

Gifford C. Cole Middle School

3126 E Avenue I | Eastside Union School District

SUMMER 2022



SAFE
ROUTES
TO
SCHOOL

Gifford C. Cole Middle School

3126 E Avenue I

SUMMER 2022

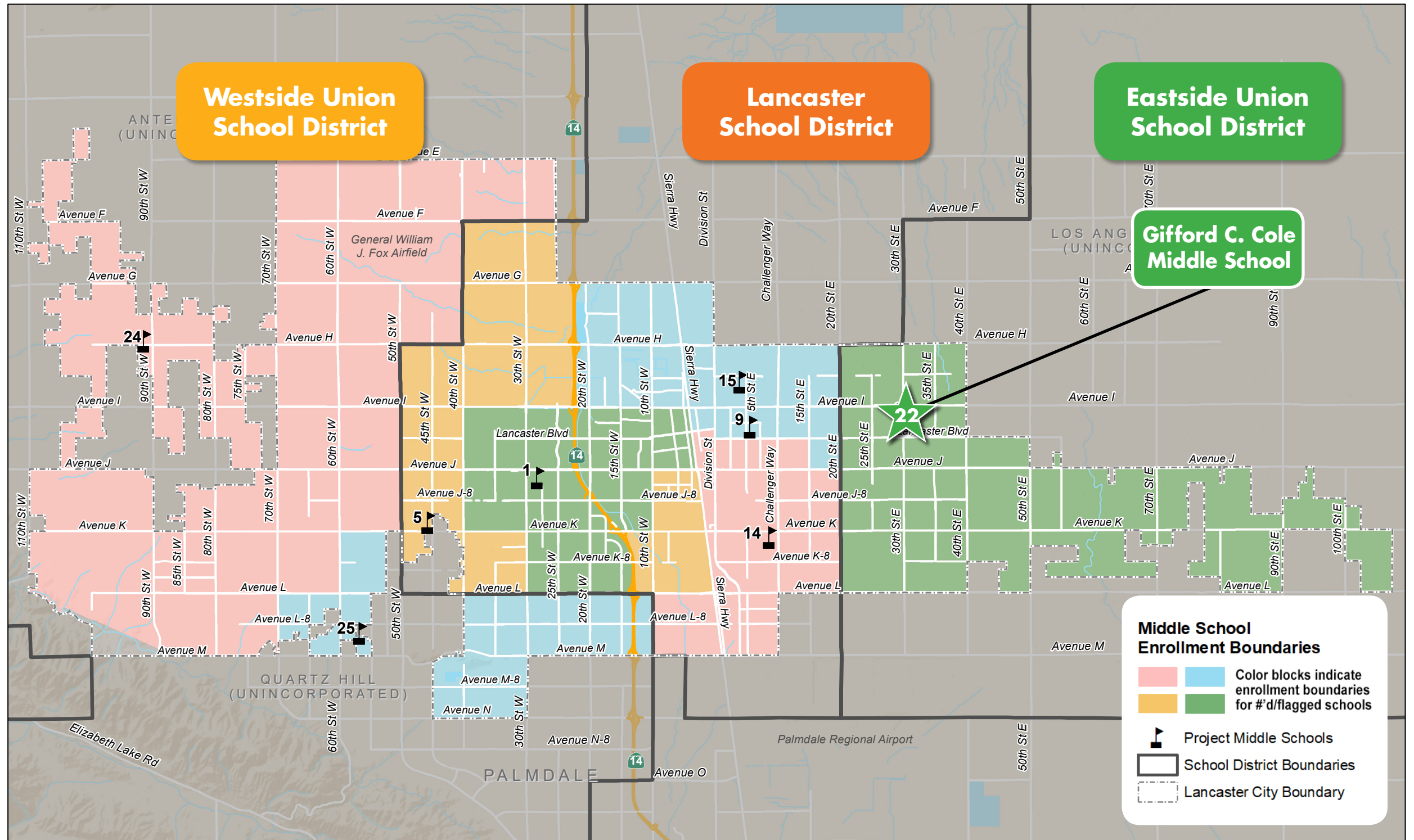


SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

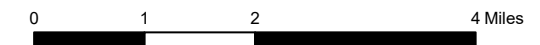


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INTRODUCTION Location Map



Middle School Enrollment Boundaries within City of Lancaster



Gifford C. Cole Middle School

3126 E Avenue I

SUMMER 2022



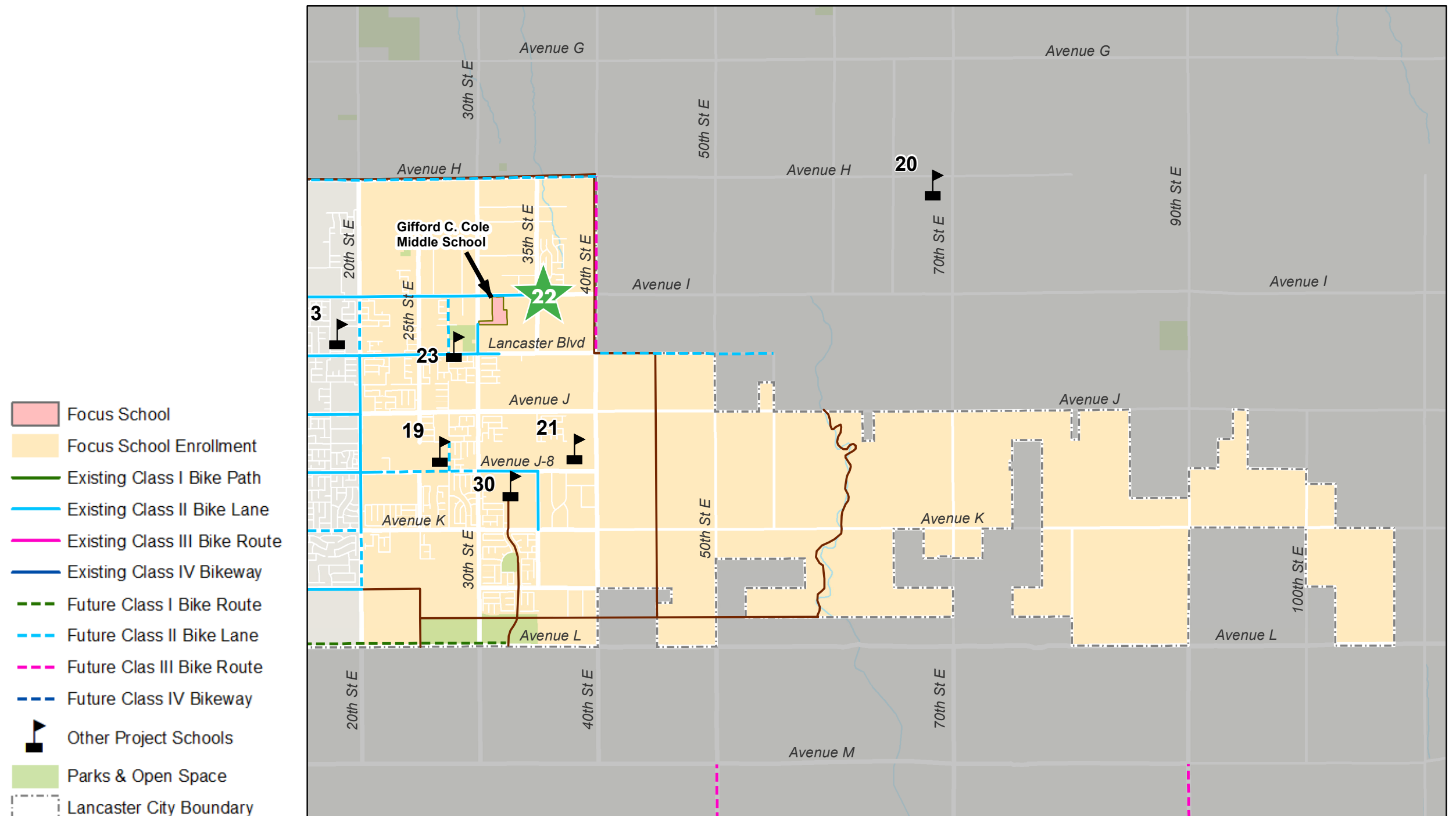
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL



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INTRODUCTION

School Enrollment Area



Gifford C. Cole Middle School - Enrollment Area

Gifford C. Cole Middle School

3126 E Avenue I

SUMMER 2022



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION School Facts



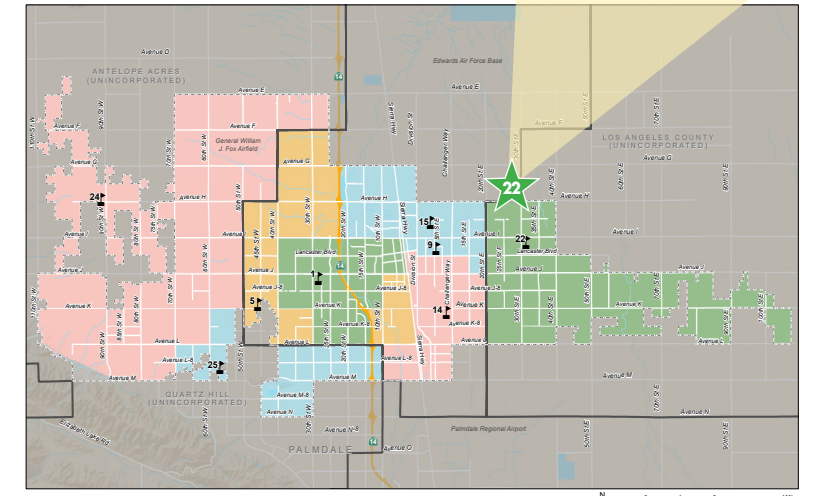
We Are Crusaders! Everyone Contributes, Every Student Achieves

We promote a safe and caring learning environment that supports successful academic outcomes for all students.

We are here to inspire a love for learning and cultivate productive members of society.

Our focus is to ensure that our students and staff **LEAD** in all we do:

- Learn with a growth mindset.
- Engage in the Cole Community.
- Act responsibly.
- Develop positive relationships.



Middle School Enrollment Boundaries within City of Lancaster

2021-22 School Snapshot

661 Student enrollment

89.1% of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals (FRPM)



How are Gifford C. Cole students getting to school?

YEAR STUDENT TALLIES COLLECTED	# OF TALLIES	# OF STUDENTS SURVEYED	WALK	BIKE	SCHOOL BUS	FAMILY VEHICLE	CARPPOOL	TRANSIT	OTHER
2021	27	442	17%	1%	8%	67%	6%	1%	1%
2013-2015	N/A	N/A	15%	1%	9%	56%	11%	0%	1%



Gifford C. Cole Middle School

3126 E Avenue I

SUMMER 2022



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Pedestrian and Bicycle Crashes near Gifford C. Cole

