



CITY OF OAK CREEK
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL
ACTION PLAN



East Middle School



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Why Safe Routes to School?

Safe Routes to School (“SRTS”) is a set of programs and investments that make it safer, more convenient, inviting, and fun for children and their families to walk and bike to school.

SRTS initiatives contribute to our children’s social and academic success, and provide a foundation for life-long healthful habits.

What’s included in this action plan?

This Safe Routes to School Action Plan is one of nine school-level SRTS plans prepared for the Oak Creek-Franklin Joint School District. The plan includes an inventory and evaluation of **Existing Conditions** for walking and biking around the school, as well as **Recommendations** for both programming and infrastructure improvements.

Programming Recommendations include fun and engaging programs for students and families to increase walking and biking to school. Programs can be relatively easy and inexpensive to implement, and can produce significant results even in the near-term.

Infrastructure Recommendations include a range of physical improvements to a school and its surroundings to improve the safety, comfort, and convenience of walking and biking. This may include upgrading sidewalks or crossings, repairing facilities, filling network gaps, or adding paint, signage, and signals.

The 6 Es of SRTS

Safe Routes to School planning is based on a framework known as the Six Es, which provides a way of thinking about and organizing improvements in and around a school. The 6Es include:



EDUCATION

Education programs and initiatives provide information to children, parents, and community member on safe walking and biking practices.



ENCOURAGEMENT

Encouragement programs inspire families to try walking or biking through fun and inviting activities such as friendly competitions and incentive programs.



ENGINEERING

Engineering includes upgrades to and upkeep of the physical landscape in and around the school such as sidewalks, bikeways, intersections and signs.



ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement programs often include participation from police with a focus on enforcing traffic safety laws, like speed limits, in the vicinity of a school.



EVALUATION

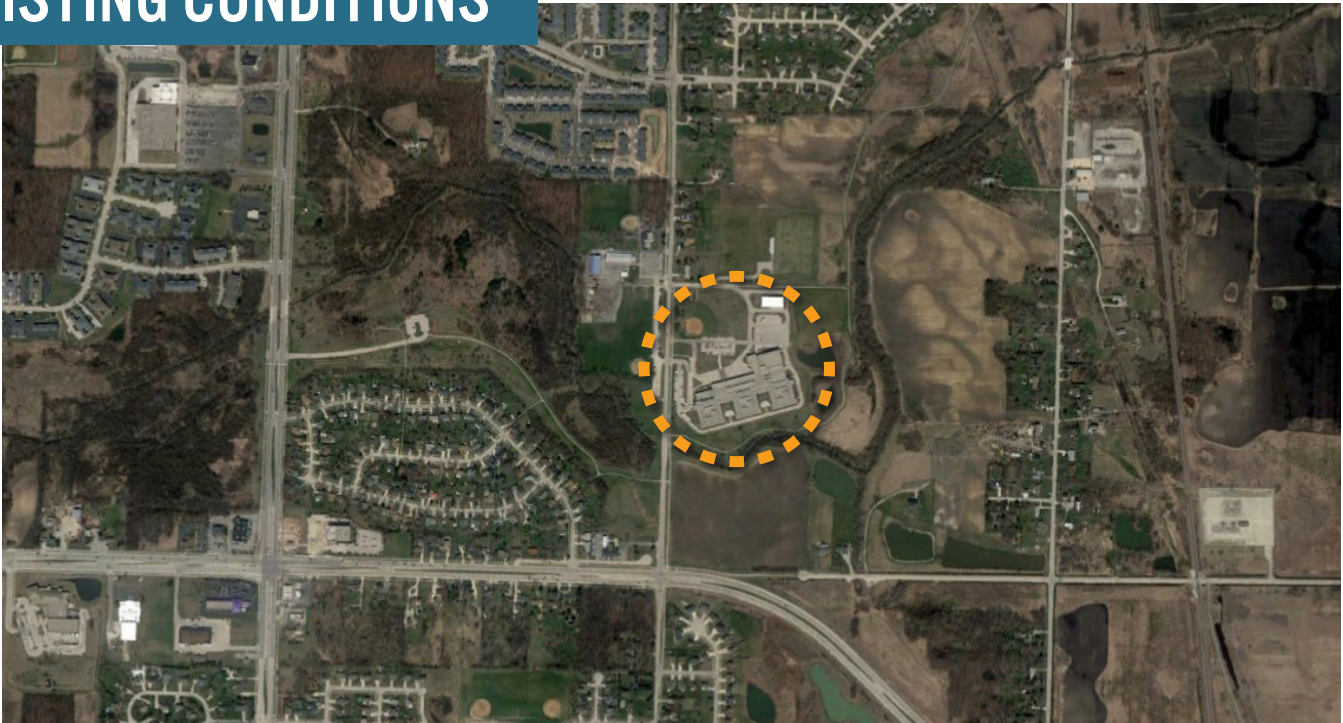
Evaluation measures conditions before, during, and after implementation, helping guide priorities and goals and ensuring efficient use of resources.



