

Joe Walker Middle School Stealth Academy

5632 W Avenue L-8 | Westside Union School District

SUMMER 2022



SAFE
ROUTES
TO
SCHOOL

Joe Walker Middle School Stealth Academy

5632 W Avenue L-8

SUMMER 2022

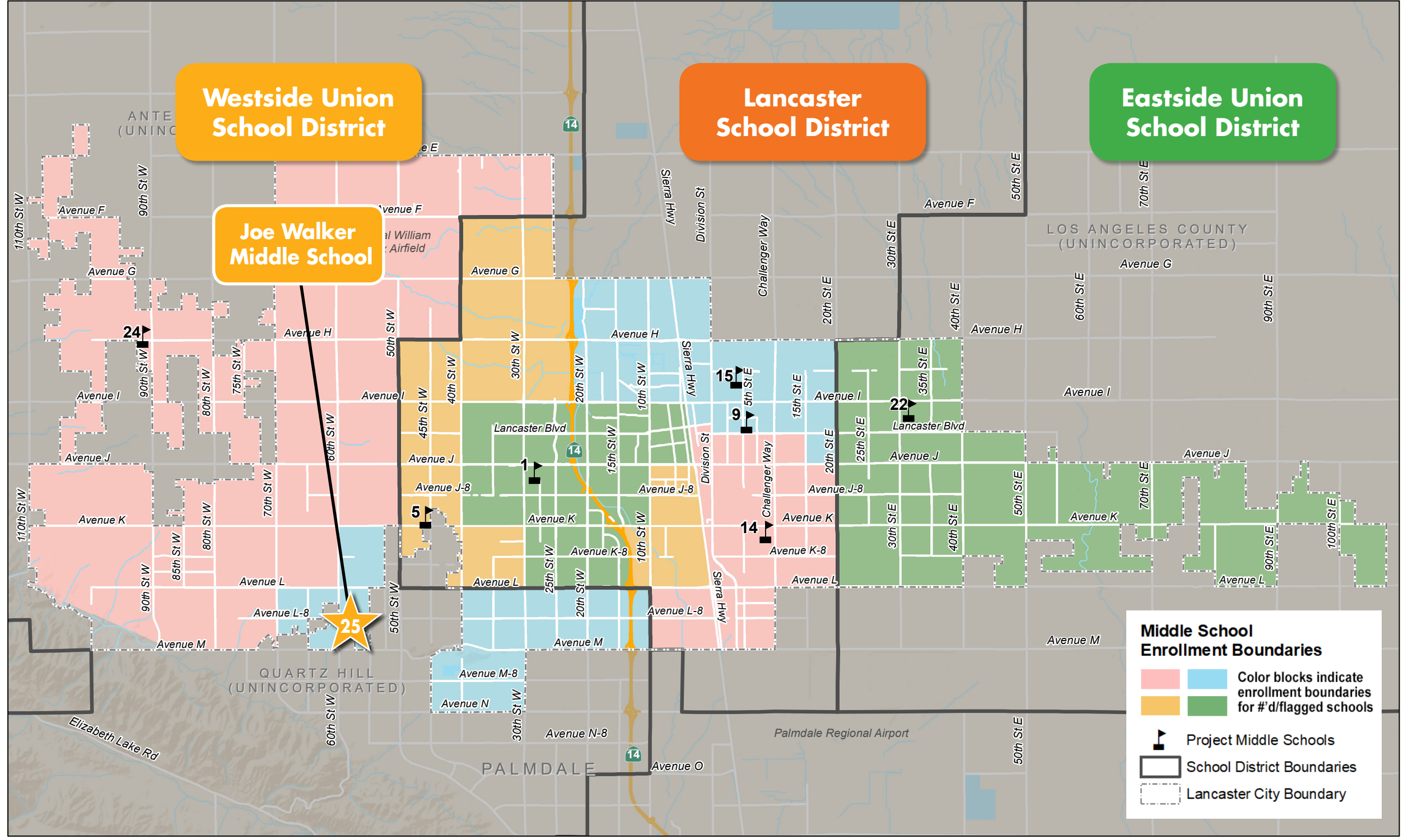


SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

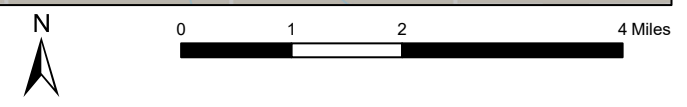


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INTRODUCTION Location Map



Middle School Enrollment Boundaries within City of Lancaster



Joe Walker Middle School Stealth Academy

5632 W Avenue L-8

SUMMER 2022



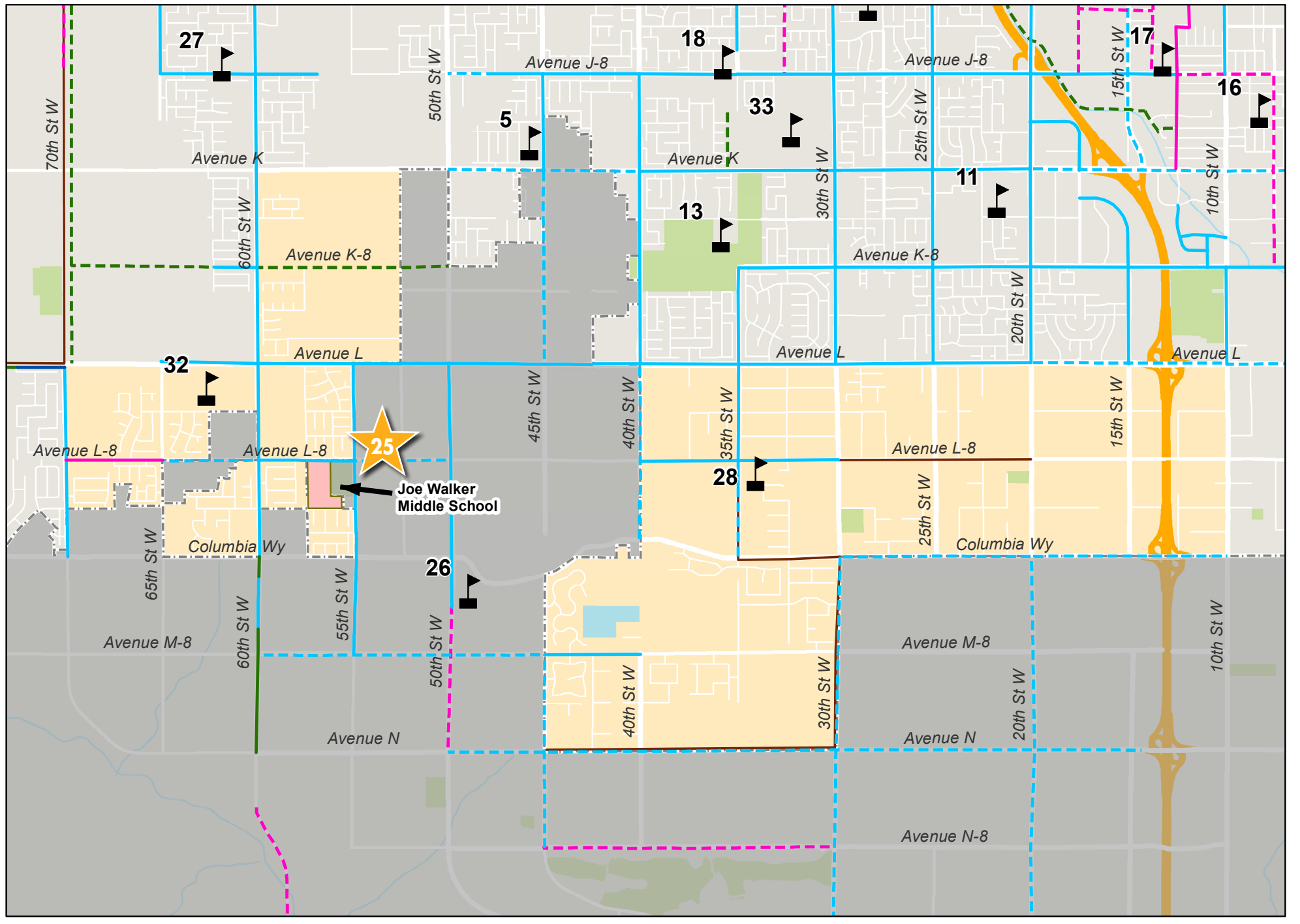
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL



