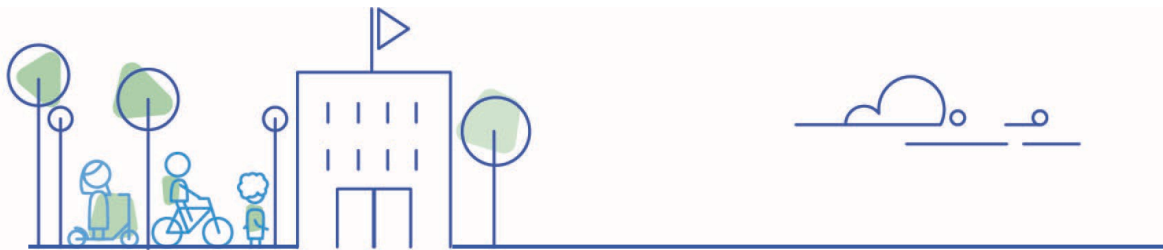


# Ross Elementary School Action Plan

DC Safe Routes to School 2020



# Safe Routes to School Planning During 2020

This Action Plan was developed between February and December 2020, while the COVID-19 pandemic was affecting normal work, school, and social behaviors. Virtual learning was in effect at all DCPS schools for the duration of the project time frame. Therefore, the project team was not able to observe conditions or arrival/dismissal procedures on a typical school day.

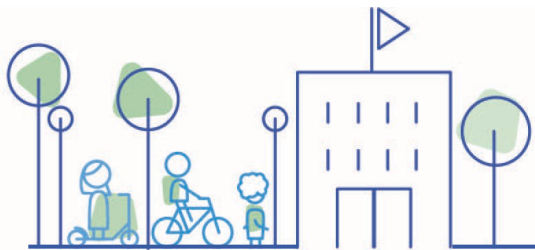
Analysis and subsequent recommendations developed in this Action Plan relied heavily on field review of walking and biking infrastructure. It was also informed by anecdotal information provided by participating school staff, teachers, and parents. The recommendations provided in this report have been vetted by professionals in the planning, engineering, and transportation fields and offer the best guidance given the limited information available due to the COVID-19 situation. DDOT is grateful for the engagement and support of all involved.

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  2. School Recommendations and Descriptions
  3. Proposed DDOT Led Initiatives



# Introduction



## DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program works to:

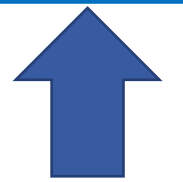
- Improve safety for students who walk and bicycle to school
- Encourage students and their parents to walk and bicycle to school
- Boost student physical activity, reduce parents' fuel consumption, and reduce pollution and traffic congestion near schools.

### DDOT Contact Information

- Derrick Hardy, *Safe Routes to School Coordinator*, [derrick.hardy@dc.gov](mailto:derrick.hardy@dc.gov)
- Gina Arlotto, *Transportation Planner, SRTS* [regina.arlotto@dc.gov](mailto:regina.arlotto@dc.gov)
- George Branyan, *Active Transportation Branch Manager* [george.branyan@dc.gov](mailto:george.branyan@dc.gov)

## DDOT SRTS Programs:

- DCPS Bicycle Education, which provides youth bicycle safety education and programming in DC public schools, as well as skills challenge courses for community events.
- goDCgo to support use of sustainable transportation options
- Safe Routes to School Planning Assistance for DC Schools that are interested in improving safety for student walkers and cyclists.



Our Work  
with Your  
School

DDOT has hired a team of consultants to provide Planning Assistance to 8 DCPS schools for the 2020 year.



# SRTS Planning Assistance

*Note: Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, students were engaged in remote learning from March 2020 through the final completion of this plan.*

Spring  
2020

- Reviewed spot safety recommendations with DDOT and school administration
- Began development of program recommendations for input in Action Plan
- Developed Sidewalk Quest for Walk to School Day

Early  
2021

Fall 2020

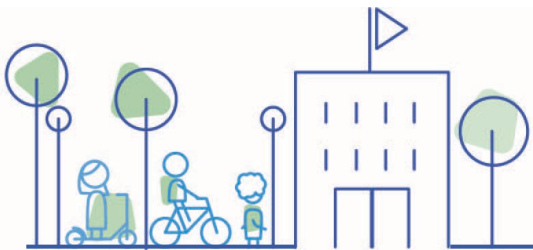
- Met with school administrators to discuss issues around walking & bicycling safety
- Performed site visit to document infrastructure needs
- Developed spot safety recommendations for area around the school

- Finalized Draft Action Plans and reviewed with DDOT and school administrators
- Final Action Plan submitted to DDOT





