



Safe Routes to School Assessment

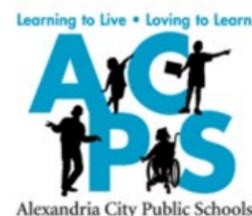
Francis Hammond Middle School

Final

Prepared For



National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board



Overview

NOTE: The final report and recommendations have been modified by the City of Alexandria to align with project goals and to focus on high-impact projects.

Francis Hammond Middle School



Methodology

Data, Mapping and Setting the Context

- Data was assembled to create maps and graphic data summaries for each school to provide context for the walk audits and establish walk audit parameters.

Community Engagement

- A community feedback form was created and shared online to provide an opportunity for parents, administrators, staff, students and community members to provide input. Outreach materials were developed by NeoNiche Strategies and distributed/posted in schools and in community spaces.

School Walk Audits

- Arrival or dismissal operations were observed at each school and the walk audit teams assessed the behavior of students, parents and commuters. Additionally, Toole staff collected field data in the walk areas of the schools to examine existing conditions to include the condition of sidewalks, crosswalks, signs and other roadway elements.

Recommendations

- Field data, observations and feedback form results were used to identify issues and corresponding recommendations.

Walk Audit Reports

- School details, observations, field data, feedback form results and recommendations were finalized in a report.