TIMS, 2015-2019

TYPES OF CRASHES

Pedestrian

Bicycle

CRASH SEVERITY

Fatal

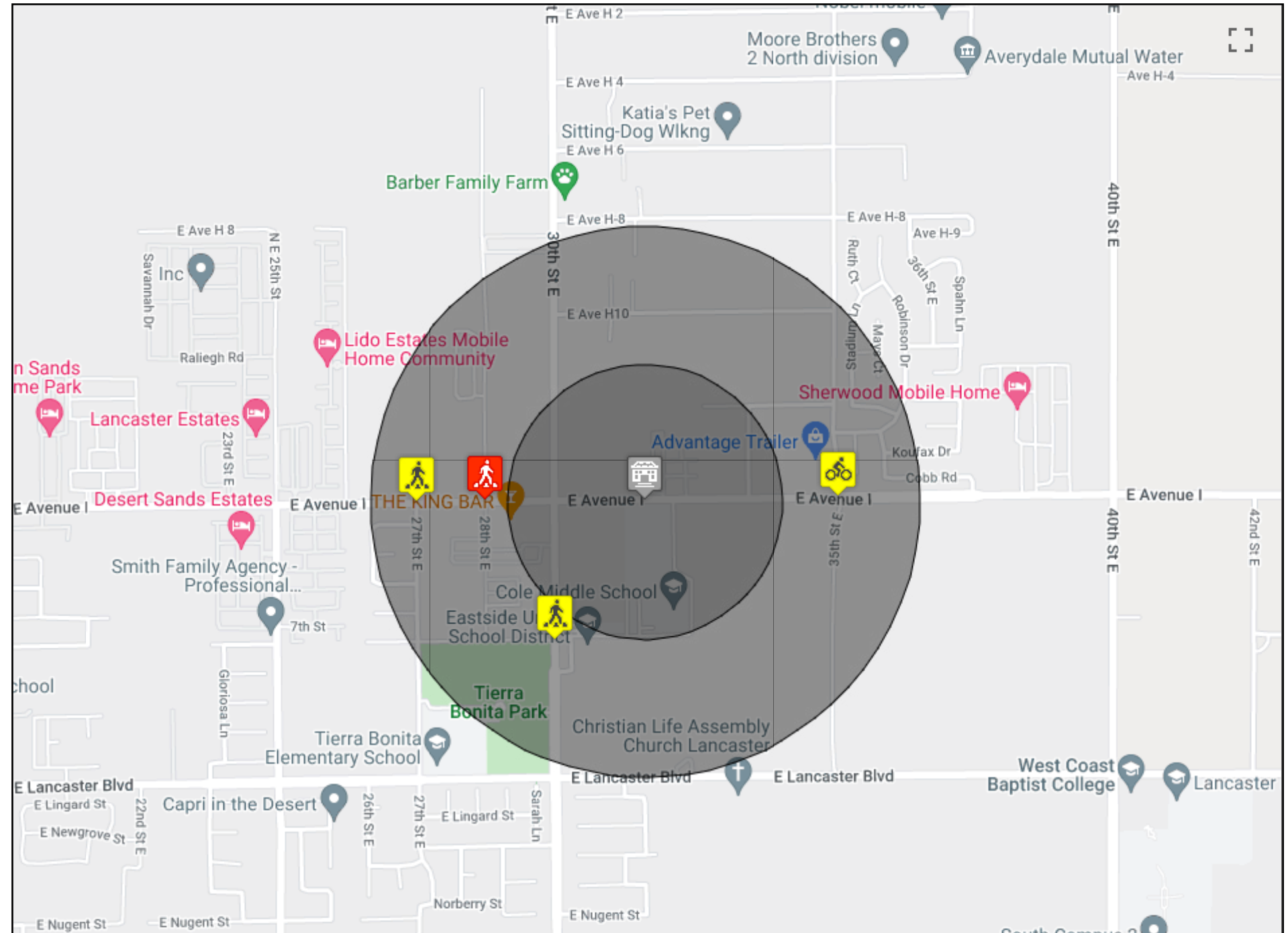
Severe Injury

Other Visible Injury

Complaint of Pain

YEARS 2015-2019

Interactive Map data summaries of bicycle and/or pedestrian crashes around school (1/4 and 1/2 mile)



Radius	Fatal	Severe Injury	Visible Injury	Complaint of Pain	Pedestrian	Bicycle	Total
<1/4 mi.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1/4-1/2 mi.	1	0	3	0	3	1	4

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Stakeholder and Community Input

Engagement Portals

The City of Lancaster met the challenge of eliciting meaningful community input during a pandemic by calling on long-standing relationships between City staff and the schools, as well as professional connections with community-based organizations. The Project Team also utilized proven virtual engagement strategies, in concert with the City's social network apparatus, electronic newsletters, and flyers, to spark interest in the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Interactive Map housed on the City's website, along with community and parent surveys. These materials and links were provided to the project's Stakeholder Advisory Team that included Lancaster's four School Districts. The major school-specific engagement activities are described below.

Lancaster School District One-on-One Interview

In order to gain insight into conditions affecting local School Districts, and to support the development of an effective SRTS Master Plan update, the City of Lancaster and its consultant team conducted a series of one-on-one interviews with the SRTS Stakeholder Advisory Team. These interviews were focused on the School Districts but included other stakeholders as well. Key points from the interview with Lancaster School District are presented here.

August 17, 2021 Interview Summary Eastside Union School District Interviewees:

- Daryl Bell, Director of Instructional Facilities, Risk Management and Safety
- Shanna Robinson, Director Risk Management

Five Eastside Union School District (EUSD) schools were included in the 2022 update, including one school that had not been included in the 2016 plan (Eastside Elementary School.)

