

Hawthorne Elementary Safe Routes to School Plan (March 2026)

About the School	
Number of Students ^a	321
% Economically Disadvantaged	69%
% Non-white	80%
Arrival / Dismissal Times	7:35 AM / 1:10 PM (Mon) 7:35 AM / 2:30 PM (Tue-Fri)

^aStudent data source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Major Streets and Highways	Annual Weekday Traffic (AWT) ^a
Lexington Avenue	3,050
N Fair Oaks Avenue	7,250
E Washington Avenue	40,600

^aSource: City of Madison Street Centerlines

Safety Concerns at Hawthorne

What we heard from the Principal (or Designee)

- The crosswalk on Lexington has no crossing guard (except teachers), and caregivers often park across the street where parking is allowed and cross midblock.
- The East Washington underpass has been a consistent source of concern for families living on the north side of East Washington Avenue for many years. Families are hesitant to send their children, especially those in younger grades, through the underpass for a number of reasons, including the lack of lighting, occasional people living in the tunnel, and fights between students.
- The school changed the arrival/dismissal procedures recently to move most traffic from Door 1 (by Concord Avenue) to Door 5 (on Lexington Avenue) and was seeking feedback on whether the procedure seemed to be working.
- Lexington Avenue is a shortcut for car and truck traffic between Stoughton Road and East Washington Avenue.

What we learned from the crossing guard

Drivers seem to respect the RRFB on N Fair Oaks Avenue. Drivers' vision of the crosswalk is somewhat obscured by large vehicles parking legally on the south side of the intersection of N Fair Oaks Avenue and Lexington Avenue.