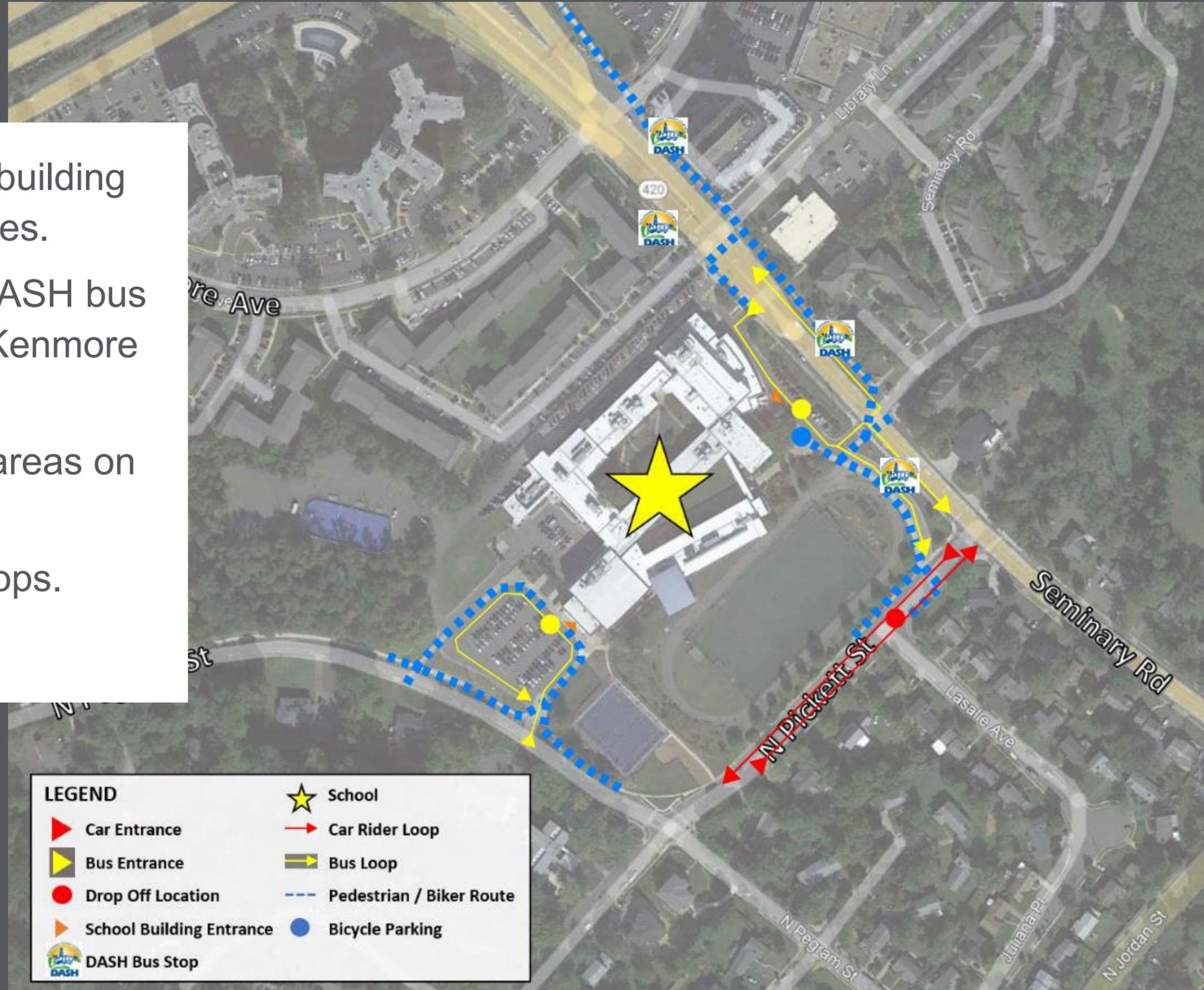


School Site

- Francis Hammond Middle School is located at 4646 Seminary Road, serving grades 6-8 and operating 8:15am - 3:15pm.
- It is located near a residential and commercial area and bounded by Seminary Road to the northeast, Kenmore Avenue to the northwest, N Pegram Street to the southwest, and N Pickett Street to the southeast.
- The residential area contains multi-family and single-family housing.
- Seminary Road is a minor arterial with a posted speed limit of 25 mph and a school zone speed limit of 15 mph.
- For the 2022-2023 school year, there were 1,413 students enrolled at FHMS in grades 6 through 8. The school reports that 1,263 students take the school bus, 150 ride in cars, 82 walk, and 5 bike.