EQUITY

Equity focuses on distributing resources fairly throughout a community to ensure all students have equal access to high quality infrastructure and programming.

EXISTING CONDITIONS



CONTEXT

East Middle School is bounded to the west by S Shepard Avenue. The campus is located a half-mile northeast of Shepard Hills Elementary, one mile south of Oak Creek High School, and one-quarter mile to the north of E Ryan Road.

Several residential multifamily developments are located two blocks to the north of the campus and single family residential homes are located to the southwest and north of

the school. The nearest public library is located 1.5 miles to the northwest. A commercial development is located three-quarters of a mile to the northwest of the school, which includes a Target, Kohl's and Panera Bread retailer.

East Middle School Quick Facts:



Principal
Susan Thompson



Number of Students
983



Health and Physical Education
Paul Bastian, Kim Bolender, Lindsay Larkin, Mary Sildo, and Lori Walters



Arrival Time
8:00 a.m.



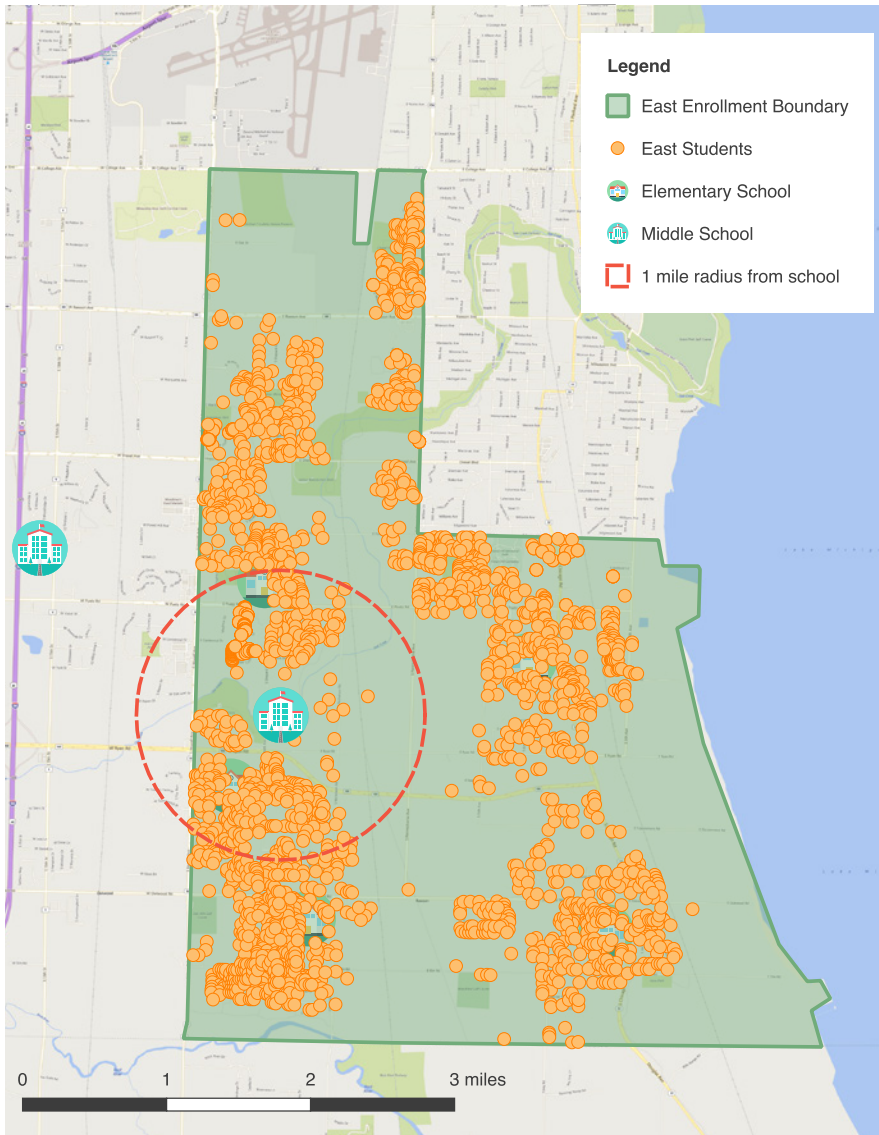
Grades
6-8



Dismissal Time
3:45 p.m.

ENROLLMENT DENSITY

Residential locations for enrolled students cluster throughout the East Middle School attendance area. Approximately one-sixth of the students live within a half-mile of the school.



WALKING/BIKING POTENTIAL:

Approximately **fifteen percent** of all students live within a walkable or bikeable distance from school (that is, one half-mile), but only about **seven percent** of students walk or bike today. *How might we grow this number?*



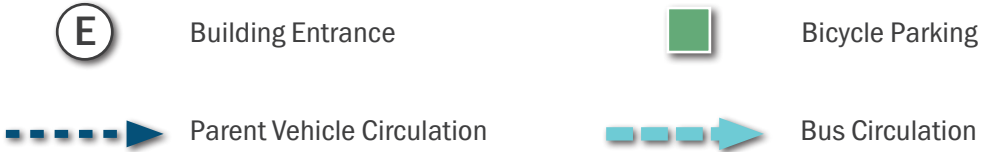
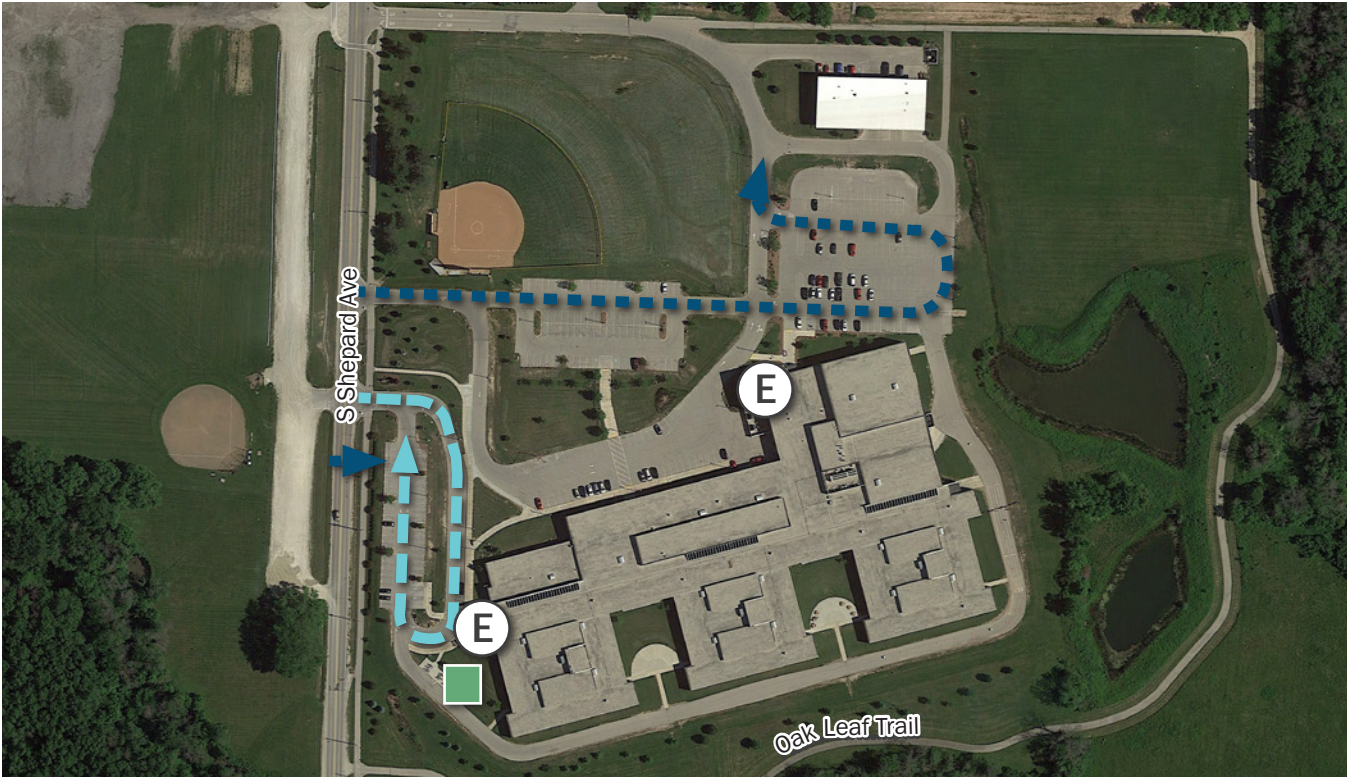
ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