# Existing Conditions



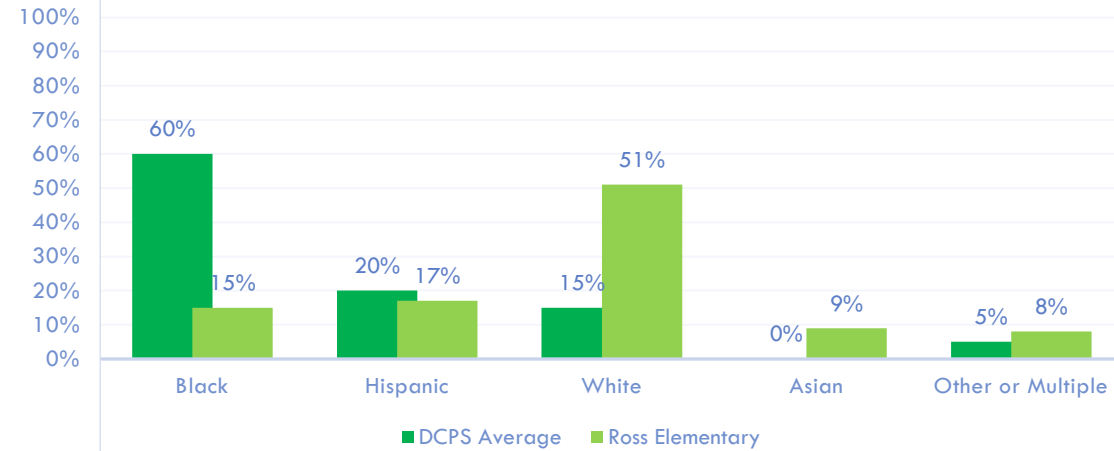


# School Profile

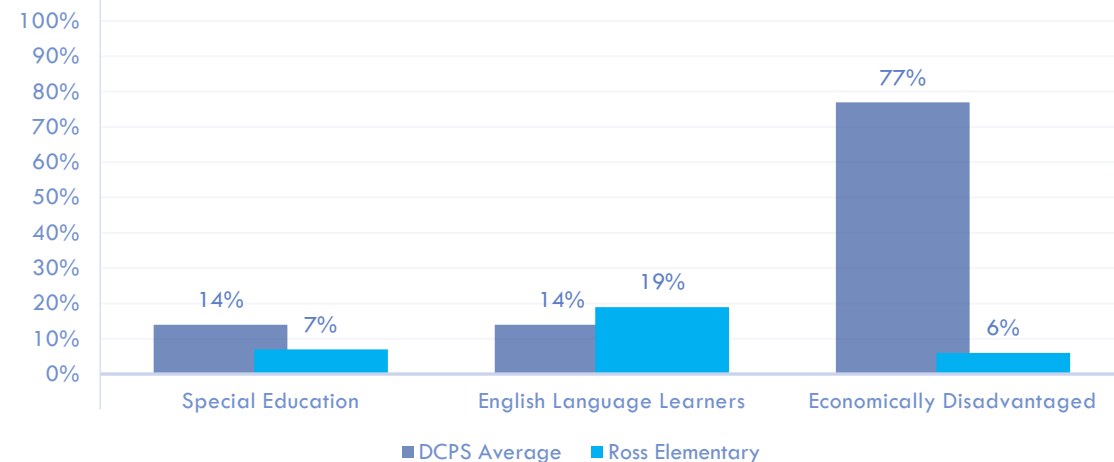
- Ross Elementary School had 177 enrolled students (for student year 2019-2020)
- In-boundary students (students living within the attendance boundary of the school make up 82% of the student population (2019-2020)
- Ross Elementary has more white students and less economically disadvantaged students than the DCPS Average

\*DCPS Averages based on available data from school year 2017-2018

Demographics Comparison to DCPS Average \*



School Statistics Relative to DCPS Average \*



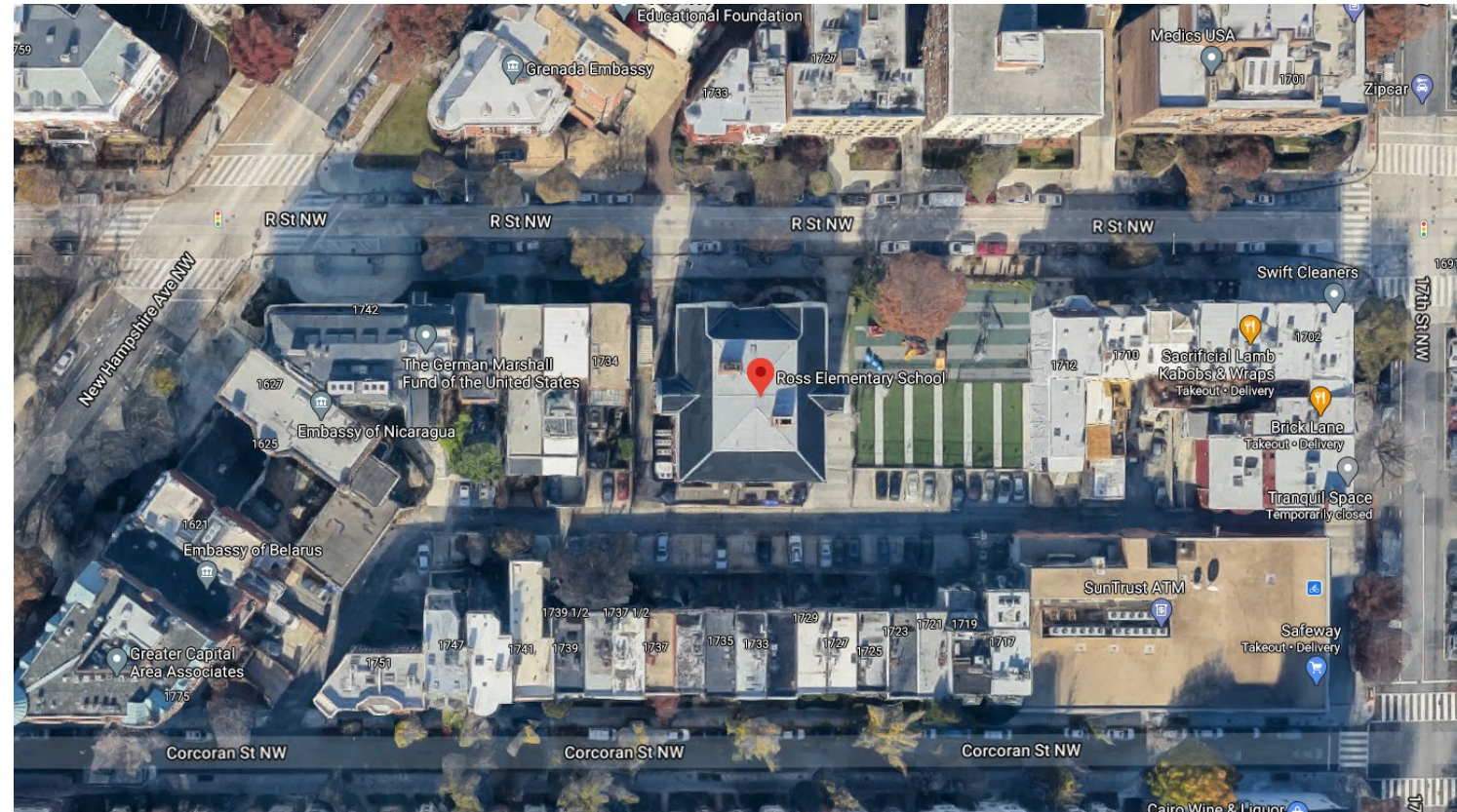
# School Location and Access

- Ross Elementary is in the Dupont Circle neighborhood at 1730 R St NW, between New Hampshire Avenue NW and 17th Street NW.
- Many students live within a ½ mile of Ross Elementary. Majority of students walk to school while some commute by bike, metrobus, and parent drop-off.



