to support more widespread walking and biking.

School staff noted that they felt the changes improved the overall safety at the crossings.

SUGGESTIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS:

One-third of respondents were in favor of making the project permanent as currently designed, and some advocated for additional regulatory changes such as providing a drop-off zone outside the high school. A recurring concern was about access to parking around the school. Also, the in-street pedestrian signs on Lakewood had to be removed soon after installation to allow large farm equipment to move through. These are important considerations to address when stakeholders evaluate permanent design scenarios for the corridor.





DESIGN

The demonstration projects near the Lincoln High School campus consisted of a pair of curb extensions at the intersection of Prairie St S and Lakewood Ave; and a curb extension on one side of Prairie St S opposite the high school entrance, paired with a raised crosswalk and a protected pedestrian plaza/curb extension around the school entrance. At Lakewood Ave, in-street pedestrian crossing signs augmented the effects of the curb extensions.

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 concrete curbs that connect with existing pedestrian facilities.

The raised crosswalk creates an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant crossing to the high school and also helps to slow vehicle speeds and increase pedestrian visibility. Like with the curb extensions, these elements can be incorporated into a permanent design.

EVALUATION

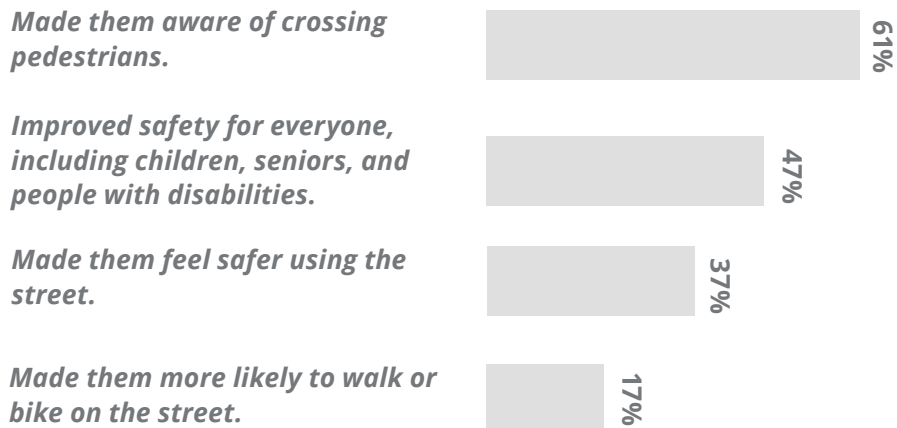
Safe Routes to School staff worked with the community to collect feedback about the demonstration project. This feedback helps describe the effects of the project and to identify opportunities to modify and improve the design if and when the project is constructed with permanent materials.

Tina Moen, Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) coordinator for Wabasha County, offered this input: "Supporting kids in being active and safe is important. It is hopeful this demonstration project is a positive experience for the school and community and that it helps us prepare to apply for a MnDOT SRTS Implementation grant down the road, once we've had feedback on this project."



RESULTS

SURVEY RESPONDENTS AGREE THAT THE PROJECT...



TESTIMONIAL

"The demonstration project raised awareness and got people's eyes open that people are walking on our streets and crossing near the school. I've noticed that students are using crosswalks well. Getting people to slow down has been helpful, and people got used to the lack of parking at the crosswalk."

-Megan Smith, Lake City Director of Planning & Community Development