The district-level perspective on the potential for active transportation at the five schools included in the SRTS Master Plan update is as follows:

- Mr. Bell noted that Columbia ES and Tierra Bonita ES hold good potential for increased walking, and perhaps some bicycling. Currently, however, there's a lot of parent drop-offs, making it very chaotic.
- Safety assessments may be most helpful at Tierra Bonita and Columbia elementary schools, because neither has bus routes, as the school enrollment boundary is tight.
- Tierra Bonita has a drop-off issue that the school is looking into right now. Parents who had been there for a while knew what to do during drop-off, but many were going "here, there, and everywhere."
- All students at Tierra Bonita *could* walk, but it's not the safest environment. The enrollment area is within a small radius, and kids who are being dropped off could walk or bike. They don't need to be dropped off by their parents.
- Mr. Bell assumed that the reason for the drop-offs might be because the neighborhood isn't the safest. High levels of crime occur (and are reported) throughout the Antelope Valley and there is a significant transient population near the schools.
- Ms. Robinson suggested parents of the youngest—the six-year-old—would not be comfortable allowing them to walk alone, but that perhaps "walking school bus" concepts could work in some locations.
- There's a geographical obstacle to active transportation at a couple of the schools, e.g., Eastside ES—I and 20th Street East to Avenue H and 90th Street East—is approximately 8 miles. The District has students who are living at the end of town, and the elementary school is in an isolated spot, with few homes near it.

EUSD is working toward a vision where school becomes a touchstone for all kinds of community needs. This is the district-wide vision of Dr. Lightle and Dr. Smith.

- Eastside ES can only be accessed via school bus or parent drop-off. Safety here will mean *traffic* safety. The school is on a two-lane rural road, but people speed in that area. The school is proposing a new parking lot behind the old baseball field. They are moving some portables out to make room for parking.

Parent and Community Involvement

- Eastside has both Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs). PTAs require school funding in order to access the programs. Now all elementary schools have a PTA
- Mr. Bell has been at the District for four years (as of 2021). One school had an official PTA, with good parent involvement—this was Columbia ES.
- Cole Middle School had good organization around sports teams fundraising activities.
- EUSD has a community liaison at the District office, and school site liaisons at each school to work with the families and the school communities.
- Saturday events—started before the pandemic. Lego day, for example. Have the kids come and do Legos and host community booths.
- Parent University—school sites hold these at their own schools and provide activities. Communities can attend events at any school in the District. Activities include a range of community programs, including immunizations for children, College University, and a women's shelter group is there.
- Community center for receiving food—sent out a message to every kid that they were having a food giveaway on Saturday. Christmas donations for jackets, and toys. Food drives—pickup on Wednesday. Lines were wrapped around the schools, especially during the beginning of COVID. Anyone can pick up food—not just parents or district residents. The District partnered with the Antelope Valley Dream Center.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Stakeholder and Community Input

Lingering Impacts of COVID-19

At the time of the interview, Eastside Union School District had been reopened for about a week and was experiencing a challenging start due to COVID-19, which impacted the trip to school in several ways. The district is trying to make the schools very community-centered, though the pandemic has made this difficult.

SEE AND BE SEEN

The City's SRTS Project Manager, Candice Vander Hyde, explained that the initial S&BS program began as a safety awareness program, with safety-themed traffic signal wraps designed by young student artists. That program was expanded through a second grant from the Caltrans Office of Traffic Safety. The original idea had been to develop in-person training, but with COVID-19, this was converted to online STEAM lessons and Physical Education (P.E.), in a distance-friendly format. The P.E. request was from Lancaster School District staff who said it was proving difficult to provide P.E. in a distance format.



Community rides on the weekends and a May 2021 scavenger hunt were well-received by the community, as was a Walk and Roll Fest at Tierra Bonita Park. once distance learning began in 2020, the City worked to develop and post instructional materials adapted for that learning mode on the SEE AND BE SEEN website. Additionally, teacher instructions were provided, along with lessons and lab worksheets for various lessons.

Mr. Bell was not familiar with the program. Ms. Robinson was aware of the traffic signal cabinet wraps that had initiated the program. The evolution and effective utilization of S&BS programming is an area for further development, communication, and collaboration between the City and the School District.

Parent Surveys and SRTS Interactive Map Input

Gifford C. Cole Middle School

35th Street East & Avenue I

- City noted that planned bus stop improvements on the south side of Avenue I at 35th Street East are resulting in sidewalk gap closures and street lighting improvements along Avenue I between this location and the school.

Tierra Bonita Park

- Incidents of students fighting at the park, including conflict with high school students.

Avenue I, west of and east of School

- Lack of school zone signage.
- Lack of sidewalks.

30th Street E south of School

- Lack of school zone signage.

School Driveway at Avenue I

- Lack of sidewalk along the driveway.
- Lack of dedicated crossing to cross Avenue I.

- Request for a marked crosswalk at this location.

30th Street East between Avenue I & Kettering Street

- Students crossing street outside of marked crosswalk from mobile home park west of 30th Street East.

30th Street East & Avenue I

- Recent accident at this location involving students hit by pickup trucks in south leg crosswalk while crossing without right-of-way.

Avenue I, west of School Driveway

- Parents illegally park in hatch marks and block bike lane during pickup and drop-off periods.

- Request for traffic control.

35th Street East & Avenue I

- Request for a traffic signal at this intersection.
- Request for a marked, controlled crosswalk at this location.

Gifford C. Cole Middle School Virtual Walk Audit

Walk audits are used across the nation and were employed here to help the project team understand existing conditions, walking and bicycling patterns, locations of crossing guards, conflicts with traffic, concerns about sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle facilities, signals, lighting, and social and environmental factors. The Gifford C. Cole Middle School virtual walk audit was held on September 30, 2021, via web conference.