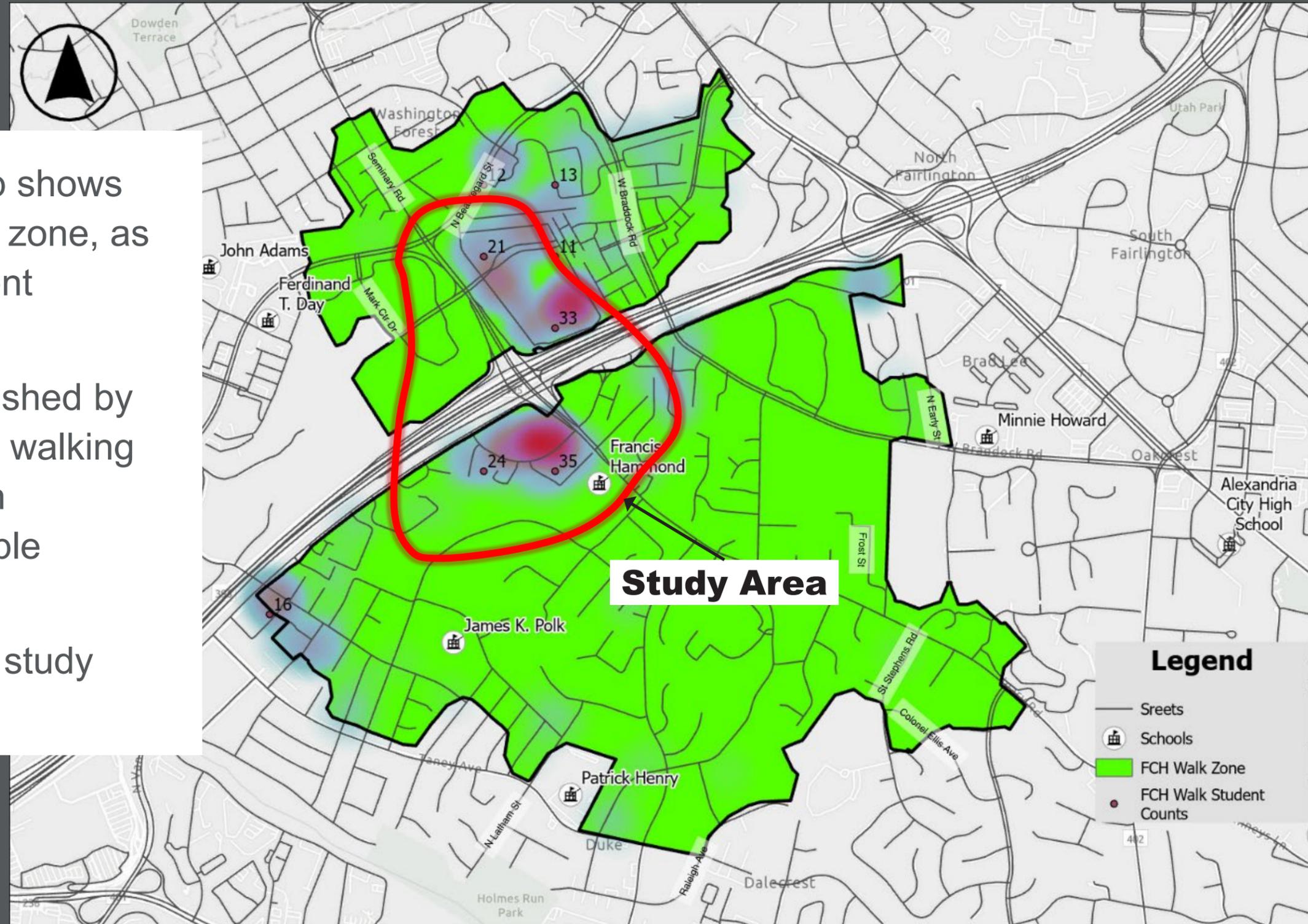
School Access

- **Pedestrians** leave the school building from the front and rear entrances.
- Some students walk to the DASH bus stop at Seminary Road and Kenmore Avenue to head westbound.
- **Vehicles** use drop off/pick up areas on N Pickett Street.
- **Buses** use front or rear bus loops.



Walk Zone

- The Walker Cluster map shows the existing school walk zone, as well as clusters of student addresses.
- The walk zone is established by ACPS by evaluating the walking distance to the school in combination with available infrastructure.
- Red line shows approx. study area.



Francis Hammond MS Walker Clusters

Map Source: ACPS, Office of Capital Programs, Planning and Design
SY2022-2023

Esri Community Maps Contributors, DCGIS, Fairfax County, VA, VGIN, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA

Walk Audit Participants

- FHMS – Anika Buster-Singleton, Principal
- PTA – Keisha Brookes
- Southern Towers – Sami Bourma
- COA – Bryan Hayes
- COA – Alex Carroll
- ACPS – John Contreras
- APD – Richard Sandoval
- COG – John Swanson
- COG – Justine Velez
- Advocate – Casey Kane
- Advocate – Mike Doyle
- Toole Design – Christina Fink
- Toole Design – J Swiderski
- Toole Design – Cipriana Thompson

Observations and Crash Data





Front driveway exit at Seminary Road



Students crossing diagonally at N. Seminary Road and Library Ln.

Dismissal Observations

- Observation Period: Wednesday March 29, 2023, 2:45pm – 4:00pm
- Pick-up area on N. Seminary Road
 - Several cars turned right on red to enter the parking lot in violation of the No Turn on Red sign.
 - Hedges obstruct driver view of approaching pedestrians.
 - Drivers stop on crosswalk at the exit driveway.
 - There is no marked crosswalk across the western leg of Seminary Road at the driveway exit. Students regularly cross here to get to the DASH bus stop. Many students were observed crossing diagonally at this intersection.
 - Many students were observed crossing on “don’t walk” indication.



Students at front entrance during dismissal



Rear exit stairs at N Pegram Street

Dismissal Observations

- Crossing Guard: No crossing guards were present. School staff are stationed at the front exit, rear exit, and at N Pickett Street to aid with dismissal operations.
- School Exit in rear of building (near Pegram St.)
 - Most students who walk leave the parking lots via the stairs at the southwest corner of the parking lot.
 - Students on bikes/riding scooters cross N. Pegram Street midblock to access bike lane.
- Pick-up area on N Pickett Street
 - Parked vehicles block bike lane on N Pickett Street.
 - Students cross N Pickett Street mid-block where there is no existing crosswalk. Staff aid with mid-block crossing.
 - Several vehicles made a u-turn on N Pickett Street during the observation period.

General Observations

- Sidewalks from the front pick-up area along N Seminary Road to the bus stop are narrow for the volume of students walking to the bus stop.
- Intersection of Seminary Road and Library Lane experiences high pedestrian volumes during dismissal times.
- Rear driveway exit has no stop bar or crosswalk.
- There is no crosswalk across N Pegram Street where students cross.
- There are no school zone signs on N Pegram Street.
- Buses which exit the lot and head west on N Pegram Street need the entire street including far-side bike lane in order to complete their turns.
- Vegetation on N Pickett Street encroaches on sidewalk when it is overgrown.



Rear driveway exit

Francis Hammond Campus and Vicinity



North of Kenmore Avenue, the sidewalk along the south side of Seminary Road dwindles to nothing as the road splits into multiple exit and entry ramps and bridges across I-395.



Rather than return to the nearest crosswalk, several hundred feet southeast, some people, including parents with small children, cross Seminary Road at or northwest of Kenmore Avenue.



Traffic waiting to turn right from Kenmore Avenue onto westbound Seminary Road often stop in the crosswalk. Multiple drivers were observed looking only for other vehicles from their left, not pedestrians or bicyclists from the sidewalk or bridge over I-395 to their right.