East Middle School’s main entrance is located on the west side of the building. Students departing by bus exit at the north or west side of the building. Buses pick up students at all three building entrances. All buses enter and exit the parking lots from / onto Shepard Avenue.

Parent vehicles drop students off at Door #7 at a designated drop-off area. In the afternoon, parents pick their kids up from the same door. Parents can also park in the lot across

Shepard Avenue and enter through Door #2. All private vehicles enter and exit the parking lots via Shepard Avenue.

Bike parking is located on the west side of the school near the main entrance. Students who walk may exit from the west side of the building to access sidewalks and trails.



EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE



Sidewalks are present along the east side of South Shepard Avenue. They are present on both sides of neighboring residential streets to the west and south of the school.



The **Oak Leaf Trail** connects the residential neighborhoods on the west across S Shepard Avenue to the neighborhoods east of the school.



Marked crosswalks (longitudinal, not high visibility) are located across Ryan Road at S Shepard Avenue (above). Marked crosswalks are also provided across Shepard Road at three Oak Leaf Trail crossings (not shown).



School Speed Zone signs are located along S Shepard Avenue. Flashing school speed zone warnings indicate that the speed limit is 15 miles per hour when children are present.

EXISTING PROGRAMMING

There are no supervised crossing locations. No other walk/bike related programs occur at the school, or information was not provided to the project team.

OTHER DATA

Student Travel Tallies

Forty-one of fifty classrooms submitted travel tallies in November 2016. From the numbers submitted by participating classrooms, it was determined that 36 students walked and 13 students biked to school. Based on enrollment at the time of the study, approximately 5% of East Middle School students walk and 2% of students bike to school.

Parent Survey Summary

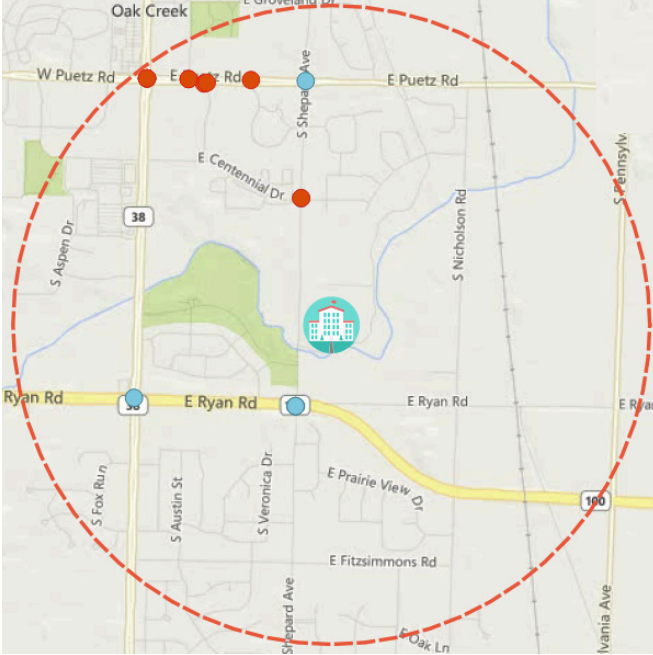
No data collected.