Anasa Evans, Assistant Principal, represented the school; the consultant team represented the City. With everyone able to view the SRTS interactive map, participants were able to quickly discuss general topics and concerns and identify specific problems. Note also that In April 2022, a follow-up interview with Mr. Greg Moore, who oversees safety and preparedness at the District. Mr. Moore's concerns and suggestions have been included in the SRTS Interactive Map Input, above. Walk audit comments in addition to those included previously in the SRTS Interactive Map Input section, are summarized below:

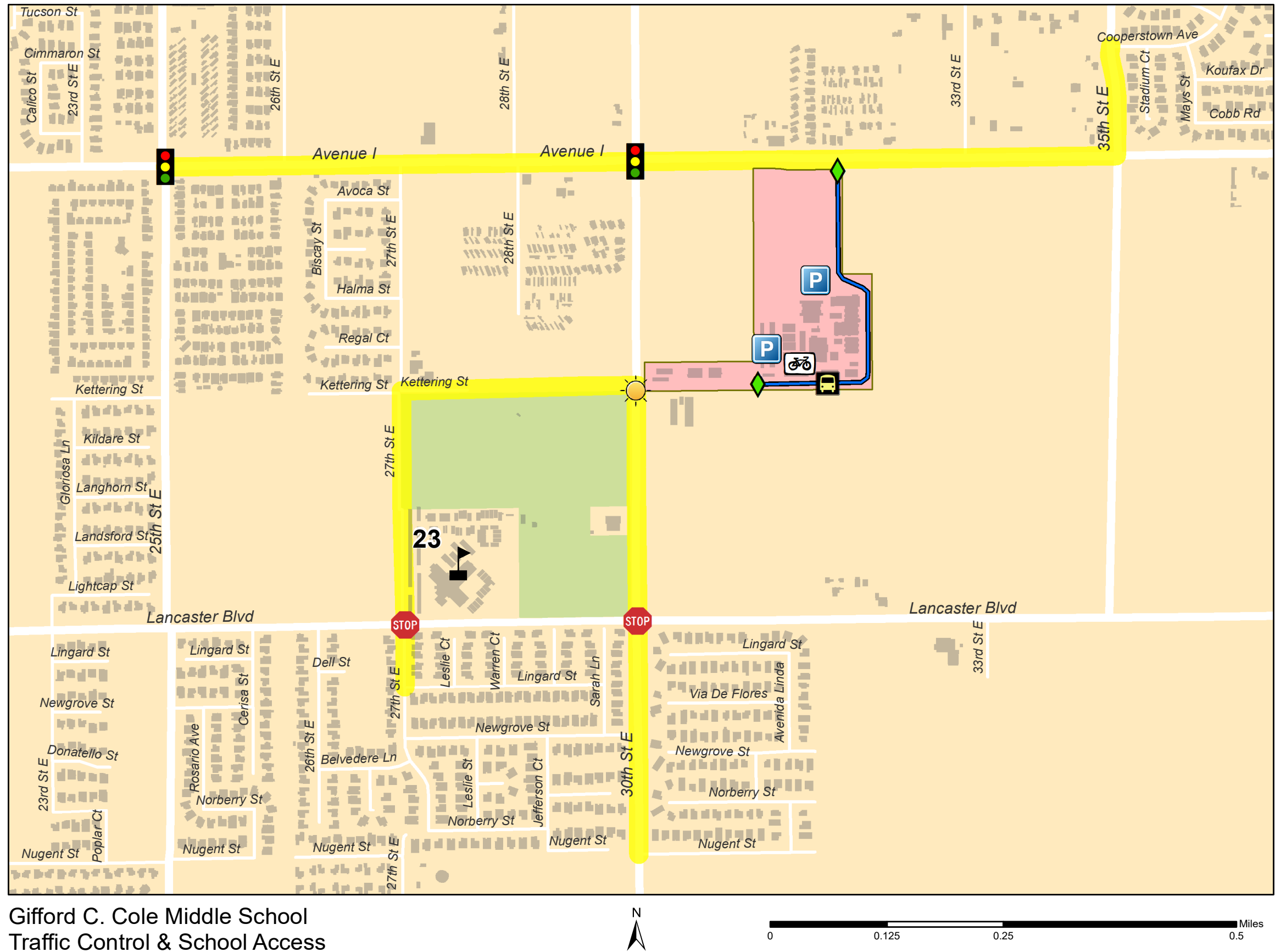
- We just had a student at Avenue I and 30th Street East get hit at a crosswalk, with a signal. There's a store right there, and a pickup truck hit the girl. A group of three students was most likely running against the light, and two of them hesitated midway across.
- We have quite a few walkers, but a lot of kids walk to Tierra Bonita Park and get picked up there.
- There have been some fights, and instances where high school kids were confronting our Cole Middle School students. Parents have called to report a kid stealing another kid's phone in the park.
- We have a program, Safe Passage, run by Mr. Muhammed, and there is a lady in the park on certain days to help kids get safely home.
- Our campus supervisors will help kids cross by the Park, where there's no light. But parents want more crossing guards.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Suggested Routes, Traffic Control, and School Access



- School Gates
- Bus Loading
- Bike Parking
- Crossing Guards
- School Parking
- Parent Dropoff/Pickup
- Traffic Signal
- Roundabout
- All-Way Stop
- School Beacon
- School Beacon and Smart Crosswalk
- School Beacon and All-Way Stop
- Suggested Routes to School
- Focus School
- Focus School Enrollment Area
- Other Project Schools
- Parks & Open Space
- Lancaster City Boundary