# Arrival and Dismissal

- School begins at 8:45 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m.
- Arrival/dismissal: Currently there is not a designated place or drop-off and pick-up. Due to Ross Elementary's location on a one-way street, the school encourages parents to drop-off students in front of the school on the south side of R Street NW on the driver side of the vehicle instead of across the street from the school on the north side of R Street NW on the passenger side of the vehicle.
- Crossing Guard: The school has two crossing guard locations located at New Hampshire Avenue NW and R Street NW and R and 17<sup>th</sup> Streets NW. The crossing guard at the R Street NW and 17<sup>th</sup> St NW location hasn't been seen in that location prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.















# Existing Walking Conditions

- The sidewalk network is connected but there is need of sidewalk maintenance. Some sidewalks are narrow and broken.
- There are challenges crossing 17<sup>th</sup> and Corcoran St: drivers routinely run stop signs and speed at 17<sup>th</sup> and Corcoran St NW. 17<sup>th</sup> and R Street NW has more traffic congestion than 17<sup>th</sup> and Corcoran Street NW.
- There is speeding on 18<sup>th</sup> and Q St. The ally located between Corcoran and R St behind Ross Elementary is unsafe due to vehicular activity.
- Many commuters speed around Dupont Circle, unaware of Ross Elementary's location and the presence of children.
- The current conditions create an unsafe walking environment for students
- Ross Elementary would like bump outs and speed bumps in proximity to the school.

Source: Open Data DC, DDOT (Crossing Guard Locations)

**Legend**

-  Planning Assistance School
-  0.25 Mile Buffer
-  Crossing Guard Locations
-  Signalized Intersection
-  Marked Crosswalk
-  Walking Trail
-  Metro Bus Stop
-  Building
-  Road
-  Park











# Existing Low Stress Bicycling Streets

- Ross Elementary is located within a dense, mixed-use area, where traffic volume and narrow streets limit the extents of a low stress bicycle network for young riders.
- The one-way streets of R and Q Streets have unprotected bike lanes which adults use; these routes are rated LTS 2, and they may not be suitable for students.
- There is a lack of low-stress bicycle connections within a 1/2 mile from Ross Elementary; although some local, residential streets are low stress (parts of Corcoran St, 15<sup>th</sup> St, 19<sup>th</sup> St, and S St), they do not form a complete connected network
- Parents would like improved bike infrastructure to create a safe suitable environment for students commuting to school.

About Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (LTS): This layer was developed by DDOT in 2017 to rank roadways by level of traffic stress for a bicyclist. Criteria used for ranking roadways by LTS include: Average Annual Traffic volume, speed limit, number of lanes, and separation of bicycle from vehicles. Roadways with Bicycle LTS 1 are typically low volume and speed streets, trails, or protected bike lanes. Higher levels of traffic stress are more suitable for adults. The purpose of this map is to identify street segments that may be suitable for children to ride on, as well as gaps. The conditions at the intersections are not evaluated for this purpose.

Source: Open Data DC; DDOT (Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (2017), Crossing Guard Locations)

### Legend

-  Planning Assistance School
-  0.25 Mile Buffer
-  0.5 Mile Buffer
-  Crossing Guard Locations
-  Signalized Intersection
-  Building
-  Road with Bicycle Level of Stress (LTS) 1
-  Road with Bicycle LTS 2-4





# Traffic and Crashes

- New Hampshire Avenue and R Street are minor arterials with low traffic volumes. Pedestrian and bicyclist involved collisions have occurred at every intersection.
- 16<sup>th</sup> St, Massachusetts Avenue, Connecticut Avenue, and Dupont Circle are principal arterials with high traffic volumes and a high number of collisions. Connecticut Avenue was identified as a high crash corridor.
- There was one fatal collision involving a bicyclist within the last five years.
- A student was hit at an intersection after school a couple of years ago.
- Parents have experienced recent crashes and near misses during their child’s commute to school.

About DC Crash Data: This heat map shows the prevalence of crashes between 2015 and 2019 within a half-mile radius of the school. Many of these involved automobiles only. Collisions involving pedestrians or bicyclists have been uniquely identified using colored circles, with larger circles denoting locations with more collisions or more serious collisions. Traffic volumes are highest on orange and red colored streets, which increases the potential for crashes, especially if continuous protected walkways and bikeways are missing.

Source: Open Data DC, DC Crash Data with Pedestrian and Bicycle - Involving Incidents (2015-2019)

**Legend**

- 🏠 Planning Assistance School
- - 0.25 Mile Buffer
- - 0.5 Mile Buffer

**Collisions Involving Pedestrians and Bicyclists (2015-2020)**

- 1 Pedestrian Involved
- 2-5 Pedestrians Involved
- 1 Bicyclist Involved
- 2 Bicyclists Involved
- 1 Pedestrian Fatality
- 1 Bicyclist Fatality