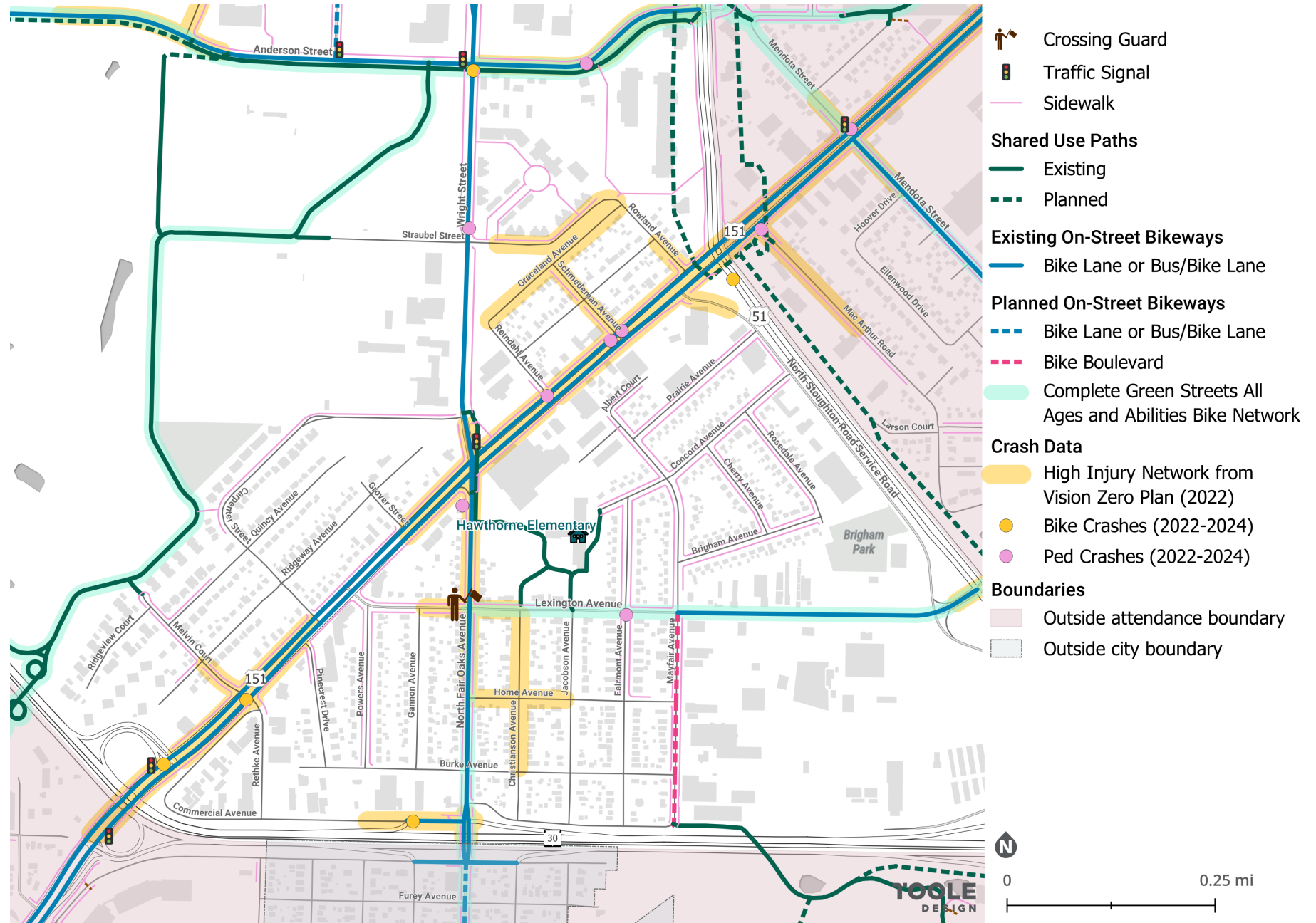
Hazardous Transportation Busing

There are no areas designated as unusual hazards for Hawthorne Elementary School.

What we learned from surveys and other caregiver feedback

- Survey respondents for Hawthorne thought that the most common way students got to school was being driven to school, followed by walking, and finally by bus.
- Survey respondents for Hawthorne thought that students were mostly driven due to concerns about traffic safety and lack of safe street crossings.
- Some survey respondents mentioned that students had to walk from the Traux apartments which seemed inequitable in terms of transportation access.
- Some survey respondents stated that major safety concerns, including crossing or going under E Washington Avenue, are sometimes disregarded because the school is within walking distance for kids.
- There were no comments on the interactive map survey about Hawthorne Elementary School.

Existing Conditions (and Previously-Planned Bikeways and Paths)



Arrival and Dismissal Observations

Observation Details	
Observation Date	The consultant team observed arrival on Thursday, May 8.
School Buses	School buses enter the main parking lot and bus loop from Lexington Avenue to drop off students near Door 2 before exiting back onto Lexington Avenue.
Specialized Transportation	Specialized transportation vehicles drop off students in the northeast loop accessed from Concord Avenue and adjacent to Door 1.
Caregiver Vehicles	- During arrival, caregivers stop their vehicles on Lexington Avenue. School staff monitor a high visibility crosswalk across Lexington Avenue leading to the staff parking lot and bus loop. Caregivers primarily drop off their students on the far side of Lexington Avenue. Some caregivers who stop on the far side do not walk their students to the monitored crosswalk. One caregiver was observed stopping on the north side, facing oncoming traffic. - Caregivers of 4K students drop off their students at the northeast loop accessed from Concord Avenue and adjacent to Door 1.
School Staff Roles	Two school staff are assigned to monitor the crosswalk across Lexington Avenue leading to the staff parking lot and bus loop. Two staff supervise the playground near Door 5, where students enter in the morning. One staff member monitors the loop near Concord Avenue and Door 1. At dismissal, all staff walk their students to their buses.
Adult Crossing Guards	A crossing guard is posted at Lexington Avenue and N Fair Oaks Avenue.
Bike Rack Locations and Use	- There is one area with bike racks, located just east of Door 2. - There were many bicycles parked at the bike racks on the day of observation.
Students Walking and Biking	Many students were observed walking and biking to school. Only a few came from west of the school, and some came from east of the school. A few came from the north using the tunnel under E Washington Avenue.