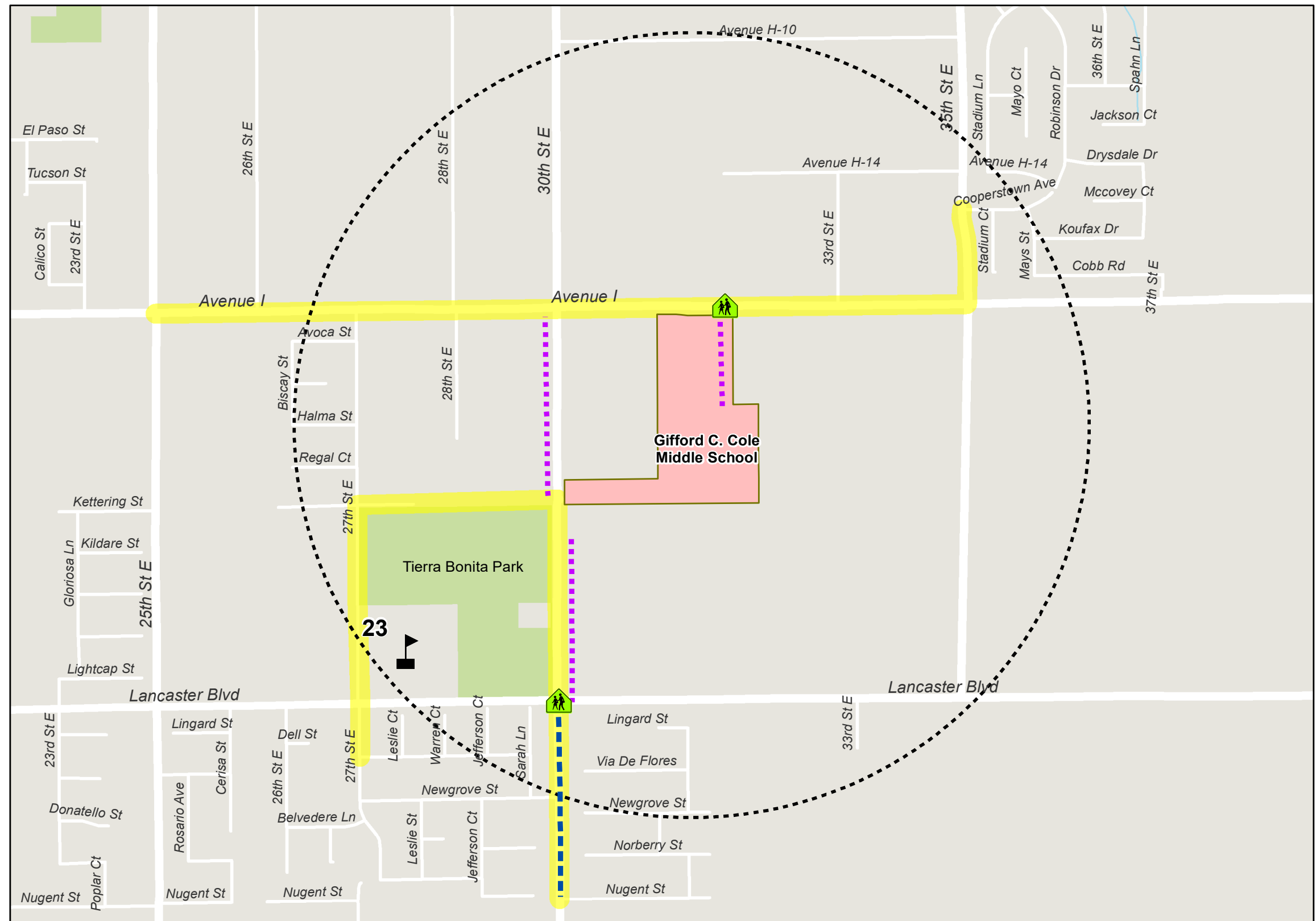
Gifford C. Cole Middle School
Traffic Control & School Access

SRTS RECOMMENDATIONS

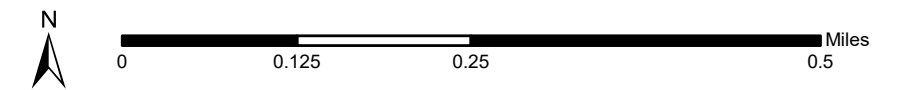
Suggested Routes and Recommended Improvements



- Potential Improvements**
- Buffered Bike Lanes
 - Sidewalks
 - Crossing Improvements
 - Suggested Routes to School
 - Focus School
 - Focus School Enrollment Area
 - Half-Mile Radius
 - Other Project Schools
 - Lancaster City Boundary



Gifford C. Cole Middle School
Potential Improvements



SRTS PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The Other 'E's



EDUCATION

The City will partner with School Districts and funders to expand SEE AND BE SEEN's offerings, and ensure educators and the general public can easily access and use its features. Driver education to improve the safety of motorists and non-motorists is included.

- Bike rodeos and clinics
- Pedestrian skills and safety rodeos
- SEE & BE SEEN lesson plans



ENCOURAGEMENT

Programmed and funded events, public recognition, themed activities, posters and signage will support current walkers and rollers, and inspire others to join them. School-focused and community-wide events will be identified and scheduled.

- Promote SRTS Calendar — Walk & Roll events and challenges
- Walking school bus in nice weather



ENFORCEMENT

Appropriate enforcement strategies ensure that motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians obey the rules of the road near schools, improving safety while encouraging active transportation. Community enforcement programs augment local law enforcement to establish new norms that respect student safety and help parents feel confident as they send their children to school.

- School Circulation Plans
- Support for crossing guards/campus supervisors
- Sheriff's Dept. roadway safety talks



EQUITY

At the core of Lancaster's SRTS is a commitment to deliver high-quality and effective projects and programs to all school communities, especially disadvantaged and low-income students, students of color, and mobility-impaired students who face challenges to walking, bicycling, or rolling to school safely and comfortably.

- Prioritize high-need schools
- RE-Cycle Bike Donation / Repair Clinics



ENGAGEMENT

Successful, funded SRTS plans result from ongoing, meaningful engagement with the students, families, schools and local community organizations who will benefit from the projects and programs. Community engagement that continues beyond plan adoption ensures that the SRTS is a living document and that implementation of the plan is responsive to intergenerational needs for bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs as they change over time.