**High Crash Corridors (2010-2014)**

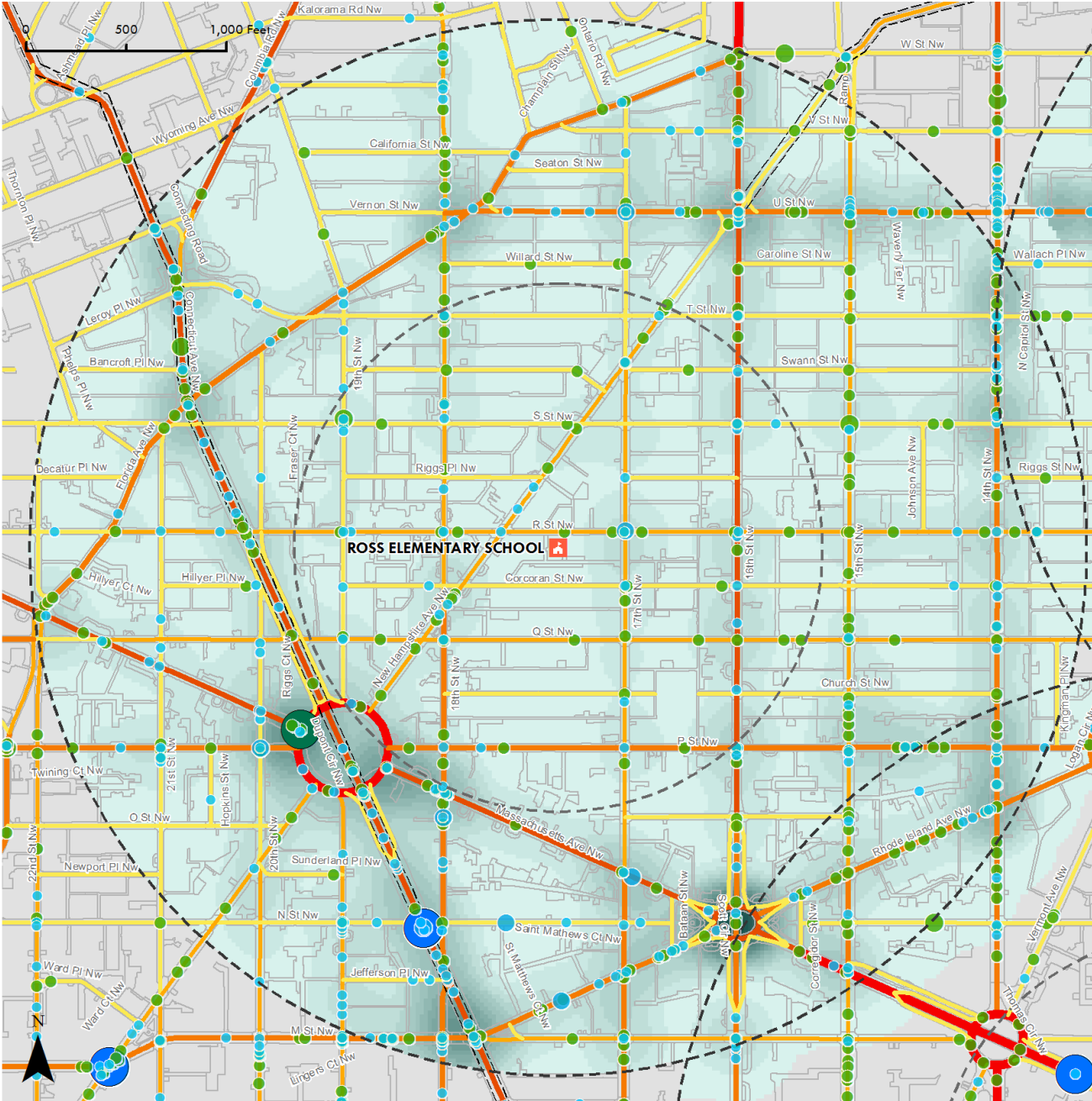
- - High Crash Corridors (2010-2014)

**Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)**

- 228 - 4,600
- 4,601 - 10,500
- 10,501 - 18,500
- 18,501 - 30,000
- 30,001 - 55,772

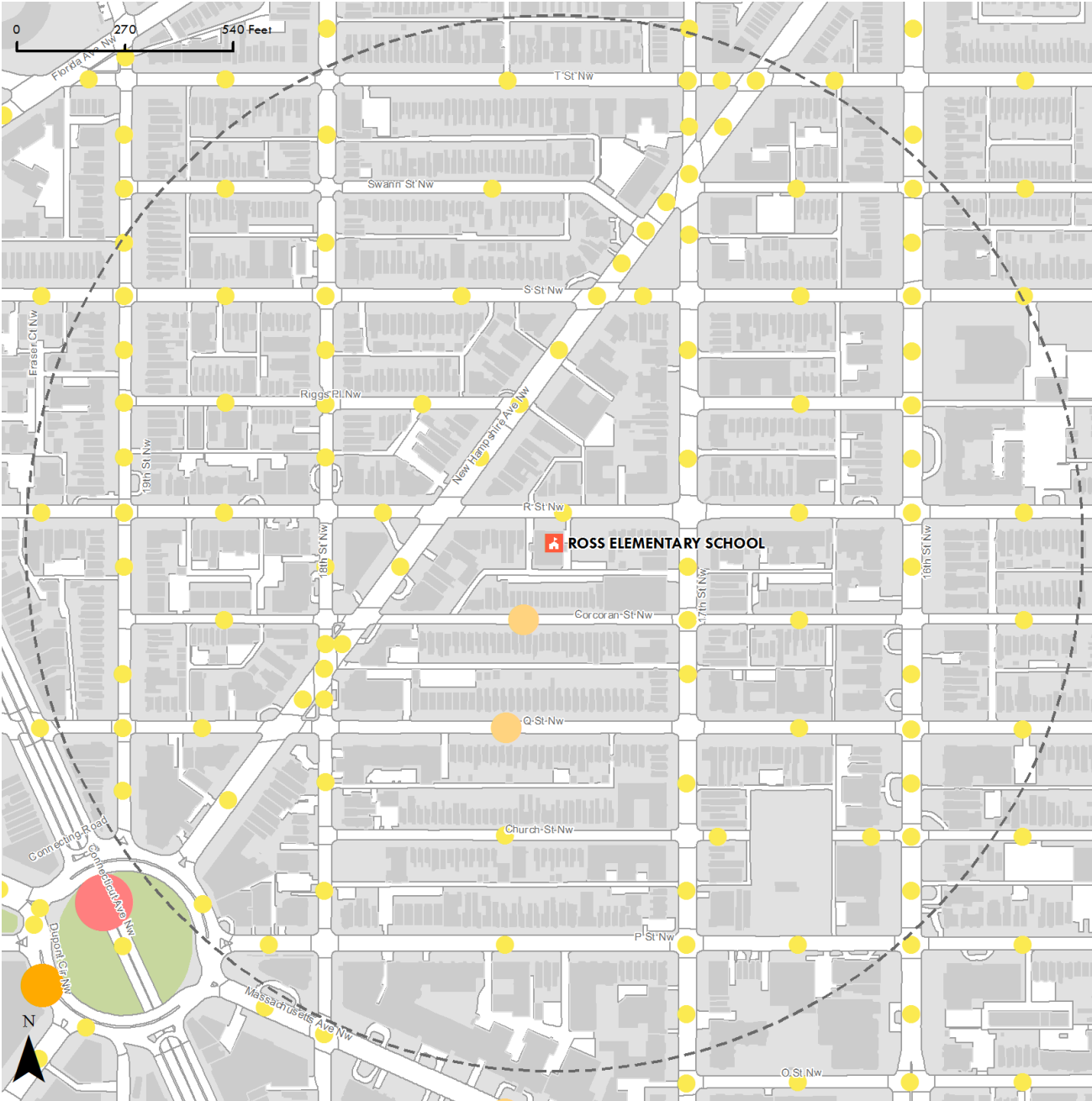
**Collision Density**

Low High



# Crime Prevalence

- A few parents expressed concerns of illegal activity and personal security issues.
- Most of the crime incidents that do occur in the area are related to auto theft and other types of theft.