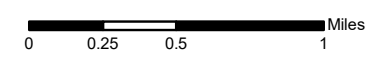
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INTRODUCTION School Enrollment Area

- Focus School
- Focus School Enrollment
- Existing Class I Bike Path
- Existing Class II Bike Lane
- Existing Class III Bike Route
- Existing Class IV Bikeway
- Future Class I Bike Route
- Future Class II Bike Lane
- Future Class III Bike Route
- Future Class IV Bikeway
- Other Project Schools
- Parks & Open Space
- Lancaster City Boundary



Joe Walker Middle School - Enrollment Area



Joe Walker Middle School Stealth Academy

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SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL



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We Are Stealth!

At the 1972 dedication of Joe Walker Middle School, then-member of the Westside Union School District School Board, James Skalicky stated, "We all want the best education possible for our children; an education that creates enthusiasm and pride in one's accomplishments; one that stimulates the inner self for a desire of understanding people, cultures, society, and education itself." To fulfill this vision, Joe Walker Middle School creates a culture of success by partnering with community organizations to promote instructional relevance in our educational program.

In order to best prepare our students for success with twenty-first century skills, we provide a balanced curriculum that educates the whole child combining science, technology, engineering, and mathematics with the arts and humanities. Every child will receive a STEALTH education at Joe Walker Middle School.

2021-22 School Snapshot

902 Student enrollment

54.7% of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals (FRPM)

INTRODUCTION School Facts

2022 Golden Bell Recipient

The Golden Bell Awards reflect the depth and breadth of outstanding education offerings in our state, and demonstrate the tenacity, vision and dedication of school leaders across California.



AVID Certified

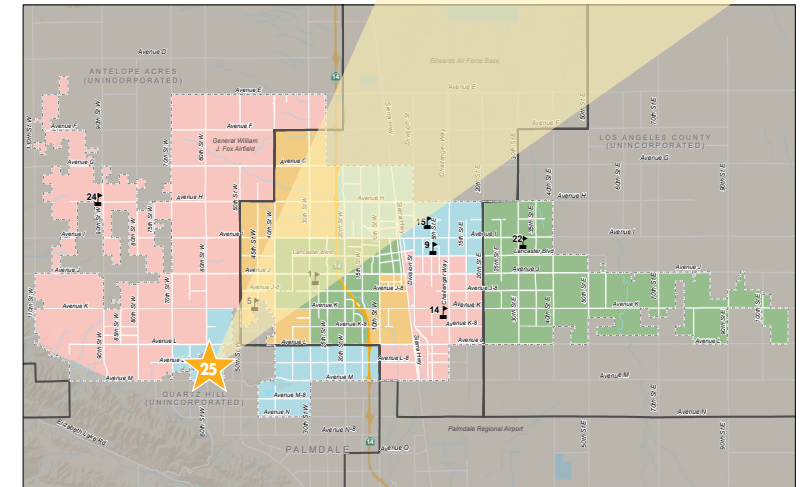
AVID Advancement Via Individual Determination

AVID is an international program that prepares students in the academic middle for admission to a four-year college or university by learning study skills, critical thinking and problem solving. This elective class includes college and career planning, college visits, guest speakers, and weekly tutoring from peers and college students.



VEX Robotics Team

In this elective class students will learn about robotics and build robots for VEX Competition. VEX Robotics encourages teamwork, leadership, and problem solving among groups. VEX Robotics is the only robotics platform that spans from elementary school through college.



Middle School Enrollment Boundaries within City of Lancaster



How are Joe Walker students getting to school?

YEAR STUDENT TALLIES COLLECTED	# OF TALLIES	# OF STUDENTS SURVEYED	WALK	BIKE	SCHOOL BUS	FAMILY VEHICLE	CARPOOL	TRANSIT	OTHER
2021	27	603	11%	1%	4%	76%	6%	0%	0%
2013-2015	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Joe Walker Middle School Stealth Academy