Crash History

Crash data obtained from the City of Oak Creek was mapped by the location of each incident. The data was analyzed by collision type, including crashes between motor vehicles and bicycles and crashes between motor vehicles and pedestrians.

Between 2006 and 2015, there were three collisions involving a motor vehicle and a bicycle and six collisions involving a motor vehicle and a pedestrian within a one mile radius from East Middle School. Two bicycle crashes occurred along E Ryan Road and one crash occurred at S Shepard Avenue and E Puetz Road. Five pedestrian crashes occurred along E Puetz Road between Howell and S Shepard Avenues and one pedestrian crash occurred at the intersection of S Shepard Avenue and E Park Boulevard.

CRASH DATA (2006-2015):



Legend

- East Middle School
- Bicycle Crashes
- Pedestrian Crashes
- 1 mile radius from school

WALK AUDIT

On 11/14/16 a walk audit and arrival/dismissal observation were completed by the audit team. Students were observed biking and walking from the south and west of campus, using grassy shortcuts to reach the southern driveway loop where they crossed to enter the school building.

Twenty-eight buses operated in three areas around the campus with the main drop-off location at the front of the school. Students remained on buses until they were released at 8:25 a.m. Parents dropped off students using a drop-off zone at the front of the school delineated with cones. Staff directed mixed bus and family vehicle traffic when buses arrived at 8:15 a.m.

Students walking home from campus were released at 3:45 p.m. as buses arrived on campus. Some parents picked up their students using the designated pick-up zone at the front of the school while other parents parked along S Shepard Avenue to meet their children as they exited from the west side of the building.

WALK AUDIT CONDITIONS:

Date: 11/14/2016

Day of the Week: Monday

Time: 7:40-9:00 am / 3:00 pm

Weather: Clear/Cloudy, Cool

Audit Team: Rudy Uumbs,
David Maier, Matt Sullivan



ASSETS AND CHALLENGES

Several assets and challenges in and around the school site were identified. These assets and challenges include both programming and infrastructure and are listed below. Specific programming and infrastructure recommendations are detailed in the following section of this report.

- ### Assets
- > Proximity to single family and multifamily housing where a density of students reside
 - > Proximity to trails that run through much of the enrollment boundary area

- ### Challenges
- > Incomplete sidewalk network; no direct walking routes for students to reach the main school building entrance
 - > ADA ramps and accessibility considerations not provided
 - > Mixed vehicle traffic congestion in school parking lots near main building entrance
 - > Proximity to commercial uses and retail that may attract students



Oak Leaf Trail provides an important connection to residential neighborhoods



Locations where conflicts may occur are sometimes without adequate facilities or signs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

