



# Kaposia Education Center

South St Paul, MN - 1st Ave S at Dale St E and Spruce St E

*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 projects at the Kaposia Education Center campus originated from a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plan completed in 2018. In collaboration with school staff, MnDOT, project consultants, and volunteers 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 1st Ave S, where there were concerns about congestion, visibility, crossing distances, and driver behavior.

After multiple draft designs, the SRTS team decided on curb extensions across 1st Ave S at Dale St E and Spruce St E. High-visibility crosswalk markings were added to the southern leg of the intersection of 1st Ave S and Spruce St E, which didn't already have them. The design aims to reduce crossing distances for pedestrians, calm traffic, increase driver yielding, and increase pedestrian visibility.



### PROJECT SUMMARY

INSTALLATION DATE: May 2022

DAYS TO INSTALL: 1

MATERIAL COST: ~\$11,000

FEATURED ELEMENTS INSTALLED:

- Curb extensions (8)
- High-visibility crosswalk (1)\*

\* Note: There were seven existing high-visibility crosswalks.

# LESSONS LEARNED AND NEXT STEPS

The SRTS team fielded a survey to capture feedback from the community about the project sites. A majority of 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 60% would like to see more projects like this one in the future.

## DRIVER SPEEDS AND AWARENESS:

Most survey respondents reported that the project increased visibility and awareness of pedestrians. In the words of one respondent: "It made me feel better as a parent knowing my child was standing in the bump out with

the poles in place while waiting to cross the street to school."

About two-thirds of survey respondents who drove through the sites reported slowing down because of the installations, improving pedestrian safety and comfort.

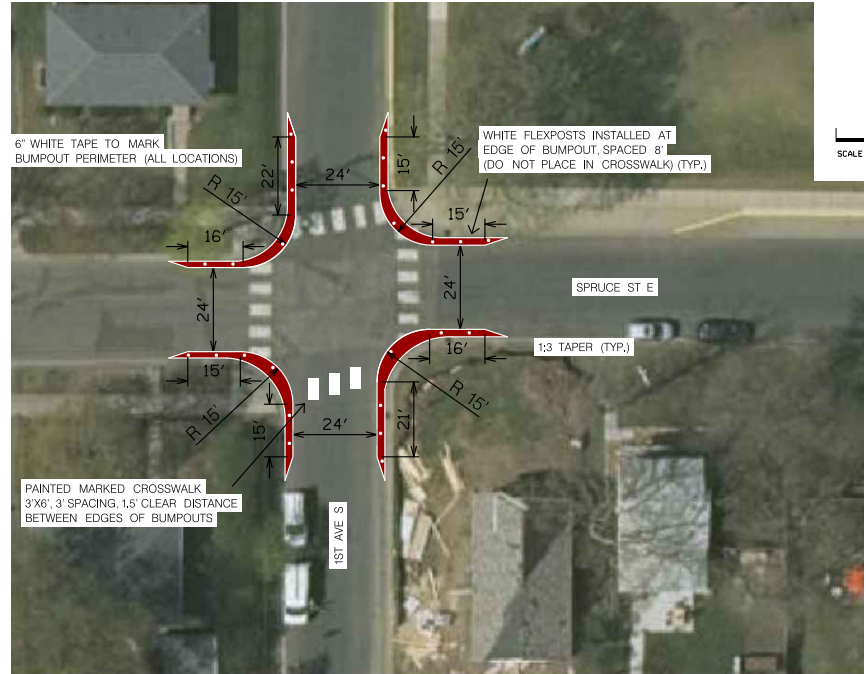
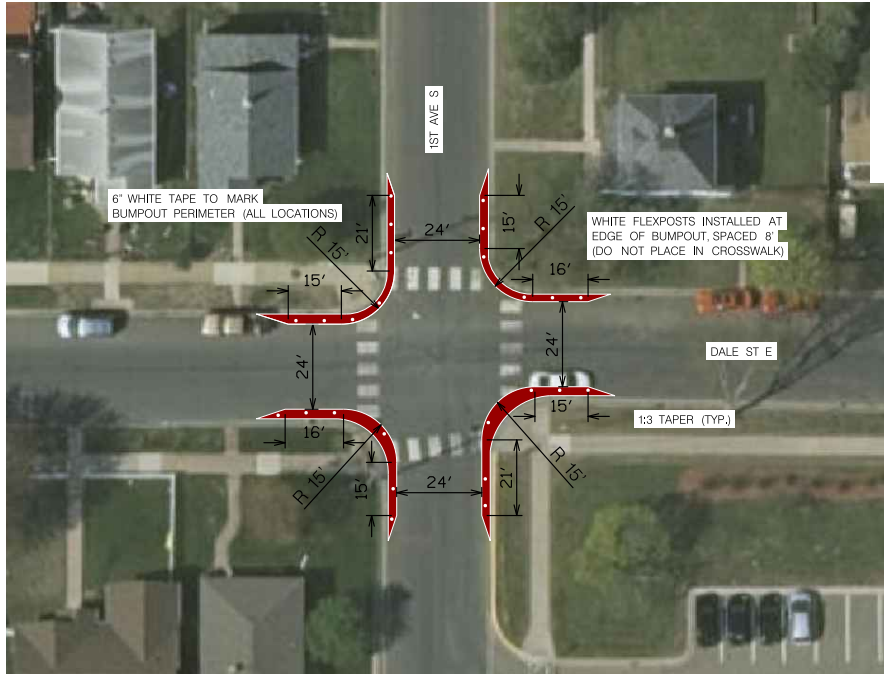
## PEDESTRIAN COMFORT AND SAFETY:

Almost 60% of respondents walked through the project site. Respondents who walked were positive about the project's impacts, although they were split on whether the project would 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:

A majority of respondents were in favor of making the project permanent as currently designed. Some advocated for adding sidewalks where they are currently lacking as a first step in creating safer spaces for people to walk. A few respondents expressed concerns that reducing the width of the street using bumpouts would put people biking in closer proximity to car traffic. Another recurring concern was about the aesthetics of the installation. These are important considerations to address when stakeholders evaluate permanent design scenarios for the corridor.





## OVERVIEW

Demonstration projects are temporary, low-cost roadway projects used to test potential long-term solutions to improve walking, bicycling, and public space. District East and Spruce Lake are the crosswalk markings, curb extensions, and median safety islands. In addition to the new crosswalk markings, the demonstration project also installed high-visibility crosswalk markings. The demonstration projects at the Kaposia Education Center campus originated from a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plan completed in 2018, in collaboration with school staff, MnDOT, project consultants and volunteers. The demonstration project, and the opening of the 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.

High-visibility crosswalk markings alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians and reinforce that pedestrians have the right of way at the intersection.

## 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.

Yielding data were collected by 5th grade student safety patrols before the project was installed and while it was in place to measure whether the project helped increase vehicle yielding rates. The SRTS team 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.



**TESTIMONIAL**

"We have had an overwhelmingly positive experience with this demonstration project. As a result of this success, we are working with Dakota County on a Safe Routes to School Grant to potentially expand the bump out / flex post strategy to the other intersections around Kaposia Education Center."

- Local SRTS team co-lead

# RESULTS

Driver yielding data and positive community feedback demonstrate the effects of the project. Rates of people driving yielding to people walking increased at both intersections in both the morning and the afternoon. In addition to the data shown below, SRTS team members shared that they have observed increased pedestrian safety, improved vehicle adherence to traffic laws, and safer intersections for student safety patrol.

## SURVEY RESPONDENTS AGREE THAT THE PROJECT...



## DRIVER YIELDING INCREASED