Francis Hammond Campus and Vicinity



Much of the sidewalk along Seminary Road between the I-395 overpass and the school (in upper right of image) not only has very little buffer from speeding traffic but is also lined with a tall hedge that obstructs 1/8 to 1/4 of its width.



Many of the school's entranceways have detectable warning surfaces, but no crosswalk markings. Some have neither.



The straight-line path between the Seminary Road sidewalk at the corner of the school property and the front door of the school building—even across the driveway—has been worn to gravel.

Francis Hammond Campus and Vicinity

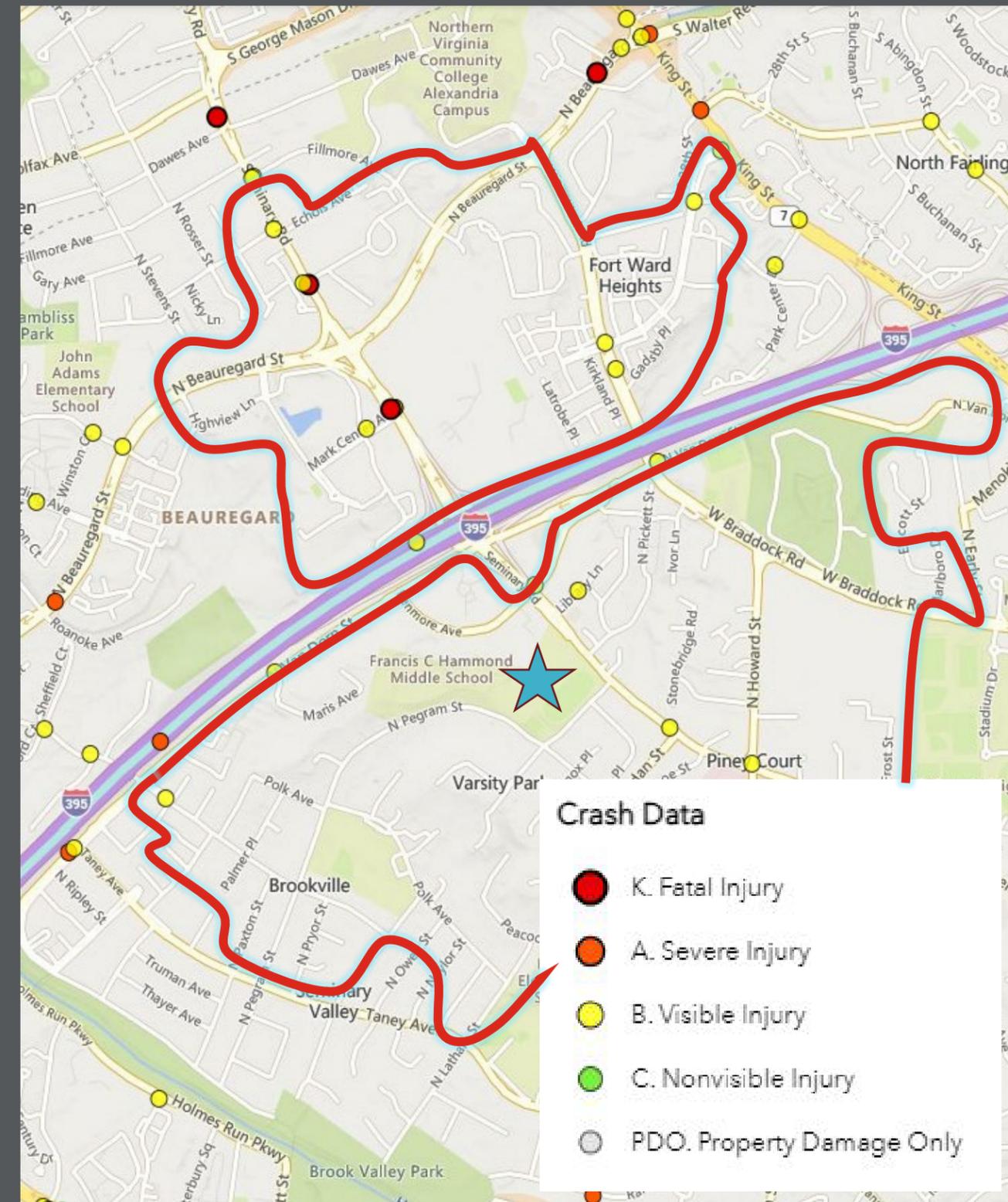


Visibility is extremely limited for drivers exiting the apartment complex immediately west of the school, opposite Library Lane. The same hedges that restrict drivers' ability to see students and others walking past their driveway also block part of the sidewalk itself, and the shy distance of a hedge taller than a student's head cuts the sidewalk's usable width in half.