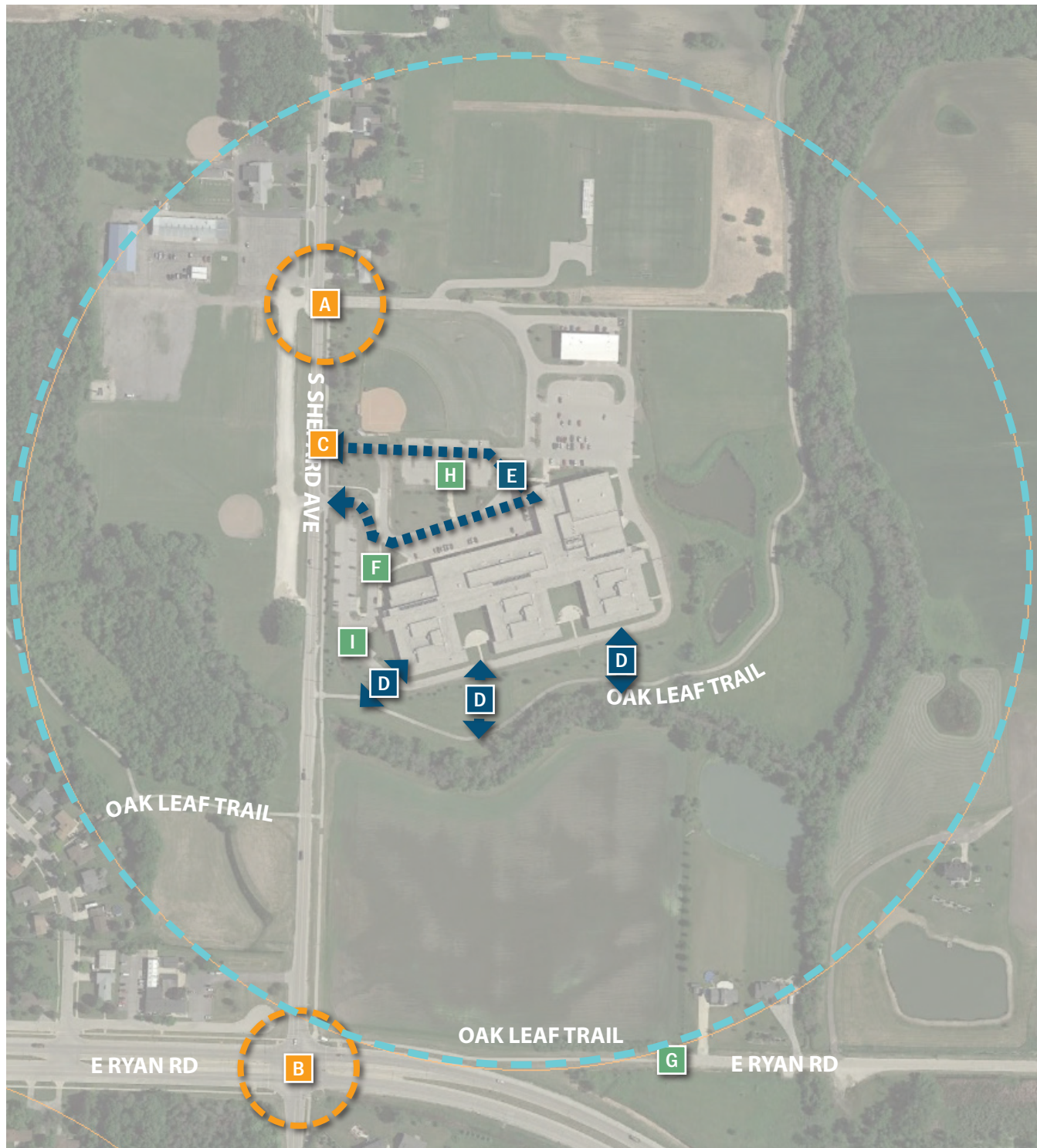
OVERVIEW

Effective Safe Routes to School initiatives include both programming and infrastructure components.

The recommendations listed here offer a selection of location-specific ideas that can be implemented in and near the vicinity of the school - please refer to the table below and to the map on the facing page for more details.

ID	TYPE	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY
INFRASTRUCTURE			
A	Intersection	Add high-visibility crosswalks at all four legs of the intersection and trail connections	High
B	Intersection	Add high-visibility crosswalks at all four legs of the intersection and pedestrian refuge when crossing north-south	High
C	Intersection	Add a stop sign at the exit for cars turning onto S Shepard Avenue	High
D	Sidewalk	Install a sidewalk for students to get from Oak Leaf Trail to the campus parking lot and front entrance	Medium
E	Sidewalk	Create more direct sidewalks with clear crossings for S Shepard Road to the front entrance of the school and to Oak Leaf Trail	High
PROGRAMMING			
F	Programming	Add crossing guard during drop-off and pick-up	High
G	Programming	Potential Park and Walk location for parents to drop students, who will engage in a 1/2 mile walk	Medium
H	Programming	Angle the parking in the faculty lot	Low
I	Programming	Have buses queue around the building leaving room for a fire lane	Low

MAP OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EAST MIDDLE SCHOOL:



- Route Identified for improvement
- Intersection Improvement
- Programming Improvement
- Walk Boundary

PROGRAMMING

This plan includes a variety of programming recommendations to grow walking and biking to school and promote the safety of all students arriving and departing from East Middle School.

PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EAST MIDDLE SCHOOL:

Park and Walk Programs

Park and walk programs are designed to encourage families to park several blocks from school and walk the rest of the way. Not all students are able to walk or bike the whole distance to their school, as they may live too far away or their route may include hazardous traffic. The program allows students who are unable to walk or bike a chance to participate in the Safe Routes to School program. It also helps reduce traffic congestion at the school as fewer parent vehicles will be circulating in the campus area.