5632 W Avenue L-8

SUMMER 2022



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL



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EXISTING CONDITIONS


Pedestrian and Bicycle Crashes near Joe Walker

TIMS, 2015-2019

TYPES OF CRASHES

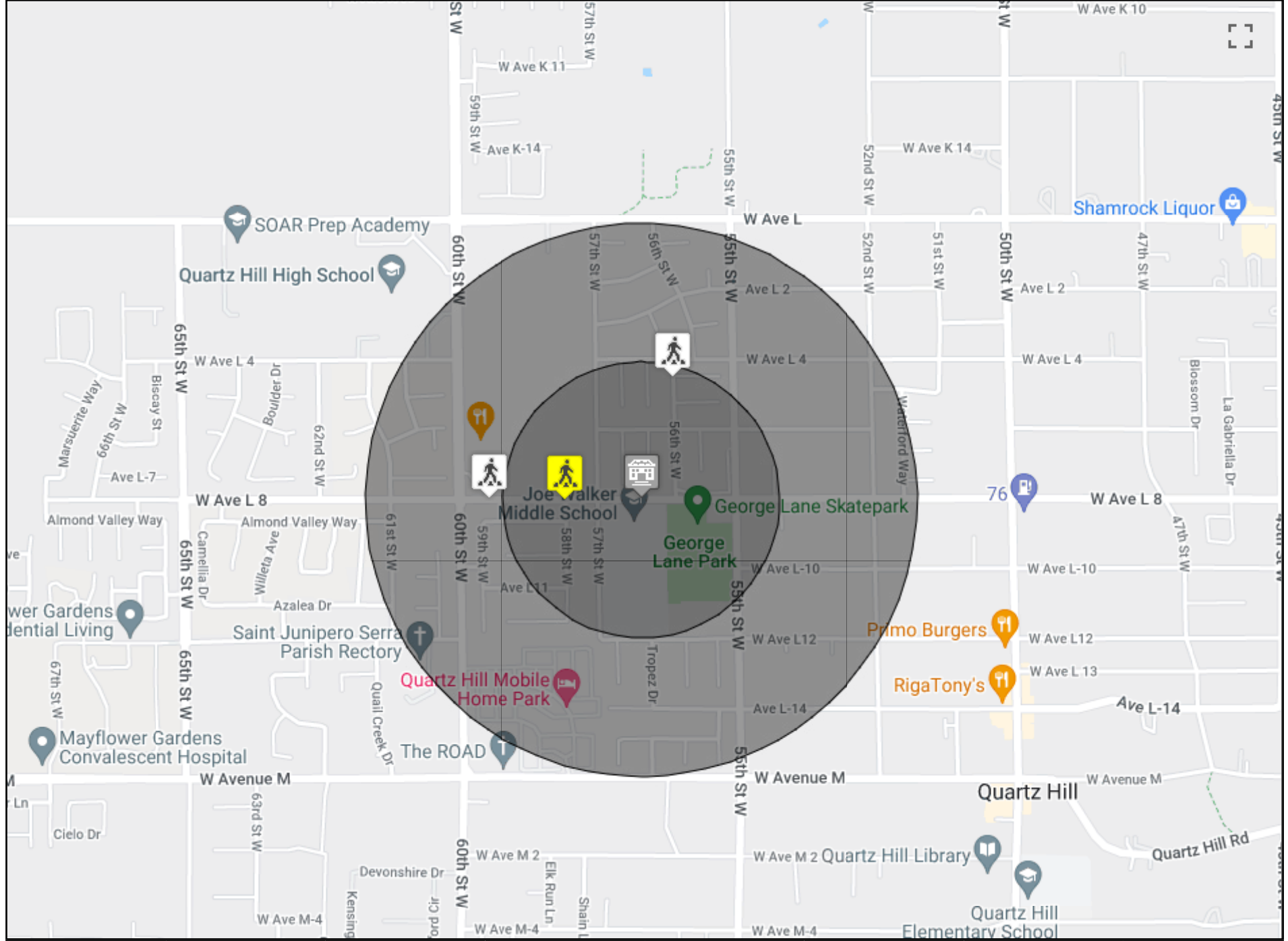
-  Pedestrian
-  Bicycle

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	1	1	2	0	2
1/4-1/2 mi.	0	0	0	1	1	0	1

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 which 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 19, 2021 Interview Summary

Westside Union School District Interviewees:

- Shelly Dearing, Director of Instructional Facilities, Risk Management and Safety
- Rhonda Hanson, Director, Risk Management

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

- Quartz Hill ES—walking/biking school potential (there are no school buses).
- Sundown ES—has some buses, but also lots of walkers.

- Valley View ES—has walkers.
- Del Sur—in a more rural, less dense area, and is more of a bus school, in the middle of busy roads, so parents don’t let their children walk or bike to school. The distance is too great for biking/walking for most students, as well. Del Sur Acres is more than a mile and a half away. Although no one is biking to this school, it could conceivably occur if there were safe bike facilities.
- Joe Walker MS—has walkers.

Anti-Bullying Campaign

Ms. Dearing and Ms. Hanson noted that one of the Westside Union School District counselors had developed a very successful anti-bullying program that included lessons for use in the lower grades.



Source: Westside Union School District, Lancaster, CA

Lingering Impacts of COVID-19

At the time of the interview, Westside Union School District had just reopened and was experiencing a challenging start due to COVID-19, which impacted the trip to school in several ways. School had just reopened on August 4, and it was not clear at the time of the interview whether volunteers would be coming back to campus. It was noted generally that for school children walking alone, the youngest would be in 4th grade.

SEE AND BE SEEN

The City’s SRTS Project Manager, Candice Vander Hyde, explained that 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.

Ms. Dearing and Ms. Hanson indicated that none of the schools were using the SEE AND BE SEEN materials and that it is likely that teachers were unaware of the resource. Future use of the lessons would be based on the needs of each school. This is an area for further development, communication, and collaboration between the City and the School District.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Stakeholder and Community Input

Parent Surveys and SRTS Interactive Map Input

Joe Walker Middle School Stealth Academy

55th Street West south of Avenue L-8

- Bike facilities implemented in 2016 or 2017.

Avenue L-8 east of 57th Street West

- Gap in bike facilities east of 57th Street West. Student on bike hit by vehicle.
- Lack of sidewalks east of 57th Street West.

60th Street West north of Avenue L-8

- Short bike lane from Avenue L-8 heading northbound ends before high school.

55th Street West south of Avenue L-12

- Lack of bike facilities. Students on bikes have been hit by vehicles.

George Lane Park

- Students often spend time in the park after school before heading home, but school is still liable for their safety.
- Students are unsupervised, partake in and/or are exposed to drug use and fights.

Avenue L-8 and 55th Street West

- Lack of curbs and curb ramps on northeast and southeast corners of intersection.
- Lack of marked crosswalk at north, west, and east legs of intersection.
 - Student cross outside marked crosswalk on north leg of intersection.
 - Lack of ADA compliance has hampered efforts to install marked crosswalk.

55th Street West between Avenue L-10 and Avenue L-12

- Lack of sidewalks.

57th Street West and Avenue L-12

- No pedestrian connection between mobile home park and school.



Avenue L-8 and 57th Street West

- Crossing guard position currently unstaffed. Crossing guard is on medical leave resources to hire are unavailable.

Avenue L-12 and 55th Street West

- Lack of marked crosswalks at intersection to assist students crossing 55th Street West.
 - Request from school staff for stop signs on 55th Street West.

Avenue L-8 and 56th Street West

- Lack of marked crosswalk at intersection to assist students crossing Avenue L-8.

57th Street West between Avenue L-8 and Avenue L-12

- Lack of parking restrictions makes traffic control during pickup and drop-off periods difficult.
- Queuing forms along 57th Street West during pickup and drop-off periods.
- Parents double parking during pickup and drop-off periods.

57th Street W between Ash Court and Summer Lane

- Parents are encouraged to use this parking lot when traffic conditions make pickup and drop-off periods difficult.

Avenue L-8 in front of School

- Vehicles Speeding.