Crash Data

- Crash Data was gathered for the school walk area for the years 2018-2022.
- Within the walk zone, there were 457 crashes. Of these crashes, 17 involved a pedestrian, 6 involved a bicyclists. There were 2 pedestrian fatalities.
- Crash reports for multiple pedestrian injury crashes list driver speeding as improper action.

CRASHES WITHIN WALK ZONE	Total Crashes	Injury	Fatality
All Modes	457	145	2
Pedestrian-involved	17	15	2
Bicyclist-involved	6	6	0



*Pedestrian-Involved Crashes 2018-2022
Source: VDOT
Red line shows approx. walk zone.*

Community Feedback Form Results



Participants

- Community feedback was solicited through an online community feedback form. For Francis Hammond Middle School, there were 42 participants.
- Table 2 summarizes the mode participants typically use and their ideal mode to get to school.

Table 1. Summary of Form Participants

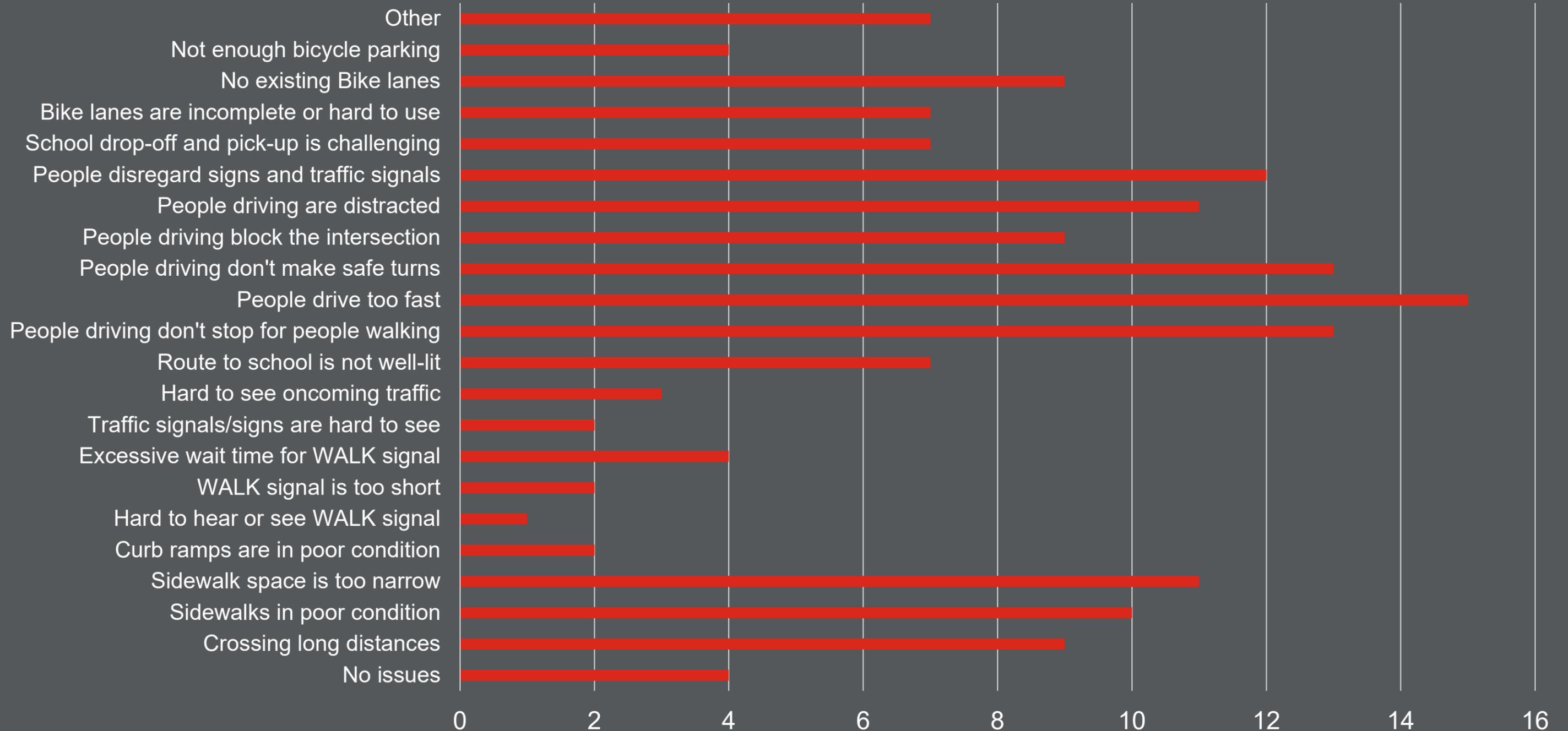
Community Feedback Form Participants	
Total number of responses	42
Student Responses	4
Parent, Grandparent, or Guardian Responses	23
Teacher, Admin, School Staff	8
Alexandria resident interested in the project	13
Other	2