Priority Recommendations at Hawthorne Elementary



The numbered issues and recommendations in the table correspond to the points in the Recommendations Map (shown on previous page).

Recommendations for School Leadership or MMSD Building Services

#	Location	Issues or Observations	Recommendations
1	Lexington Avenue	- Caregivers were observed parking on the opposite side of the street, and many parked too close to the crosswalk, limiting visibility. One caregiver was observed stopping and facing oncoming traffic. - Existing parking restriction signs prohibit drop off (no stopping, standing and parking) on the school side of the street. - Lexington Avenue is a shortcut for car and truck traffic coming to or from Stoughton Road.	<i>Immediate Priority:</i> Communicate expectations by sharing the school's new Traffic Safety Plan. Encourage caregivers to drop off and pick up in legal parking zones on Lexington Avenue or Jacobson Avenue. Remind caregivers whose students must cross Lexington to walk them to the staff-monitored crosswalk.
4	Northern perimeter of the school	The Rise apartments are directly adjacent to the school to the north, and students living there are anticipated to attend Hawthorne. If permanent fencing were constructed without a gap or gate, students living there would have to walk along N Fair Oaks Avenue or Concord Avenue to get to school.	<i>Immediate Priority:</i> Ensure students have safe passage between the apartment complex and the school. If fencing is constructed, consider requiring or installing a well-lit gap or gate usable by students.
5	Sidewalk crossing the Rise driveway	The path providing access to the rear of the school is directly adjacent to the Rise's driveway. There could be safety concern if drivers exiting do not have clear line-of-sight to students on the sidewalk.	<i>Immediate Priority:</i> Maintain the use of chain-link or a comparable fencing material to ensure drivers can see students who may cross the driveway, and keep the fence clear of vegetation.
6	N Fair Oaks Avenue and Wright Street at E Washington Avenue	E Washington Avenue is a high-traffic and high-speed arterial. The E Washington underpass has been a source of concern for families living on the north side of E Washington Avenue for many years. Families are hesitant to send their children, especially those in younger grades, through the underpass for a number of reasons, including the lack of lighting, occasional people living in the tunnel, and fights between students. Under the district's new draft Unusually Hazardous Transportation (UHT) bus criteria, the underpass still does not qualify as a hazard.	<i>Immediate Priority:</i> Establish a Walking School Bus with a paid school or EMCC staff person and promote it through communications to families and students.

Recommendations for City of Madison

#	Location	Issues or Observations	Recommendations
1	Lexington Avenue	- Caregivers were observed parking on the opposite side of the street, and many parked too close to the crosswalk, limiting visibility. One caregiver was observed stopping and facing oncoming traffic. - Existing parking restriction signs prohibit drop off (no stopping, standing and parking) on the school side of the street. - Lexington Avenue is a shortcut for car and truck traffic coming to or from Stoughton Road.	<i>Immediate Priority:</i> Add No Stopping, Standing or Parking signs within 15 feet of the crosswalks in front of the school and reinforce with flex posts and markings if necessary. Revise parking restrictions so they are Drop Off Pick Up No Parking on school days on the school side of Lexington Avenue west of the crosswalk.
2	Christianson Avenue, Jacobson Avenue, and Lexington Avenue between N Fair Oaks Avenue and Mayfair Avenue	Christianson and Jacobson Avenues lack sidewalks. The southern side of Lexington Avenue lacks sidewalks between N Fair Oaks Avenue and Mayfair Avenue. Missing sidewalks present a barrier to walking and bicycling to school.	<i>Medium Term (2-6 years):</i> Construct new sidewalks where there are gaps on Christianson and Jacobson Avenues and on Lexington Avenue between N Fair Oaks Avenue and Mayfair Avenue.
3	N Fair Oaks Avenue at Lexington Avenue	- The existing crossing where a crossing guard is posted has high visibility crosswalk markings, school zone crossing signs, and an RRFB. However, the crossing guard reported that drivers approaching from the south on N Fair Oaks Avenue often did not see crossing students or one of the beacons until they approached the intersection because of vehicles parked close to the intersection. Large vehicles were observed parked close to the corners on the south leg of the intersection. - Fair Oaks Avenue has a speed limit of 25 miles per hour; the school zone speed is 20 miles per hour.	<i>Immediate Priority:</i> - Review parking restrictions on the south leg of the intersection to ensure adequate visibility. - Consider lowering school zone speed limit to 15 miles per hour.
5	Sidewalk crossing the Rise driveway	The path providing access to the rear of the school is directly adjacent to the Rise's driveway. There could be safety concern if drivers exiting do not have clear line-of-sight to students on the sidewalk.	Work with residents in the Rise apartments to add decorative markings or decals to the driveway crossing.