SURVEY RESPONSES

The children of all three Joe Walker Middle School parents who responded to the online survey were dropped off and picked up via the family car. Getting traffic to slow down, having safer crosswalks, and ensuring that adults walked or biked alongside students, would help convince at least two of these parents to consider allowing their child to walk or bicycle to school.

Approximately 400 parents responded to the paper survey handed out at the schools as the Student Tallies were being conducted in September 2021. Because responses indicated discrepancies in how people answered the survey questions, these could not be meaningfully summarized and analyzed. However, it is clear that distance, traffic speeds and volumes, crime and the weather were significant factors in determining whether parents allowed their children to walk or ride to school.

Additionally, about 10% of respondents provided written responses to an open-ended question eliciting comments. A sample of these is provided below.

"I'm a stay-at-home mom and I drive my kids to and from school."

"I want my son to have other kids to walk with, not adults necessarily."

"I will allow my daughter to walk home from school once the weather cools down. I will most likely encourage it more as she gets older."

"We drive to school every day because of our location. Thank you for your concerns to improve pick up and drop off."

"I would honestly let my older child walk, but I'm already driving my younger kids and it's easier just to drop him off and pick him up on the way."

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Stakeholder and Community Input

"Both of my children walk/bike. We do, however, need more sidewalks along 60th Street West around the ranch, and along 60th. This might encourage more parents to allow kids to walk."

"My son is already walking home, and I meet him halfway. But would like it if a crossing guard was there every day."

Concerns about safety on Avenue L-8:

"I would love for my daughter to walk or bike to school since the buses don't drop off near our home. Safety along Avenue L-8 is my biggest concern."

"We live close to L-8 and we hear cars racing. I fear for the children that have to walk along there. There should be some speed bumps, but I know that's the City's responsibility."

"In order for my child to walk or ride their bike to school, the entire length of Avenue L-8 would have to be fixed."

"I would not let my children walk to school. There are too many crazy people."

(A number of people mentioned human trafficking and child abductions.)

Joe Walker 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 Joe Walker Middle School virtual walk audit was held on September 23, 2021, via web conference.

Joe Walker Middle School had not been included in the 2016 SRTS Master Plan, so there were no baseline tally data or earlier recommended SRTS projects or programs.

Felicia Goldovsky, Principal, and Ana Penaloza, Vice Principal represented the school; Rhonda Hanson represented Westside Union School District; Candice Vander Hyde and Matt Simons 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. Walk audit comments in addition to those included previously in the SRTS Interactive Map Input section, are summarized below:

- Some of the streets connecting to the school are maintained by the City; others are maintained by the County of Los Angeles. Sitting on the boundary of these jurisdictions presents challenges for the consistent and swift implementation of projects. Ms. Vander Hyde indicated that the City could leverage its good working relationship with the County to help move past any implementation obstacles.

- Joe Walker Middle School has the highest percentage of students among the five district schools included in the SRTS Master Plan. Walking is at 11%, with the students coming from all of the neighborhoods around the school. A lot of students live in the trailer park to the southwest of the school. It was noted that pedestrian access appears to be cut off from the school.
- Over the past three years, there have been three students who were bicycling who were hit where there were no bicycle lanes, near 52nd Avenue West and Avenue L-8, 55th Avenue West and Avenue L-12; one was transported to the hospital. The one that was seriously injured was actually walking the bike across the road, as instructed.
- To the northwest is Quartz Hill High School, and the students who drive don't obey traffic rules, making it less safe for our kids at Joe Walker.
- The location of the park near a middle school is a problem. The school is responsible for getting the kids home, and they stop at the park, and there's a skate park there. There are adults, drugs, smoking, and no supervision. Even if parents say it's ok to allow the child to go to the park, the school is liable until they get home.
- The park has never been a positive influence. There was an after-school program, but it's not clear if that's still in operation. It's where kids go to fight. On Wednesdays, the high-schoolers get out and we've had times where the middle-schoolers are picked up by the high-school kids.
- Crossing guard positions are very hard to fill. You put your life in your own hands at certain locations. Parents can be aggressive drivers and ignore what the crossing guards tell them to do. Parent behavior and education and civility issues are ongoing.
- At the corner of the parking lot, 56th Street West—the students will run across Avenue L-8 to get into the neighborhoods.