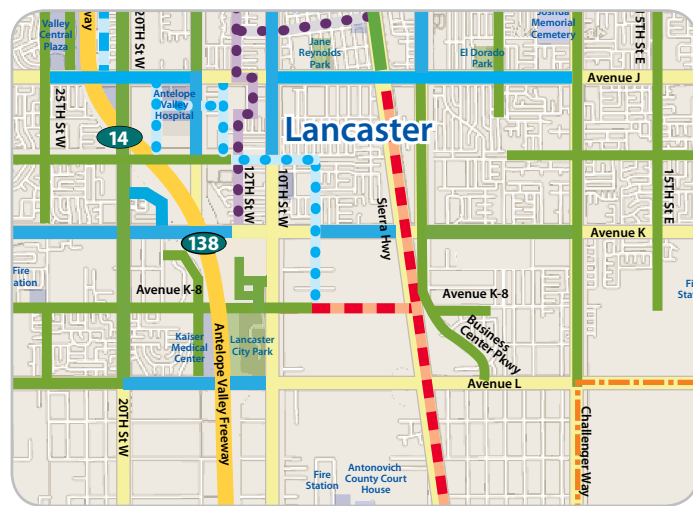
- Community events, family fun days
- Annual parent/guardian surveys



EVALUATION

Clearly identified periodic reporting allows schools and the City to document progress, make modifications, request needed funding, and celebrate success.

- Annual student tallies



With City and School District programmatic support, the principal can set the tone to encourage and increase students who walk or bike to school.



**See SRTS Master Plan Introduction:
Menu of Best People Strategies**

PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS

Recommendations

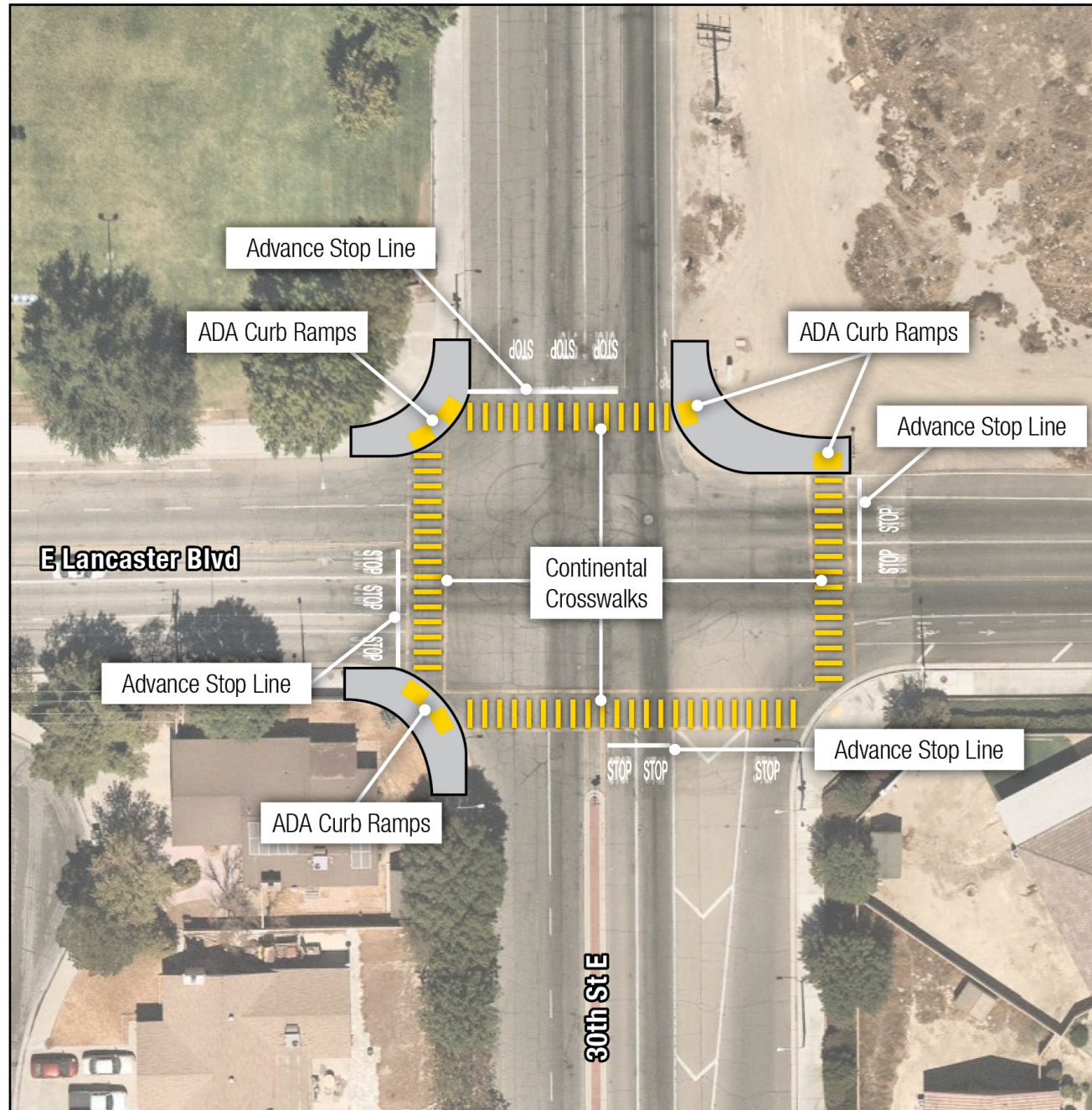
30th Street East and Lancaster Boulevard

Existing

- All-way stop intersection.
- Yellow transverse-line crosswalks on east, south, west legs.
- Red flashing LED lights on all stop signs.
- One truncated dome ramp at southeast corner.
- No truncated domes on other ramps.
- No sidewalk on the east side of 30th Street East north of Lancaster Boulevard.

