



Green Central Park Elementary School

Minneapolis, MN - East 34th Street from Clinton Avenue to Park Avenue

Safe Routes to School Demonstration Project: Summary and Evaluation



NOVEMBER 2023



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 or pedestrian lanes, crosswalk markings, curb extensions, and median safety islands.

The demonstration project near the Green Central Elementary School campus originated from a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plan completed in 2021. In collaboration with school staff, MnDOT, project consultants, and student volunteers, the City of Minneapolis installed the demonstration project in Spring 2023.

The goal of the project was to make it easier and safer for students to walk and

bike along and across East 34th Street, where there were concerns about crossing distances and driver speeds.

After multiple draft designs, the SRTS team decided to install curb extensions and a raised crosswalk across East 34th Street at Clinton Avenue and a protected two-way bikeway on the south side of East 34th Street from Clinton Avenue to Park Avenue. By reducing the distance to cross at intersections and providing a protected, dedicated place for people to bicycle, the design aims to slow drivers and allow pedestrians and bicyclists to travel more safely and efficiently.

SRTS is part of Vision Zero, the City's plan to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries on city streets by 2027. The program coordinates with public schools to make streets safer and more comfortable for children and pedestrians.



PROJECT SUMMARY

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INSTALLATION DATE: April 2023

DAYS TO INSTALL: 1

MATERIAL COST: ~\$15,000 (including pedestrian crossing signs that can be reused on future projects; not including raised crosswalk)

FEATURED ELEMENTS INSTALLED:

- Curb extensions (3)
- Pedestrian signs (2)
- Raised crosswalk (1)
- Protected two-way bikeway (5 blocks)

LESSONS LEARNED AND NEXT STEPS

The SRTS team fielded a survey to capture feedback from the community about the project sites. A majority of survey respondents reported that the demonstration projects made them feel safer using the street, increased visibility of pedestrians and bicyclists, and improved safety for students, including those with disabilities. Nearly 60% of respondents reported they would support installing this project with permanent materials.

DRIVER AWARENESS AND SPEEDS:

Most survey respondents reported that the project increased visibility of pedestrians. 95% 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: "Because 34th is more narrow now, vehicles are going much slower on that street, which is AWESOME!"

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLIST COMFORT AND SAFETY:

63% of survey respondents drove through the project site, while 58% biked and 47% walked (respondents could select more than one mode). Respondents who walked and bicycled, and some who drove, were positive about the project's impacts. Half of all respondents suggested the project was likely to make them walk there more frequently, while the other half responded that they

walked and bicycled there about the same amount as before.

SUGGESTIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS:

Most respondents were in favor of making the project permanent as currently designed, while some advocated for adjustments to the project to ensure that there would be enough space to pass in winter and to communicate to drivers that it is a two-way street, as well as concerns about the bike lane crossing a church driveway. Another recurring concern was that speeding and yielding on 3rd Avenue and 5th Avenue remained significant issues. These are important considerations to address when stakeholders evaluate permanent design scenarios for the corridor.





DESIGN

The demonstration project at the Green Central Elementary School campus consisted of three curb extensions and a raised crosswalk installation at the intersection of 34th Street East and Clinton Avenue South, and a protected two-way bikeway from Clinton Avenue South to Park Avenue South. Temporary in-street pedestrian crossing signs augmented the effects of the curb extensions and raised crosswalk.

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 concrete hardscape (and potentially green stormwater infrastructure) that connects with existing pedestrian facilities.

The raised crosswalk is meant to alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians, to encourage drivers to slow down, and to reinforce pedestrian right-of-way when crossing the intersection.

A protected two-way bikeway is meant to provide a designated place for people to bicycle on a connecting route between nearby bikeways and school, and to alert drivers to the presence of bicyclists.

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.

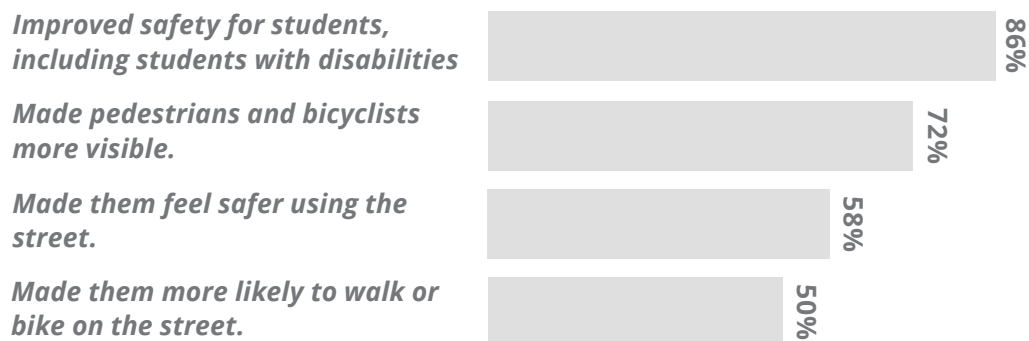
The project staff and community fielded an online survey to collect input about how pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers felt about the project and to solicit ideas for improving the project in the future. The survey link was shared on posters in Spanish and English posted in nine locations near the project site. A total of 38 people responded to the survey.



RESULTS

A speed study was conducted to evaluate conditions before and during project installation. Median speeds on 34th decreased from 21.9 to 20.2 miles per hour (mph). The speed limit is 20 mph. A May 2023 traffic study counted 82 bicyclists using the temporary protected two-way bikeway in a single day. Peak hours were from 4 to 6 pm.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS AGREE THAT THE PROJECT...



TESTIMONIAL

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A parent of a student biking to school wrote:

"Last Friday, we tried a new route, exiting the Greenway and crossing Lake Street at the 13th Avenue signal, skirting Powderhorn Park, and finally taking the 34th Street bike lane, which delivered us straight to the school grounds like a red carpet.

This improvement strikes me as a modest investment, but highly strategic and smartly planned. This is a great example where improving a small segment of a network makes the whole system more robust.

Thanks to your efforts, we look forward to biking to school more often!"