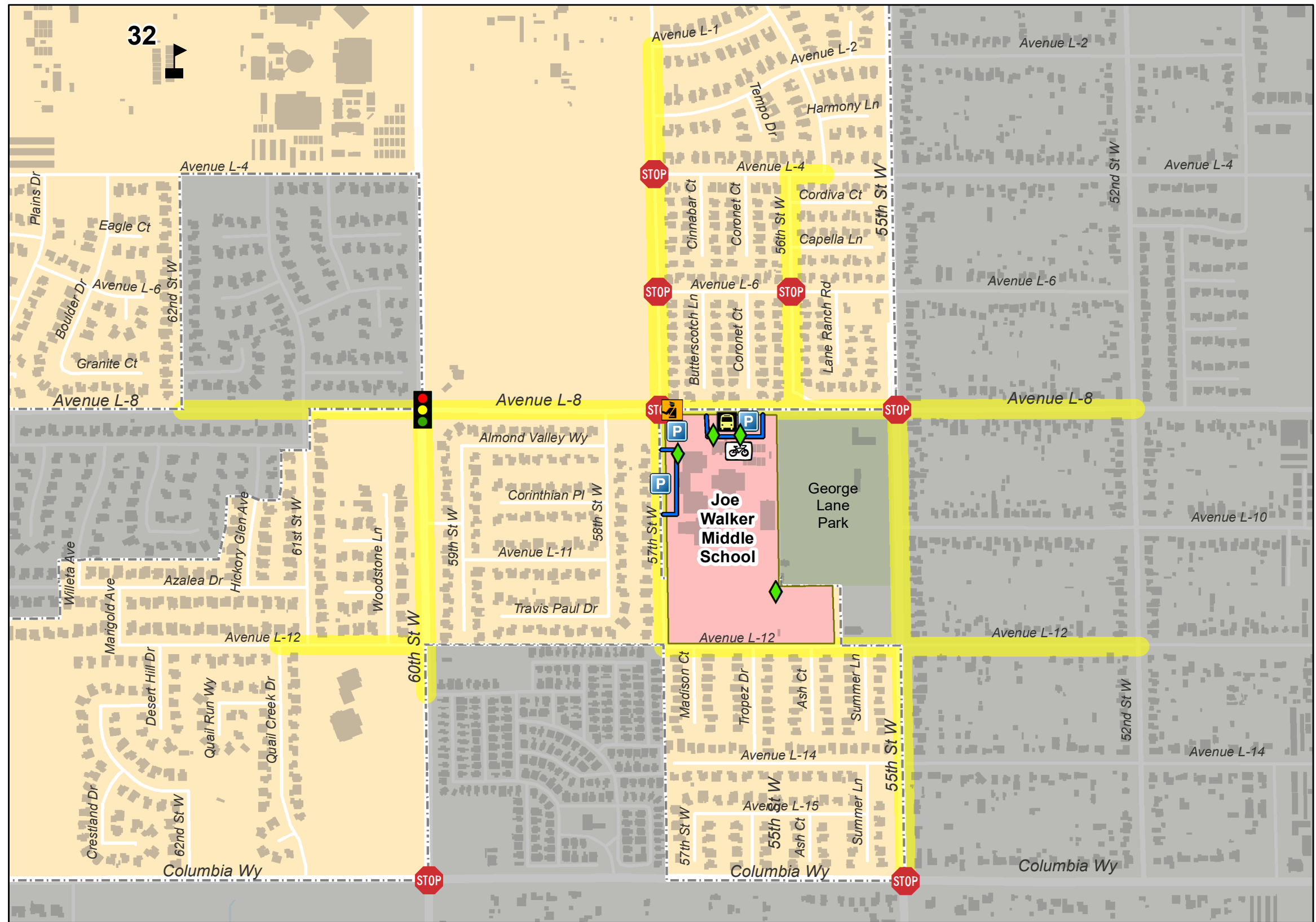


EXISTING CONDITIONS

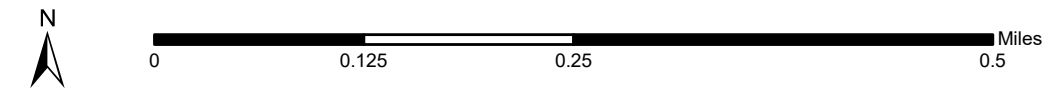
Suggested Routes, Traffic Control, and School Access



- 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



Joe Walker Middle School
Traffic Control & School Access

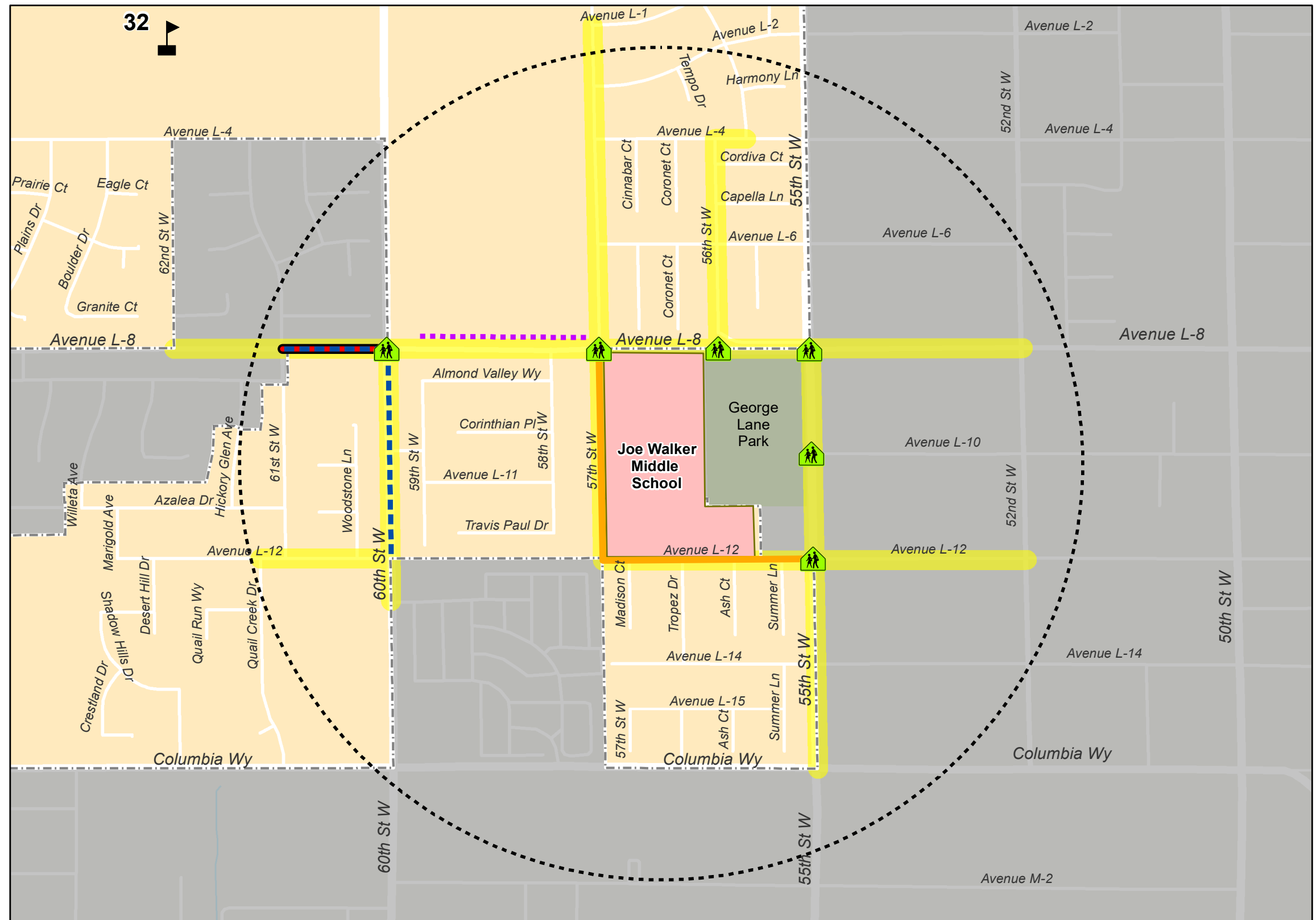


SRTS RECOMMENDATIONS

Suggested Routes and Recommended Improvements



- Potential Improvements**
- Buffered Bike Lanes
 - Sidewalks
 - Traffic calming
 - Lane Reductions
 - Crossing Improvements
 - Suggested Routes to School
 - Focus School
 - Focus School Enrollment Area
 - Half-Mile Radius
 - Other Project Schools
 - Parks & Open Space
 - Lancaster City Boundary



Joe Walker Middle School
Potential Improvements

SRTS PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The Other 'E's

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 students, students of color, and students who face barriers to walking, bicycling, or riding to school safely and comfortably.



EDUCATION

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

Successful, funded SRTS plans result from ongoing, meaningful engagement with the students, families, schools and local community organizations who will benefit from the programs. Community engagement continues beyond plan adoption 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.