Potential Improvements

- Add yellow continental crosswalk to all legs.
- Add advanced stop lines to all legs.
- Add ADA ramps with truncated domes at northeast, northwest, southwest corners.
- Investigate narrowing intersection width (by reducing number of approach lanes) as part of Lancaster Local Road Safety Plan (LRSP) Project.



POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS

Recommendations

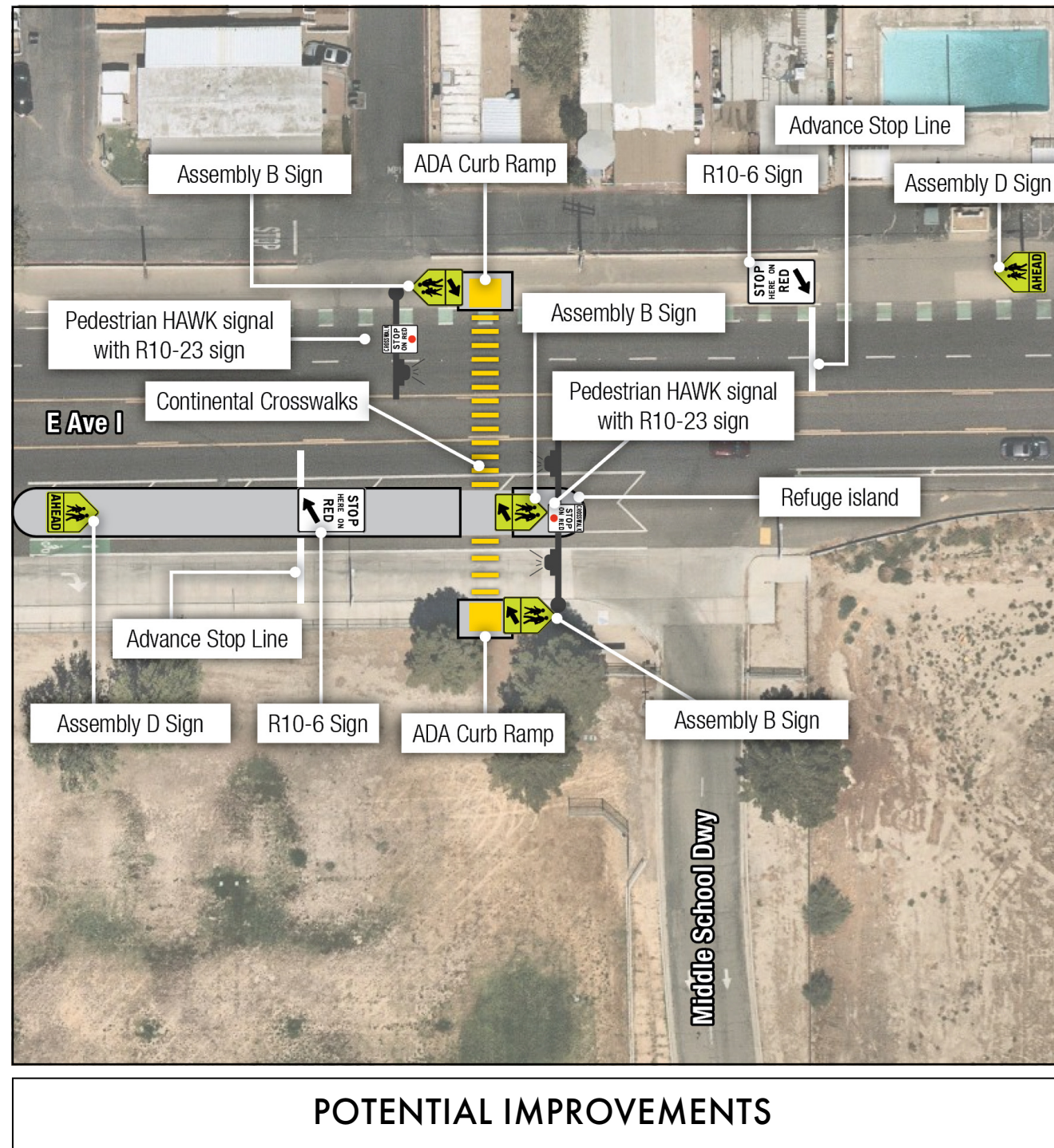
Avenue I and Middle School Driveway

Existing

- Uncontrolled T-intersection.
- Avenue I is 3-lane major arterial divided by striped median with Class II bike lanes.
- Large eastbound right turn pocket approaching school driveway.
- Several driveways along north side of Avenue I.
- No marked crosswalk.

Potential Improvements

- Investigate installing pedestrian-activated HAWK signal.
- Add a yellow continental crosswalk across Avenue I just west of the school driveway.
- Add refuge islands/median at the new west leg crosswalk.
- Add advanced limit lines to both approaches of the new crosswalk.
- Add ADA ramps with truncated domes.
- Add signs approaching crosswalk(s) per CA MUTCD guidelines, as shown.



Summary of Engineering Strategies, by Type

Crossing Improvements

- **30th Street East & Lancaster Boulevard:** Pavement markings; curb extensions/ramps
- **School Driveway & Avenue I:** Pavement markings & signage; pedestrian refuge island; pedestrian HAWK signal, curb ramps

Bikeway

- **30th Street East between Lancaster Boulevard & Nugent Street:** Class II buffered bike lanes

Sidewalks

- **30th Street East** between existing sidewalk south of school & Lancaster Boulevard (east side)
- **30th Street East** between Avenue I & Kettering Street (west side)
- **School Driveway** south of Avenue I (west side)