Table 2. How Respondents Are Getting to School

Mode Options	Typical Mode	Ideal Mode
Walk	19	15
Bike	3	8
Drive	12	0
Carpool	1	0
School Bus	11	6
Public Transit	5	2
Other	5	2

Results

Issues experienced on the way to school



Community Feedback Form – Free Response

- Community feedback form participants provided free responses to the following free response questions. Responses are summarized in the table below.
 - What would it take for you to walk or bike to school more often than you do now?
 - Please provide more detail about the issues you experience getting to school.

Intersections of concern	Seminary Road and Kenmore Ave is a high crash intersection with no crossing guard. Speeding drivers.
	Seminary Road/North Pickett – pedestrian signal malfunctions.
	Pegram Street – students walk in the streets and jay walk rather than crossing at crosswalk. Sidewalks on one side only are overgrown with vegetation and narrow. Bike lane is on the wrong side. Cars park on bike lane.
	Taney/Pegram Intersection – Drivers routinely run stop sign.
Bike Infrastructure	Bike lanes are not protected. Students taking bike share and scooters to school not wearing helmets.
Safety Concerns	Seminary Road – Students do not cross at crosswalks, drivers do not yield to pedestrians and try to “beat” pedestrians by making a quick left turn, speeding/distracted drivers, distracted students crossing while looking at their phone.

