



# Sweeney Elementary School

Shakopee, MN - 10th 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 next to the Sweeney Elementary campus originated from a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plan completed in 2021. In collaboration with school staff, MnDOT, project consultants, and volunteers, the City of Shakopee 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 10th Ave W in the vicinity of Clay St, where there were concerns about crossing distances and driver speeds.

After multiple draft designs, the SRTS team decided to install curb extensions across 10th Ave W in combination with relocating a high-visibility crosswalk. By reducing the distance to cross at intersections, the design aims to slow drivers and allow pedestrians to cross more safely and efficiently.



### PROJECT SUMMARY

INSTALLATION DATE: April 2022

DAYS TO INSTALL: 1

MATERIAL COST: ~\$9,000 (including pedestrian signs that can be reused on future projects)

FEATURED ELEMENTS INSTALLED:

- Curb extensions (4)
- Pedestrian signs (2)
- Merge lane signs (2)
- High-visibility crosswalk markings (1)

# LESSONS LEARNED AND NEXT STEPS

The SRTS team fielded a survey to capture feedback from the community about the project sites. Most survey respondents reported that the demonstration projects improved safety for everyone, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities.

## DRIVER AWARENESS AND SPEEDS:

Nearly half of survey respondents reported that the project increased visibility and awareness of pedestrians.

Nearly 60% of survey respondents who drove through the site reported slowing down because of the installations, improving pedestrian safety and comfort. In the words of one respondent: "I observed drivers

slowing to the speed limit when they had to merge and then pass through the experiment area. I would like to see this concept made permanent and expanded so there isn't just one safe place to cross this road."

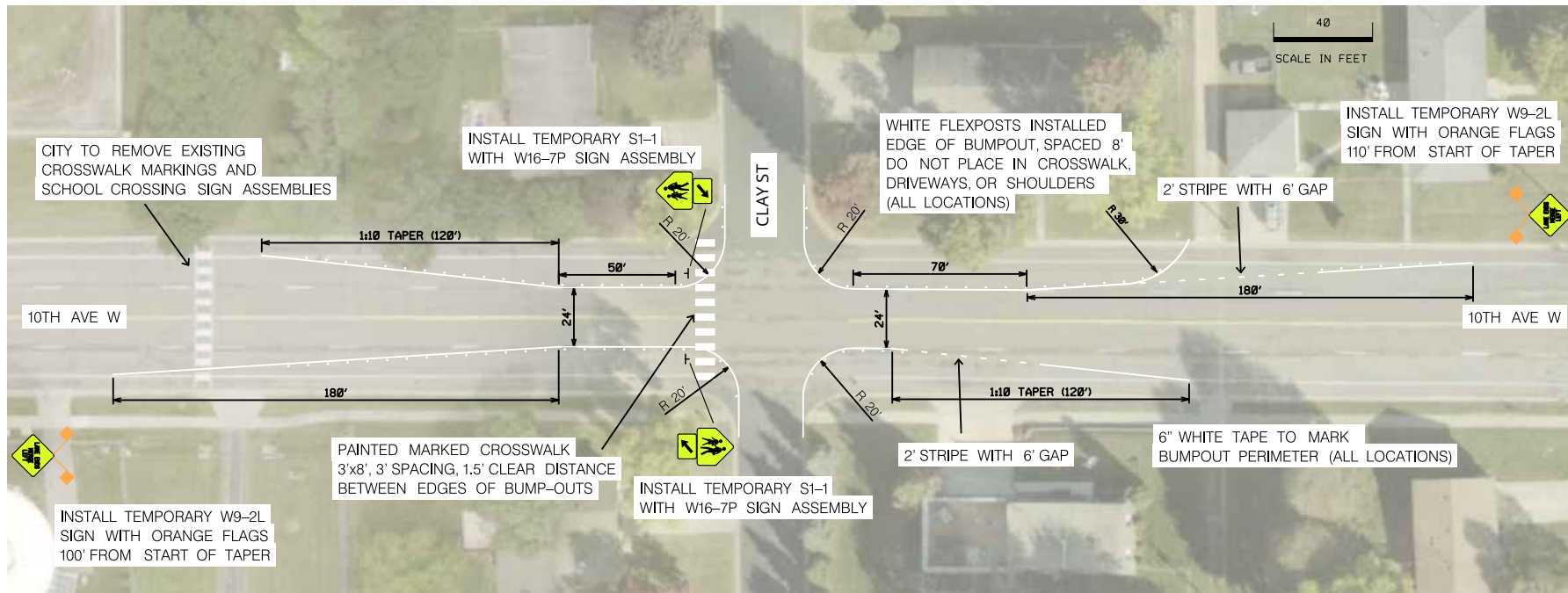
## PEDESTRIAN COMFORT AND SAFETY:

90% of survey respondents drove through the demonstration project site, while over 40% walked or biked. Responses about the project's impacts were mixed, suggesting that other street and policy improvements may be needed to support more widespread walking and biking.

## SUGGESTIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS:

About one quarter of respondents were in favor of making the project permanent as currently designed. Some advocated for different types of installations, such as rectangular rapid flashing beacons, or installations in different locations closer to the school, such as at 10th and Adams St. A recurring concern was about driver awareness of the lane reduction, suggesting the need for additional education, signage, or other awareness-raising activities. These are important considerations to address when stakeholders evaluate permanent design scenarios for the corridor.





## DESIGN

The demonstration project at the Sweeney Elementary school campus consisted of two pairs of curb extensions and high-visibility crosswalk markings at the intersection of 10th Ave W and Clay St. In-street pedestrian crossing signs augmented the effects of the curb extensions, and merge lane signs alerted drivers to the upcoming lane reduction.

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 high-visibility crosswalk markings are meant to alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians and to reinforce pedestrian right-of-way when crossing the intersection.

## EVALUATION

The project team 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.

There was some confusion among people driving about the taper from four lanes to two lanes. If a permanent installation was considered as part of a corridor-wide road diet, that concern may be reduced if there is no need for vehicles to merge right before a crosswalk.



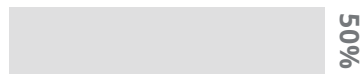
# RESULTS

## SURVEY RESPONDENTS AGREE THAT THE PROJECT...

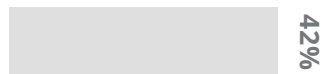
*Improved safety for everyone, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities.*



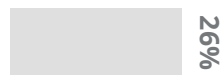
*Made them feel safer walking on/ across the street.*



*Increased drivers' awareness of crossing pedestrians.*



*Should be made permanent*



### SURVEY TESTIMONIALS

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"Thank you for experimenting with this type of traffic calming. I saw so many kids biking and walking along this street all summer to get to parks. I would love for 10th street to become a safe path to get them there."

"It took me a bit to understand what the project was for, but I thought it was a good idea after learning its purpose. I think it would be a good permanent idea if students are expected to walk to school in that area."