#	Location	Issues or Observations	Recommendations
6	N Fair Oaks Avenue and Wright Street at E Washington Avenue	E Washington Avenue is a high-traffic and high-speed arterial. The E Washington underpass has been a consistent source of concern for families living on the north side of E Washington Avenue for many years. Families are hesitant to send their children, especially those in younger grades, through the underpass for a number of reasons, including the lack of lighting, occasional people living in the tunnel, and fights between students.	<i>Immediate Priority:</i> - Install overhead lighting outside of both tunnel entrances because tunnel seems darker before entering. - Increase the frequency of tunnel maintenance.
7	Wright Street and E Washington Avenue	- More students are anticipated to use this crossing to access the tunnel under E Washington Avenue as more homes are built in the Hawthorne attendance area, especially around Melvin Court and Aberg Avenue. - This crossing goes across six lanes of traffic and includes two pedestrian islands, one between northbound and southbound traffic and one between northbound traffic and a slip lane.	<i>Immediate Priority:</i> Evaluate the intersection for opportunities to shorten pedestrian crossing distances and enhance safety.
8	Graceland Avenue	There is no pedestrian connection from the end of Graceland Avenue to Wright Street, forcing pedestrians to continue down Reindahl Avenue and along E Washington Avenue instead of directly accessing Wright Street and the tunnel to N Fair Oaks Avenue.	<i>Long Term (6+ years):</i> Construct a new pedestrian path connecting the western end of Graceland Avenue to Wright Street. Will require right of way acquisition.
9	Graceland Avenue	Graceland Avenue lacks sidewalks. Missing sidewalks present a barrier to walking and bicycling to school.	<i>Medium Term (2-6 years):</i> Construct sidewalks along Graceland Avenue between Reindahl Avenue and Rowland Avenue.

#	Location	Issues or Observations	Recommendations
10	Straubel Street and Graceland Avenue	• Students living north of Straubel Street have no direct pedestrian connection to the south without going west to Wright Street. There is an informal pedestrian “desire path” connecting Straubel Street and Graceland Avenue. This leads to Schmedeman Avenue, which has a sidewalk on one side. • No crosswalk is marked across Straubel Street between Wright Street and Rowland Avenue, a distance of approximately 950 feet.	<i>Long Term (6+ years):</i> • Formalize the “desire path” connecting Graceland Avenue and Straubel Street. May require right of way acquisition from the Dane County Regional Airport. • When installed, add a high-visibility crosswalk across Straubel Street at Graceland Avenue.
11	Wright Street and Straubel Street	• Existing single curb ramps at corners do not orient users directly into the crosswalk.	<i>Long Term (6+ years):</i> • Install new curb ramps that line up with crosswalks on the east leg of the intersection.

Information contained in this document is for planning purposes and should not be used for final design of any project. All results, recommendations, concept drawings, and commentary contained herein are based on limited data and information and on existing conditions that are subject to change. Further analysis and engineering design are necessary prior to implementing any of the recommendations contained herein.