ENCOURAGEMENT

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

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

- Annual student



ENFORCEMENT



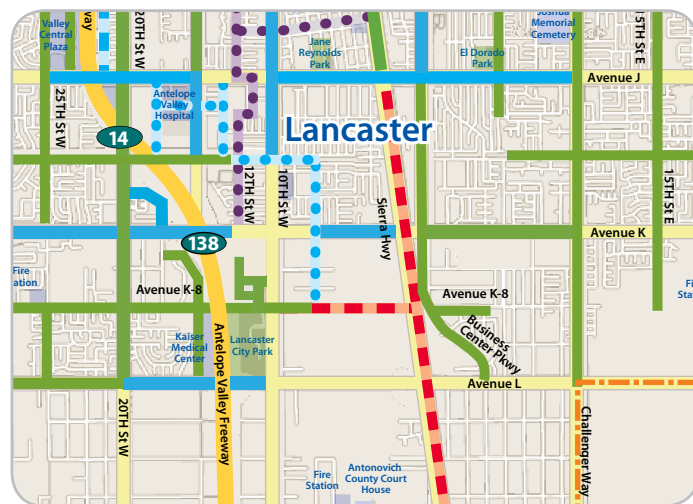
EQUITY



ENGAGEMENT



EVALUATION



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

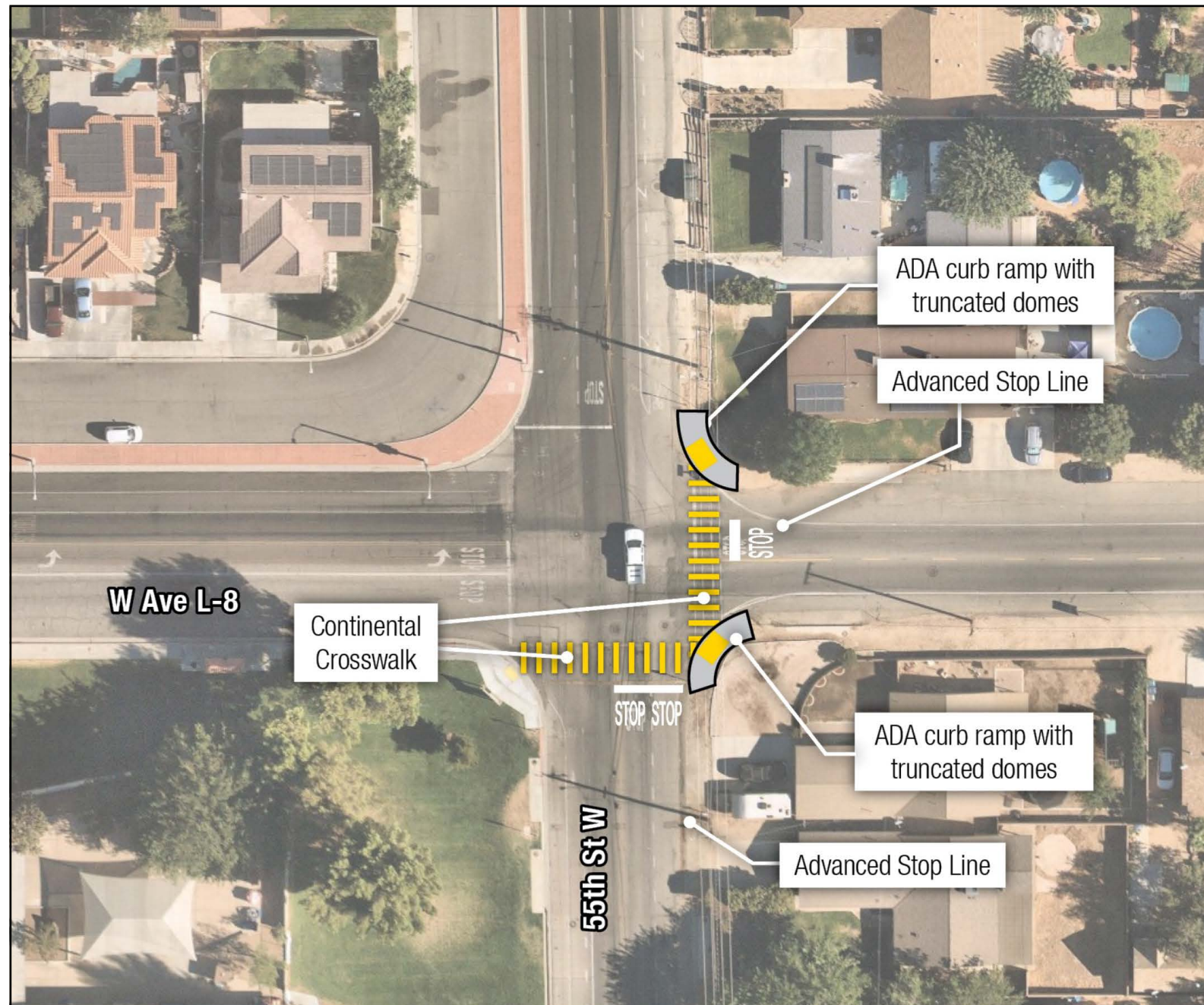


See SRTS Master Plan Introduction: Menu of Best People Strategies

PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS

Recommendations

Avenue L-8 and 55th Street West



POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

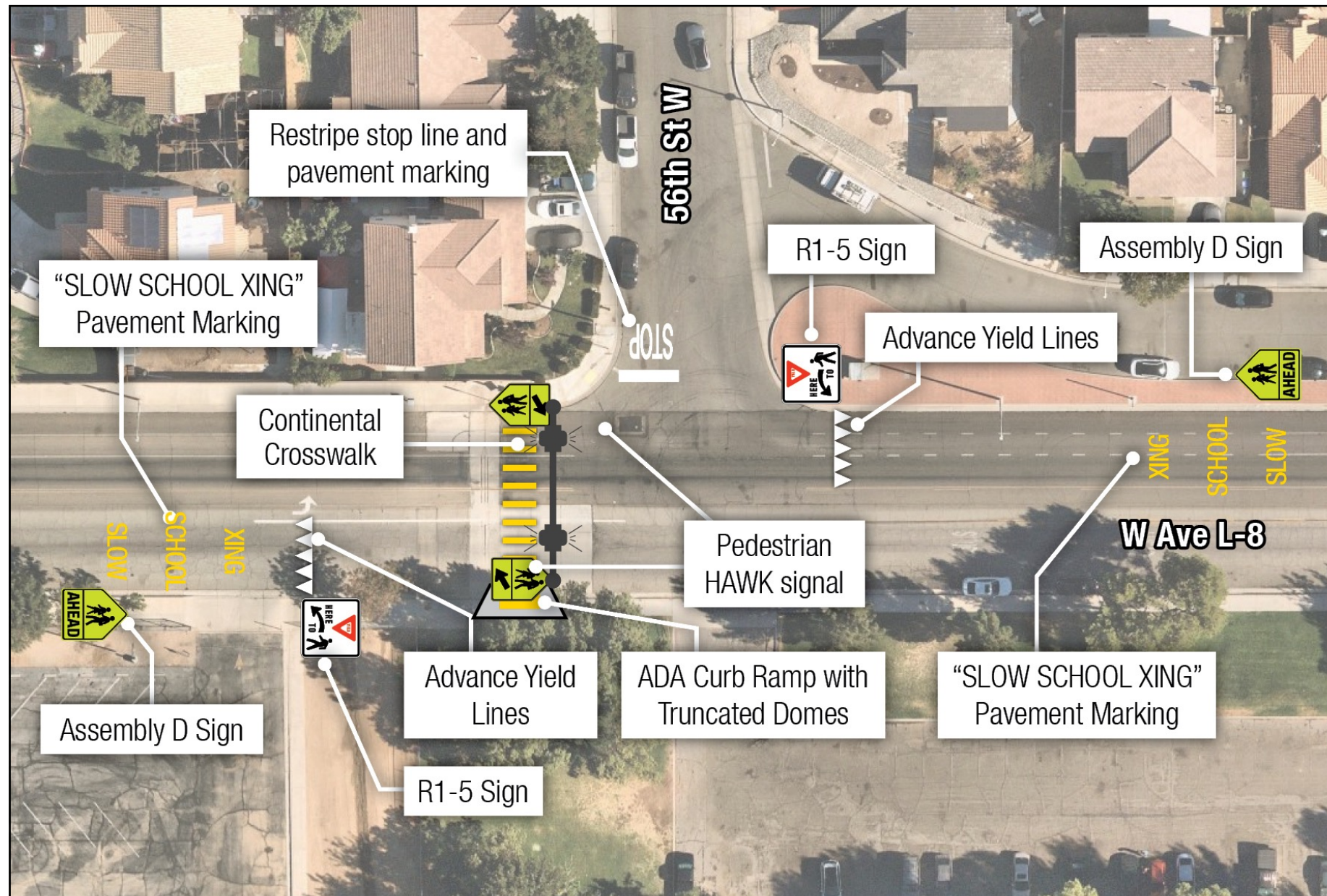
Existing

- All-way stop control.
- Transverse-line crosswalk on south leg.

Potential Improvements

- Add yellow continental crosswalks on east and south legs.
- Add advanced stop lines to the new crosswalks.
- Add ADA curb ramps with truncated domes to northeast and southeast corners.

PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS Recommendations



POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

Avenue L-8 and 56th Street West

Existing

- Stop controlled at 56th Street West.