Walk Audit Recommendations

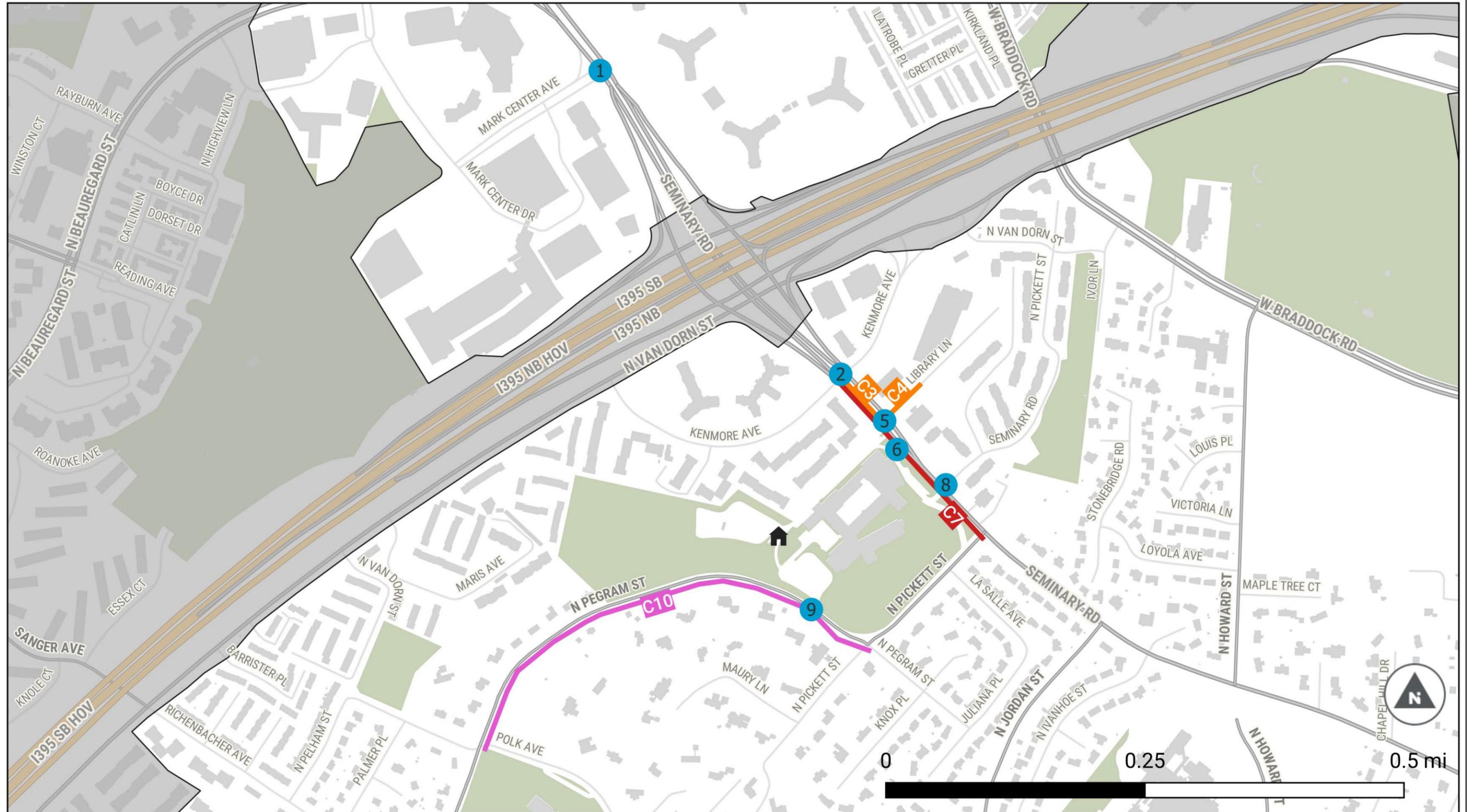
Recommendations Approach

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) infrastructure recommendations aim to improve safety and accessibility for students to walk and bicycle to school. This may include reducing vehicle speeds, addressing conflicts between pedestrians/bicyclists and drivers, and providing fully accessible sidewalks and crossings near schools.

The following map and tables summarize infrastructure recommendations within and outside of the current school walk zone as relevant. Key student walking or bicycling routes were identified based on information received from school administration, parent surveys, and school observations.

Note that other projects or planning/feasibility studies may be planned or ongoing within the study area. The City of Alexandria will confirm the approach to implementing recommendations from this SRTS Study to ensure they align with other projects as necessary.

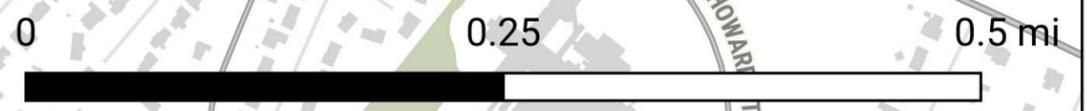
Francis C Hammond MS - Recommendations



-  School
-  School Walk Zones
-  Alexandria Boundary
-  Parks
-  Buildings

- Spot Recommendations
-  Intersection or Crossing

- Corridor Recommendations
-  Sidewalk
 -  Speed Management
 -  Bicycle Facility



Recommendations Overview

The following pages provide tables of the recommendations for each location. Below is a description of the column within the tables.

- Map ID – Label number on the map. Points with multiple recommendations will have a suffix of a, b, etc. Corridor recommendations are identified with the prefix of “C” (e.g. C2).
- Location, Recommendation Type – Location of recommendation and the type of the recommendation. The extents of corridor recommendations are defined in parenthesis.
- Issue – Description of the issue at the identified location.
- Recommendation – Description of the proposed recommendation.
- Complexity – Scale of complexity for recommendation implementation. The ranking considers costs, timeframe, and overall difficulty from one to five, with one being the least complex and five being the most complex.
- Responsibility – Responsible party for implementation.

Map ID	Location School	Location, Recommendation Type	Issue	Recommendation	Complexity	Responsibility
1	Francis C Hammond MS	Seminary Rd & Mark Center Ave, Intersection or Crossing	Eastern crossing of Seminary Rd does not have a crosswalk. This crossing location will have an increase in demand as the area redevelops.	Evaluate options to enhance pedestrian access and safety at Seminary Rd / Mark Center Ave.	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	City
2a	Francis C Hammond MS	Seminary Rd & Kenmore Ave, Intersection or Crossing	Curb ramps on northeast and northwest corners lack level landing areas and detectable warning surfaces.	Reconstruct curb ramps and add detectable warning surfaces.	■ ■ □ □ □	City
2b	Francis C Hammond MS	Seminary Rd & Kenmore Ave, Intersection or Crossing	Northern crossing of Kenmore Ave is long and there are concerns about southbound motorists not stopping for people crossing on foot or bike. Bridge approach also restricts sight distance. Crosswalk markings are faded.	Explore ways to reduce crossing distance, including adjusting the curb to reduce turning radius and/or adding flex posts in the short-term (particularly on the northwest corner) to reduce effective turning radii; repaint high-visibility crosswalk.	■ ■ ■ □ □	City
2c	Francis C Hammond MS	Seminary Rd & Kenmore Ave, Intersection or Crossing	Bus stop on northeast corner has limited space for students.	Explore feasibility of widening sidewalk to provide more waiting space or explore relocating bus stop to an area with more sidewalk space. May be contingent on future development.	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	City
2d	Francis C Hammond MS	Seminary Rd & Kenmore Ave, Intersection or Crossing	Some students were observed crossing Seminary Rd without a signal or marked crosswalk.	Explore opportunities to provide a formal crossing here with appropriate traffic control (long-term).	■ ■ ■ ■ ■	City