**Legend**

- Planning Assistance School
- 0.25 Mile Buffer
- Building
- Roads

**Number of Crime Incidents (2015-2019)**

- 1 - 75 Incidents (0-15/year)
- 76 - 150 Incidents (16-30/year)
- 151 - 300 Incidents (31-60/year)
- 301 - 557 Incidents (61-112/year)

About the Crime Data: This data is shared via an automated process, where addresses are geocoded to the District’s Master Address Repository and assigned to the appropriate street block. All crime incidents were considered in this analysis, which include all crimes documented in the database, ranging from arson and car theft to homicide.

Source: Open Data DC, Crime Incidents (2015-2019)



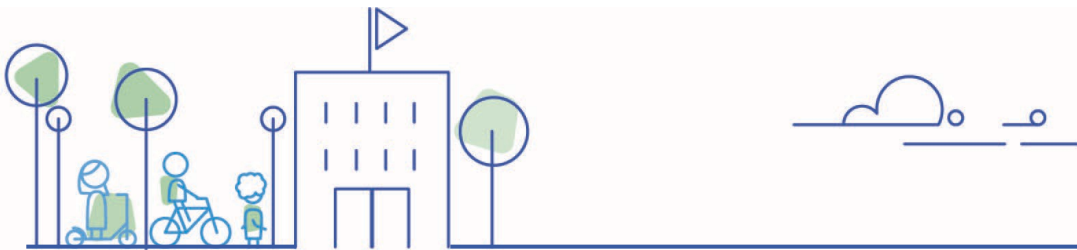
## Key Issues

- School Zone Safety: Speeding on 17th and Corcoran Street & 18<sup>th</sup> and Q Street is a concern; some traffic calming measure is needed.
- Walking: Although the sidewalk network is complete, walking safety is a concern due to vehicular speeding and uneven sidewalk conditions on surrounding blocks.
- Biking: Lack of low-stress bicycle connections within close vicinity of Ross Elementary poses barriers to a safe commute for students.
- Arrival/Dismissal: Drop-off/pick-up can create safety issues on R Street for students when parents don't park directly next to the sidewalk in front of the school.

## Other Issues

- Parking: There is a lack of parking directly in front of the school entrance. To the right of the school entrance, there is no parking from 7am to 4pm. To the left of the school entrance, there is no parking 9:30am to 2:30pm.

# School Based Recommendations

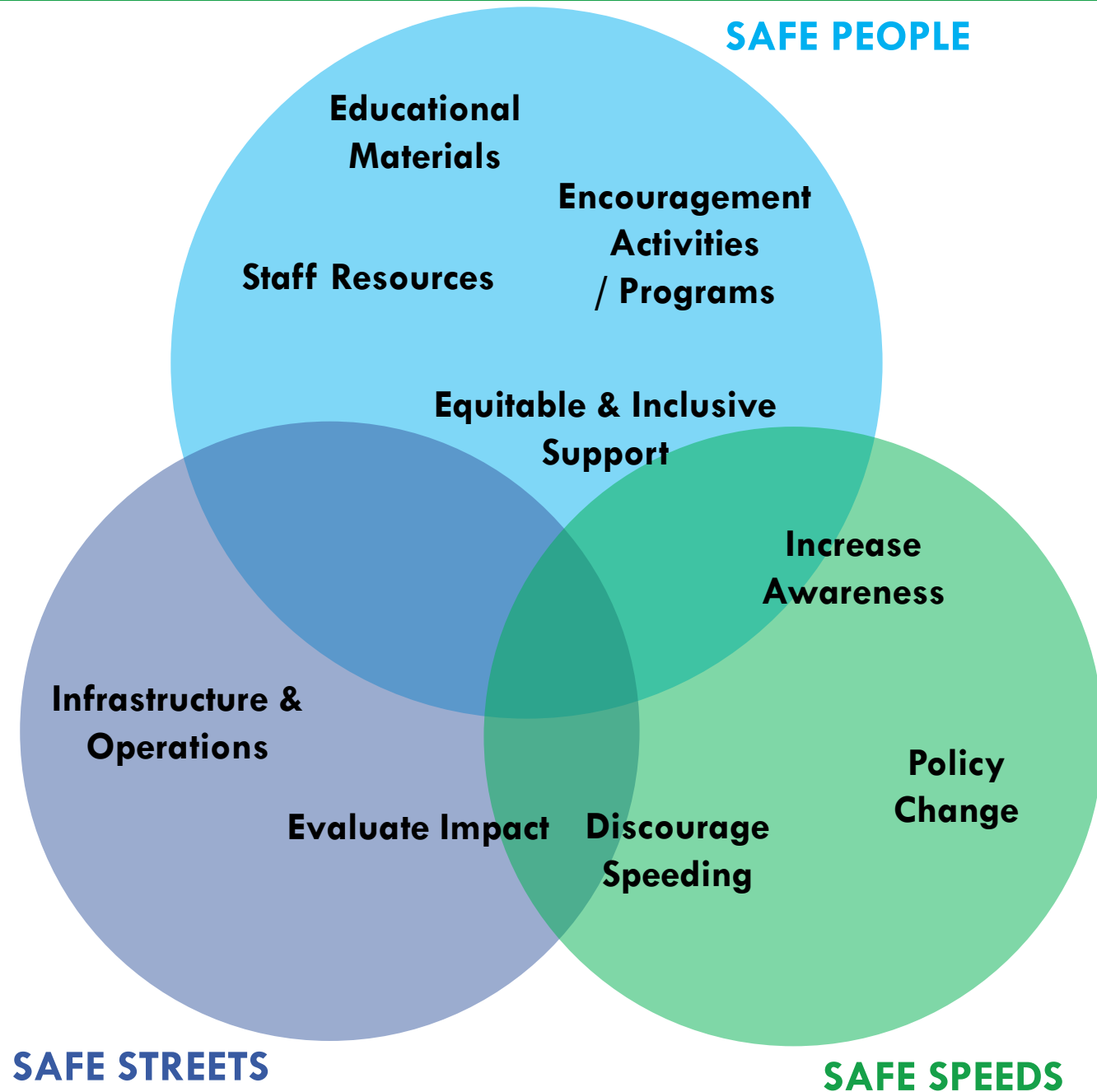


**SAFE PEOPLE**

# Safe Systems

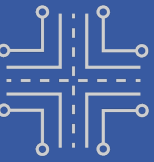
The recommendations in this Action Plan are organized around the concept that a multi-layered system of **Safe Streets**, **Safe People**, and **Safe Speeds** can advance sustainable Safe Routes to School at individual schools and citywide.