Potential Improvements

- Investigate installing an overhead pedestrian-activated rapid-flashing beacons or HAWK to the west leg crosswalk.
- Add a yellow continental crosswalk to west leg
- Add advanced yield lines to both approaches on the west leg crosswalk.
- Add "SLOW SCHOOL XING" pavement marking per CA MUTCD.
- Add signs approaching crosswalk(s) per CA MUTCD guidelines, as shown.
- Restripe stop line and pavement marking on north leg.

PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS

Recommendations

Avenue L-8 and 57th Street West

Existing

- All-way stop control.
- Transverse-line crosswalk on south and east legs.

Potential Improvements

- Add yellow continental crosswalks on south and east legs.
- Add advanced stop lines on south and east legs.
- Add ADA curb ramps with truncated domes to southwest and southeast corners.



POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS

Recommendations

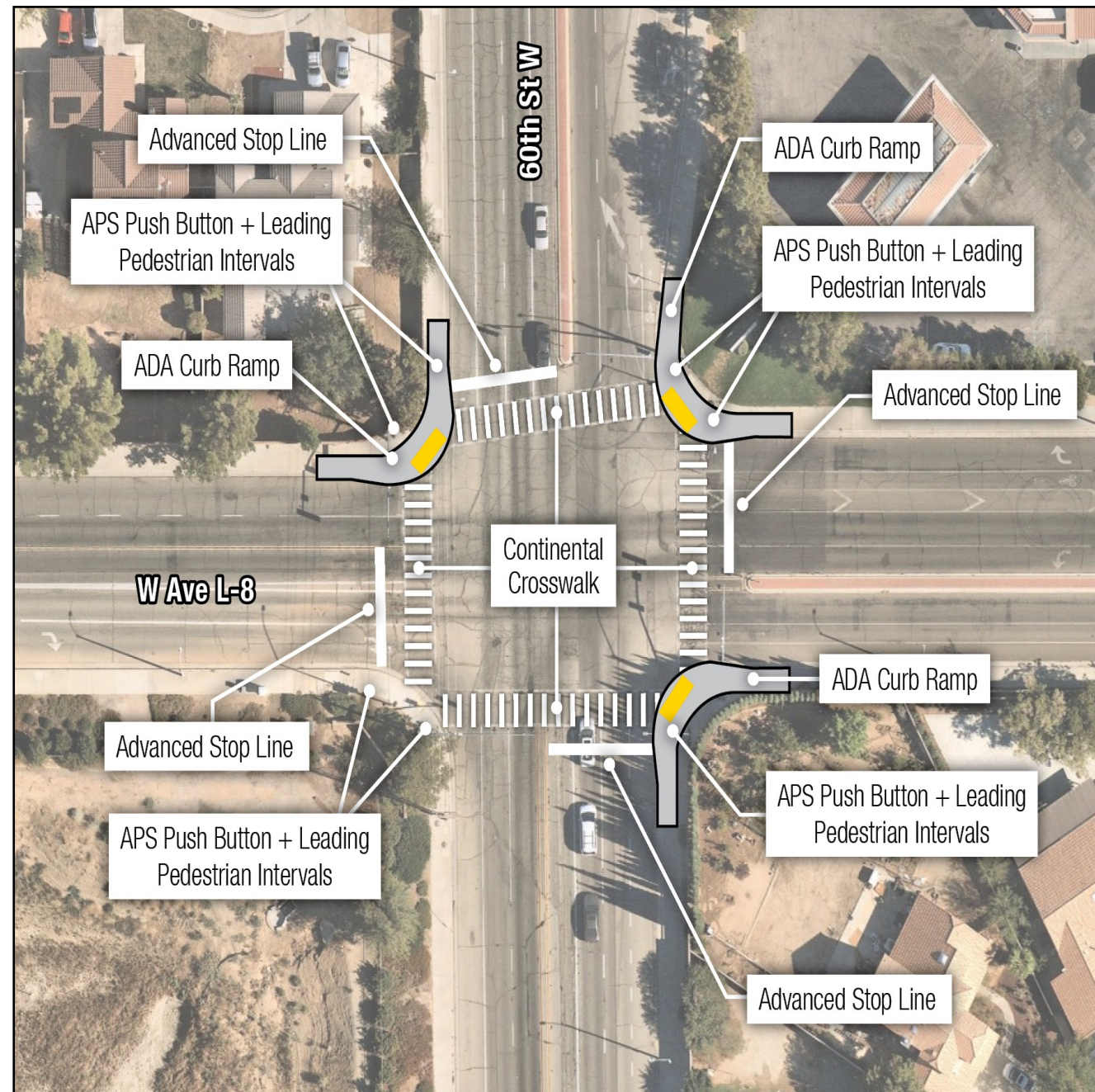
Avenue L-8 and 60th Street West

Existing

- Signalized intersection.
- Transverse-line crosswalk on all legs.