Map ID	Location School	Location, Recommendation Type	Issue	Recommendation	Complexity	Responsibility
3	Francis C Hammond MS	Library Ln (north of Seminary Rd), Sidewalk	Sidewalk on east side and west side of Library Ln is relatively narrow and street (Library Ln) is relatively wide. Students walk on this sidewalk to access the shopping center.	Explore linear traffic calming, like bike lanes, and/or widen sidewalk on Library Ln; provide crosswalk across Library Ln to shopping center.	■ ■ ■ ■ □	City
4a	Francis C Hammond MS	Seminary Rd & Library Ln, Intersection or Crossing	Southern crossing experiences conflicts with motorists turning right on red.	Install No Turn on Red sign for the northbound driveway approach.	■ □ □ □ □	City
4b	Francis C Hammond MS	Seminary Rd & Library Ln, Intersection or Crossing	Southern crossing of driveway does not have pedestrian signal, is missing crosswalk marking, and has no stop bar.	Install pedestrian signal; high-visibility crosswalk; stop bar.	■ ■ ■ □ □	City
4c	Francis C Hammond MS	Seminary Rd & Library Ln, Intersection or Crossing	Students cross diagonally on the exclusive pedestrian phase. Students don't have enough time to cross and often begin their crossing with little time left. Exclusive pedestrian phase requires pedestrians to press a push button.	Explore formalizing a diagonal crossing and extend crossing time; put pedestrian signal on auto recall during school hours.	■ ■ ■ □ □	City

Map ID	Location School	Location, Recommendation Type	Issue	Recommendation	Complexity	Responsibility
4d	Francis C Hammond MS	Seminary Rd & Library Ln, Intersection or Crossing	Many students observed crossing during what would be a concurrent green/pedestrian phase, but because there is no concurrent pedestrian phase, there isn't enough time to cross, and students linger in the intersection.	Explore geometric improvements to intersection to improve pedestrian safety. Improve signal timing for people walking.	■ ■ ■ □ □	City
4e	Francis C Hammond MS	Seminary Rd & Library Ln, Intersection or Crossing	There is significant crowding on all sides of the intersection as students and families wait to cross.	Expand waiting space at corners where feasible.	■ ■ ■ ■ □	City
5	Francis C Hammond MS	Seminary Rd & School Drwy, Intersection or Crossing	Southern crossing of school driveway is missing crosswalk marking.	Install high-visibility crosswalk marking.	■ □ □ □ □	City
6	Francis C Hammond MS	Seminary Rd (Pickett St to Kenmore Ave), Speed Management, School Zone Signs and Pavement Markings	Speeding on Seminary Road was a concern from parents and school.	Conduct speed study and perform speed mitigation measures.	■ ■ ■ ■ □	City
7a	Francis C Hammond MS	Seminary Rd & The Encore Apt Drwy, Intersection or Crossing	Northern crossing of The Encore Apt Driveway is missing crosswalk markings and has no stop bar.	Install high-visibility crosswalk marking and stop bar.	■ □ □ □ □	City

Map ID	Location School	Location, Recommendation Type	Issue	Recommendation	Complexity	Responsibility
7b	Francis C Hammond MS	Seminary Rd & The Encore Apt Drwy, Intersection or Crossing	Pedestrian signals are not functional when signal is flashing.	Reassess signal (signal is scheduled to flash outside school arrival/dismissal. Pedestrian signals are not functional when flashing).	■ ■ □ □ □	City
8	Francis C Hammond MS	N Pegram St & School Drwy, Intersection or Crossing	Students were observed crossing N Pegram St to use the bike lane with no crosswalk available.	Install curb ramps, install high-visibility crosswalks, and install school crossing signs across N Pegram St to provide access to bike lane.	■ ■ □ □ □	City
9	Francis C Hammond MS	N Pegram St (Polk Ave to N Pickett St), Bicycle facility	Existing buffered bike lane does not have any vertical separation.	Add some vertical element (flex post, tire stops, etc.) to existing bike lane.	■ ■ □ □ □	City
10	Francis C Hammond MS	La Salle Ave at N Pickett St	At dismissal, students walk south on the east side of N Pickett St and cross La Salle Ave where parents queue for pickup.	Reconstruct curb ramps to face crosswalk, add detectable warning surface, and install crosswalk across La Salle Ave.	■ □ □ □ □	City

Notes

All images by Toole Design unless noted otherwise.

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