These focus areas recognize that the responsibility to realize Safe Routes to School falls on many different stakeholders. Infrastructure and behavior change recommendations in this plan will reduce the frequency and severity of crashes resulting from human mistakes and help students arrive ready to learn.



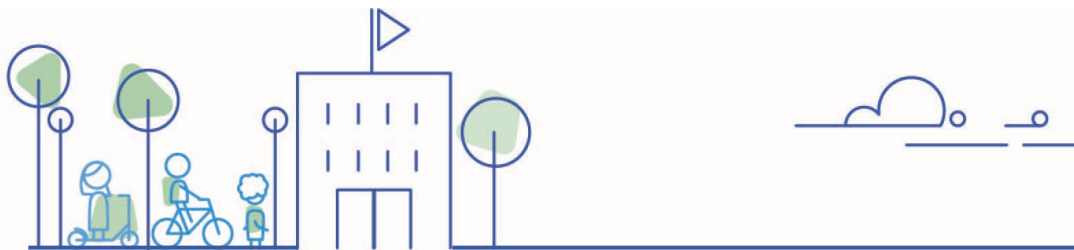
**SAFE STREETS**

**SAFE SPEEDS**



# Safe Streets

Streets and features that slow traffic speeds, separate conflicting movements, and provide dedicated spaces for different modes are critical for long term and sustainable crash and trauma reduction. DDOT led actions for safe streets prioritize infrastructure improvements and roadway design changes such as traffic calming, intersection re-design, protected bike lanes, and other street design strategies that slow speeds, separate users, and increase visibility.





# INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

## RECOMMENDATION & DESCRIPTION

## RESPONSIBLE PARTY

- **Spot Safety Recommendations:** Advocate for implementation of recommended short, mid, and mid-long term spot safety improvements provided in July 2020 (see Appendix).
- **Equity Prioritization:** Advocate for prioritized installation of engineering improvements in areas where communities would benefit the most from low cost and safe transportation options.

DDOT (school-specific)  
*Community*  
*or school members*  
*(e.g. PTA or ANCs) can*  
*bring awareness to site-*  
*specific priorities*

DDOT (school-specific)

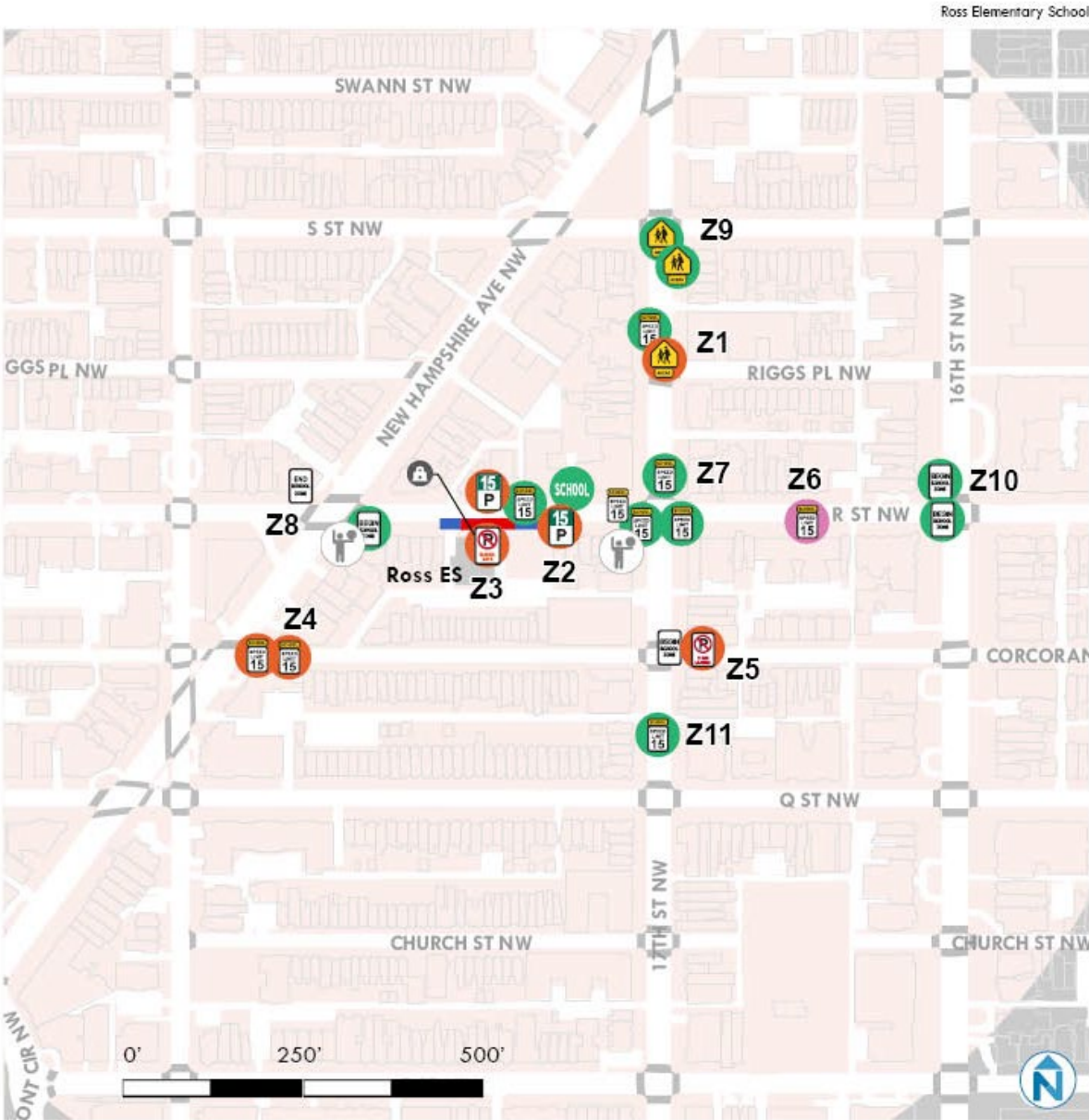
# School Zone Safety Map

Major recommendations include:

- Install new school zone and speed limit signage
- Install new School Crossing sign between 17th & S Streets NW
- Repair school crossing, speed limit, and no parking signage around the school
- Consolidate parking signs

**School Zone Safety**

- # Recommendations / ID
- Crossing Guard Location
- Install New
- Maintenance
- No Parking
- School Loading Zone (15 min)
- Quarter-mile Buffer
- School Entrance



A full list of spot safety recommendations is included in Appendix 1: Spot Safety Recommendations



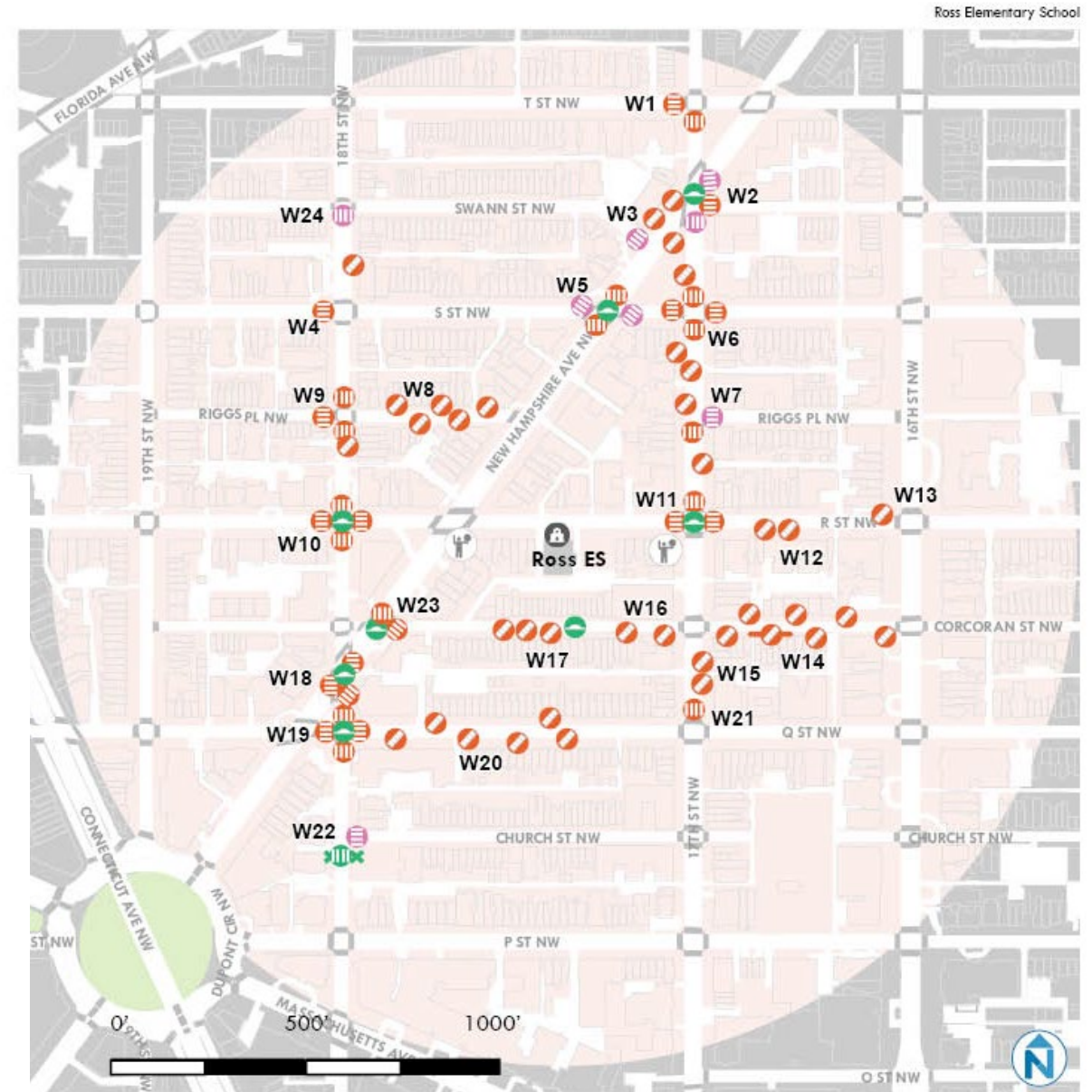
# Walking & Biking Safety Map

Major recommendations include:

- Upgrade/remark all crosswalks within 1/4 mile of the school to high visibility crosswalks
- Repair deficient sidewalks
- Install traffic calming measures at intersections and mid-block on Corcoran Street
- Install mid-block crossing on R Street NW in front of school
- Install raised crosswalks at New Hampshire Ave & S St, R St & 18th St, R St & 17th St, R St & 18th St, Q St & 18th St

## Walk Safety

- # Recommendations / ID
- Crossing Guard Location
- Upgrade Existing
- Install New
- Maintenance
- Quarter-mile Buffer
- School Entrance



A full list of spot safety recommendations is included in Appendix 1: Spot Safety Recommendations





# EVALUATE IMPACT

## RECOMMENDATION & DESCRIPTION

## RESPONSIBLE PARTY

- **Walk Audits:** Conduct annual or biannual walk audits to note the walkability condition of streets surrounding the school and community. Report serious deficiencies to DC 311 and document other issues and challenges based on priority.
- **Arrival and Dismissal Observations:** Observe the arrival and dismissal process on an annual basis and consider revisions to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety and encourage walking and bicycling.
- **Parent/Caregiver Survey:** Conduct an annual survey of parents and caregivers to provide additional information on student travel modes and monitor parents' concerns about walking and bicycling.
- **Student Hand Tallies:** Conduct hand tallies annually in order to collect information about journey to school and monitor changes or progress in efforts to encourage students to walk and bike to school.