Re-route Parking Lot

Parking areas on campus may be better defined to facilitate the flow of bus and car traffic. The small parking lot located at the front of the school should be designated as visitor parking only. To facilitate the movement of buses during arrival and departure, cones may be used to limit through traffic into this lot, with the exception of buses.

Pick-up/Drop-off Procedures

The parent drop-off procedures may be refined through better signage, the use of cones, and staff facilitators that clearly instruct parents and bus drivers on the proper vehicle movement through the campus parking lots and bus loop. Parents picking up and dropping off students should adhere to clearly communicated procedures that instruct parents to use the northeast parking lot as the drop-off and pick-up zone.



INFRASTRUCTURE

This plan recommends several infrastructure improvements to intersections, sidewalks and signage. Intersection enhancements will make street crossings safer for students, improve ADA-compliance, and resurface and repaint crosswalks that need maintenance and repair.

For a full description of each of these improvement recommendations, please see the **Infrastructure Reference Guide** in Appendix E.

INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EAST MIDDLE SCHOOL:



High-Visibility Crosswalks



Curb Radii Reduction



Curb Extensions



Raised Crosswalks



Painted Stop Bars



Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFB)

Photos 2 and 4 courtesy of Dan Burden from pedbikeimages.org, photo 3 courtesy of emersongarfield.org.

IMPLEMENTATION + NEXT STEPS

Sometimes starting a new project within a busy school can seem like a daunting task. Implementing your Safe Routes to School Action Plan doesn't have to be hard. Here are some ideas to get you started:

Organize

Find your school's champions for Safe Routes - including teachers, parents and students. Start with the teachers who are already helping with departure and arrivals at the school, and bring others who are excited about more kids walking or biking to school. Bring the parents in: work with the school's parents' association to help coordinate support for walking school buses, for volunteer adult crossing guards and other ideas. Work with your city's Public Works and Planning to coordinate and prioritize improvements at your school.

Prioritize + Plan

This one is done already (it's the plan in your hands) - Congratulations! Now all you have to do is work with your team and select a couple of ideas to implement!



Share + Celebrate Success

Success is the best foundation for future success! Don't forget to review your accomplishments every year, and to note the goals you achieved, the people who helped you get there, and the tasks that remain for the coming year!

Start Small

Commit to implementing just one program or initiative in your first year (if you want to do two or more that's great also, but give yourself time and space to organize your team, to identify common priorities, and to get the help and resources that you need to succeed).

Some great ideas for starting small include:

- › Develop a map showing the best routes from surrounding neighborhoods to your school, and distribute it to parents a couple of times in the fall of the school year, and again during spring. Make sure to note the location of crossing guards, traffic signals, and sidewalks and trails.
- › Celebrate international walk and bike to school day - in 2019, it'll be on May 8 - learn more and start planning here: www.walkbiketoschool.org
- › Start a student safety patrol at your school - it's a great way to develop students' leadership skills and build a culture of walking and biking at your school. You can find more resources in the Action Plans' Appendix.
- › Work with your PTA or other involved parents to start a walking school bus route: www.walkingschoolbus.org
- › Establish a yearly school-wide tally of student travel to and from school. This will help provide the baseline of information you will need to determine which programs are yielding the best results for your school, and can help focus your efforts and priorities. They also show potential funders that your school is already making gains and is well-prepared to benefit from more expensive infrastructure improvements. Find out more in the Appendix and here: www.saferoutesdata.org
- › Work with your school's safety officer and other police partners to host a bike rodeo where students learn and practice how to safely ride and interact with traffic.
- › Get your students involved in planning for Safe Routes - ask them for their preferred routes and ideas for making walking and biking to school easier for them!

This Safe Routes to School Action Plan was prepared by Community Design Group for the City of Oak Creek, the Oak Creek-Franklin Joint School District, and the Carollton Elementary School community. For more information about Safe Routes to School planning and programming efforts, please contact Matthew Sullivan at the City of Oak Creek or Andrew Chromy at the Oak Creek-Franklin Joint School District.