Potential Improvements

- Add a leading pedestrian interval to cross all legs.
- Add accessible pedestrian signal (APS) push buttons.
- Add white continental crosswalks on all legs.
- Add advanced stop lines to all approaches of the new crosswalks.
- Add ADA curb ramps with truncated domes to northeast, northwest, and southeast corners.



POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS

Recommendations

Avenue L-10 and 55th Street West



POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

Existing

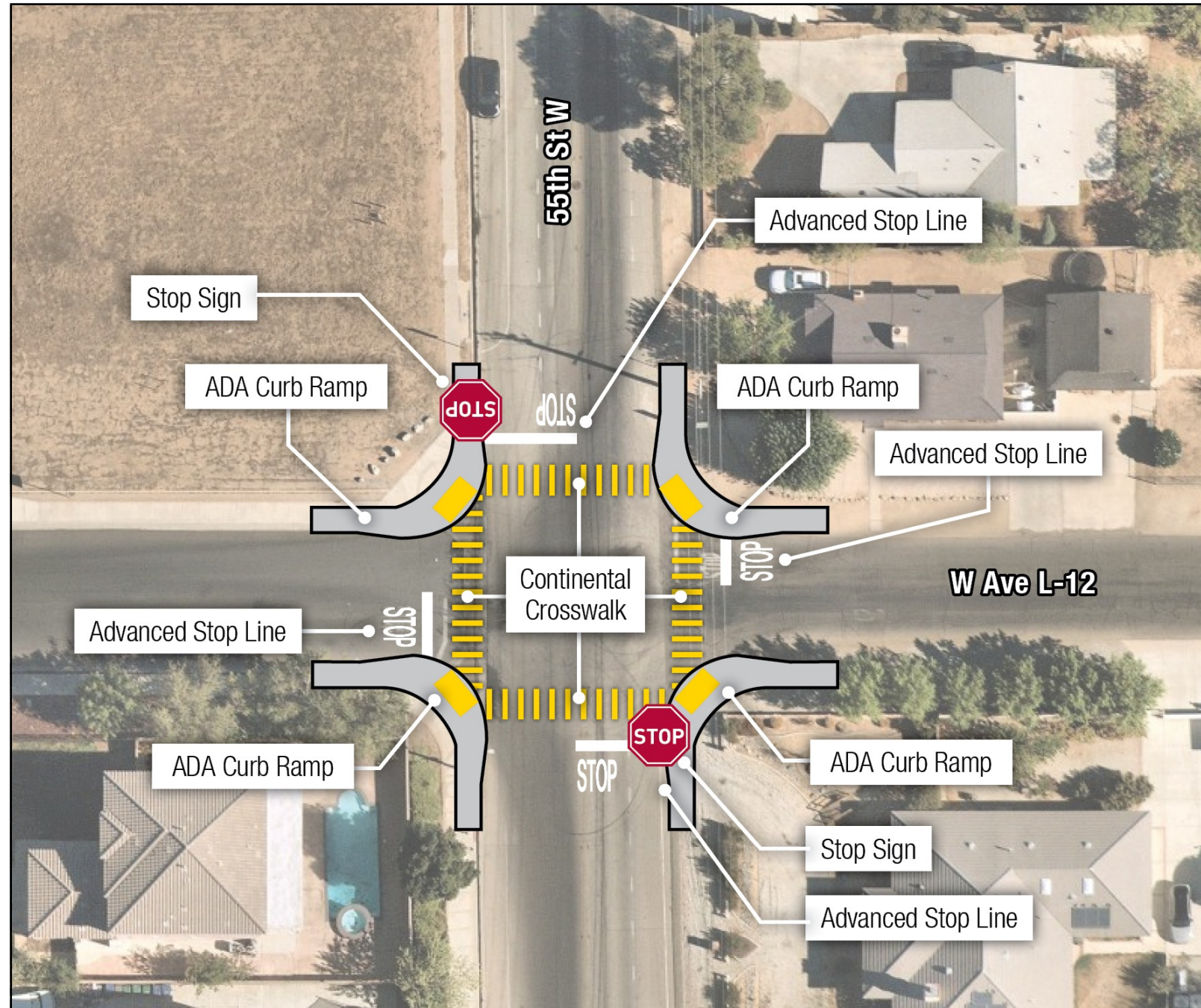
- T-intersection.
- Stop-controlled at Avenue L-10.
- White ladder crosswalk on north leg.

Potential Improvements

- Add white continental crosswalk on north leg.
- Add ADA curb ramps with truncated domes to northwest and northeast corners.
- Remove W1 1-2 sign from southeast corner.
- Investigate installing a post-mounted pedestrian-activated rapid-flashing beacon.

PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS Recommendations

Avenue L-12 and 54th Street West



POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

Existing

- TWSC Intersection.
- Stop-controlled on Avenue L-12.
- 55th Street West is uncontrolled.

Potential Improvements

- Add yellow continental crosswalks on all legs.
- Add advanced stop lines to all approaches of the new crosswalks.
- Investigate adding stop sign to north and south approaches on 55th Street West.
- Add ADA curb ramps with truncated domes to all corners.

PROJECT & PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Strategy Packages

Summary of Engineering Strategies, by Type

Crossing Improvements

- **Avenue L-8 & 55th Street West:** Pavement markings; curb ramps
- **Avenue L-8 & 56th Street West:** Pavement markings & signage; curb ramp; rectangular rapid-flashing beacon (RRFB)
- **Avenue L-8 & 57th Street West:** Pavement markings; curb ramps
- **Avenue L-8 & 60th Street West:** Pavement markings, APS push buttons & leading pedestrian intervals
- **Avenue L-10 & 55th Street West:** Pavement markings; curb ramps
- **Avenue L-12 & 55th Street West:** Pavement markings & signage; curb ramps

Bikeways

- **Avenue L-8 between 60th Street West & 62nd Street West:** Lane reductions & Class II buffered bike lanes
- **60th Street West between Avenue L-8 & Avenue L-12:** Class II buffered bike lanes

Sidewalk

- **Avenue L-8 between 57th Street West & existing sidewalk east of 60th Street West (north side)**

Traffic Calming

- **57th Street West between Avenue L-8 & Avenue L-12:** Speed humps
- **Avenue L-12 between 55th Street West & 57th Street West:** Speed humps