*Could be DDOT-facilitated or led by school representatives or community members (ANCs or neighborhood associations).*

Principal  
PE Teacher  
PTA

Principal  
PE Teacher

*Discourage Speeding*



*Policy Change*

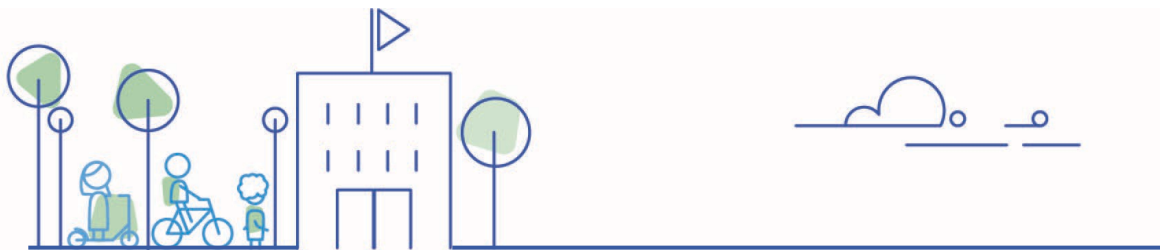


*Increase Awareness*



# Safe Speeds

High speed driving puts people at a greater risk of serious injury or death in the event of a crash. Actions for safe speeds focus on reducing vehicle speeds through policy changes, equitable reinforcement of safe speed, and public awareness to prevent crashes and reduce the potential harm inflicted on vulnerable road users in the event a crash occurs.





# DISCOURAGE SPEEDING

## RECOMMENDATION & DESCRIPTION

## RESPONSIBLE PARTY

- Neighborhood Safety Messaging Campaign: Use yard signs, neighborhood newsletters, or flyers to communicate with neighbors and drivers
- Parent Driver Education & Safe Driving Pledge Program: Parents pledge to drive the speed limit. Campaign could include informational materials.

Principal  
PE Teacher  
PTA

Principal  
PTA  
(DDOT supported – see Appendix 3)





# POLICY CHANGE

## RECOMMENDATION & DESCRIPTION

## RESPONSIBLE PARTY

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advocate for school zone camera enforcement</li></ul>	Principal PTA (DDOT supported – see Appendix 3)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prioritize school zone frontage for students arriving by transit, walking, or bicycling.</li></ul>	Principal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a standing Safe Routes to School Committee</li></ul>	Parent organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integrate Safe Routes to School content into instruction</li></ul>	Principal Faculty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Require bicycle parking to be visible, accessible, secure, well lit, and protected from inclement weather.</li></ul>	Principal



# INCREASE AWARENESS

## RECOMMENDATION & DESCRIPTION

## RESPONSIBLE PARTY

- Arrival and Dismissal Supervision: Ask school personnel or parent volunteers to stand at key locations and provide oversight.

Principal  
Staff  
Parent organization

- Vision Zero-focused Student Art Projects: Develop art projects centered around Vision Zero to engage students and advance a traffic safety culture.

*Could be school-led (by school principal or staff) or non-profit led (e.g. Safe Routes Partnership, WABA, etc.)*

# Safe People

Safe road users are an important part of a safe road system, especially in the interim as the system is being built. Road users should, to the best of their ability, try to operate within the boundaries set by the road system designers. This can include actions such as shifting to a safety culture, parking off site and walking students in to the entrance, and using helmets. People can better understand and accept their role in ensuring safe streets through education, awareness, and training.

*Equitable and Inclusive Support*



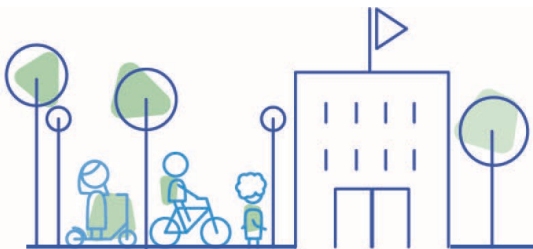
*Staff Resources*



*Educational Materials*



*Encouragement  
Activities/Programs*





# EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE SUPPORT

## RECOMMENDATION & DESCRIPTION

- Re-prioritize Arrival/Dismissal Procedures: Include walkers and bikers in school arrival/dismissal procedures. Cite location of bike parking and building entries/exits for walkers and bikers. Consider an early dismissal for walkers and bikers to ensure their safe passage.

## RESPONSIBLE PARTY

Principal  
Staff  
(DDOT supported –  
see Appendix 3)





# STAFF RESOURCES

## RECOMMENDATION & DESCRIPTION

## RESPONSIBLE PARTY

- **Commuting Resources:** Link teachers and school staff to programs provided in goDCgo to expand sustainable transportation support school-wide.
- **Crossing Guard Appreciation Event:** Select a day to celebrate your crossing guard with thank you cards, a special gift, breakfast or school assembly.

Principal

Principal  
PE Teacher





# EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

## RECOMMENDATION & DESCRIPTION

## RESPONSIBLE PARTY

- Support 2nd grade ‘Biking in the Park’ curriculum: Develop supplemental biking and walking safety information for parent and family education.

PE Teacher  
(DDOT supported – see Appendix 3)

- Traffic Gardens: Implement a temporary or semi-permanent traffic garden to create a traffic-free environment for students to practice bicycling and learn traffic rules.

Principal  
PE Teacher



- School Safety Patrol Program: Implement a school safety patrol program to put students in role model positions where they can assist with the arrival and dismissal process.

Principal  
Staff



# ENCOURAGEMENT ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

## RECOMMENDATION & DESCRIPTION

## RESPONSIBLE PARTY

- Remote Drop-off or Park and Walk Program: Establish a remote drop-off or park and walk location at an accessible location near the school (e.g., a park, public library, or church parking lot) and encourage parents to use it on a regular basis as an alternative to dropping children off at school.

Principal  
Staff

- Sidewalk Quest or Storywalk: Use walking safety trivia signs to create a fun activity for students to partake in while learning about walking safety.

Principal  
PE Teacher  
STEM Teacher

- Walking School Bus and/or Bicycle Train: Encourage parents to provide adult supervision for students that can walk or bike to/from school. Walking school buses can also be coordinated for a remote drop-off or park and walk location.

Principal  
PTA  
(DDOT supported –  
see Appendix 3)



# ENCOURAGEMENT ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

## RECOMMENDATION & DESCRIPTION

## RESPONSIBLE PARTY

- Expand Safe Passage Priority Areas: Provide volunteer support for Safe Passage program, in order to decrease exposure to crime and unsafe traffic conditions on school routes. Volunteers may support by providing eyes on the street.

Principal  
PE Teacher  
PTA



- Green Alleyways: Install green alleyways (between R and Corcoran Streets) with planter boxes to teach students about local foods, green stormwater infrastructure. Include games and art activities as an event.

*Could be school-led (by school principal or staff) or non-profit led (e.g. Safe Routes Partnership, WABA, etc.), with support, permits, and permissions from DDOT*

