

Vel Phillips Memorial High Safe Routes to School Plan (May 2026)

About the School	
Number of Students ^a	Approximately 2,000
% Economically Disadvantaged	41%
% Non-white	58%
Arrival / Dismissal Times	8:15 AM / 3:37 PM

^aStudent data source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Safety Concerns at Memorial

What we heard from the Principal (or Designee)

- There are high volumes of vehicle traffic during arrival and dismissal, including students who drive themselves or are driven by caregivers.
- The intersection of Mineral Point Road and S Gammon Road and the midblock crossings of S Gammon Road are the most dangerous for students. Students cross these during arrival, dismissal, and at lunch.
- Caregivers sometimes cut through the driveway directly in front of the planetarium entrance, creating conflicts with students who ride specialized transportation or Metro Transit buses.
- Traffic backs up on the driveway while waiting to turn onto S Gammon Road. This driveway has two lanes, compared to the three-lane driveway at Gillespie Middle School.

Hazardous Transportation Busing

There are no areas designated as unusual hazards for Vel Phillips Memorial High.

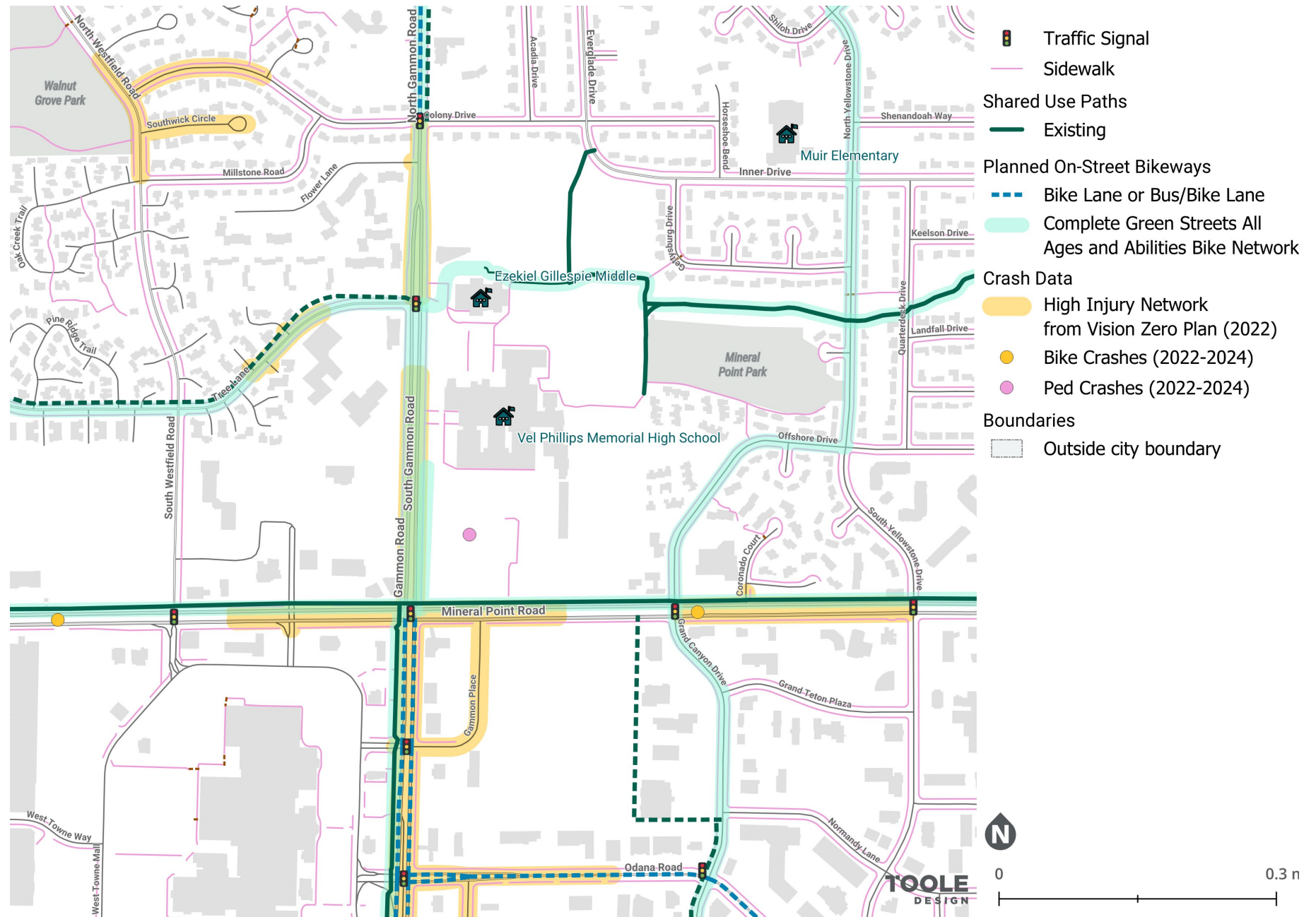
Major Streets and Highways	Average Weekday Traffic (AWT) ^a
Mineral Point Road	29,800
S Gammon Road	17,700
Grand Canyon Drive	1,950
Inner Drive	2,500

^aSource: City of Madison Street Centerlines

What we learned from surveys and student feedback

- Students walking or biking from the north or from the athletic fields east of school have to navigate around the school to the planetarium entrance. There are no sidewalks or paths that separate them from traffic in the parking lots and driveways.
- Drivers in the main parking lot do not always yield to students using the crosswalks in the parking lot.
- There is general concern about the safety of students walking and biking along S Gammon Road, especially at Mineral Point Road. Some drivers do not yield, and some drive straight in the bus/right turn lane. Some drivers also turn right on red from Mineral Point Road onto S Gammon Road and cross the path unexpectedly.
- Students using the Struck Street underpass can cross the Beltline safely but then do not have a direct path to the school. A shared use path on Grand Canyon Drive would help.

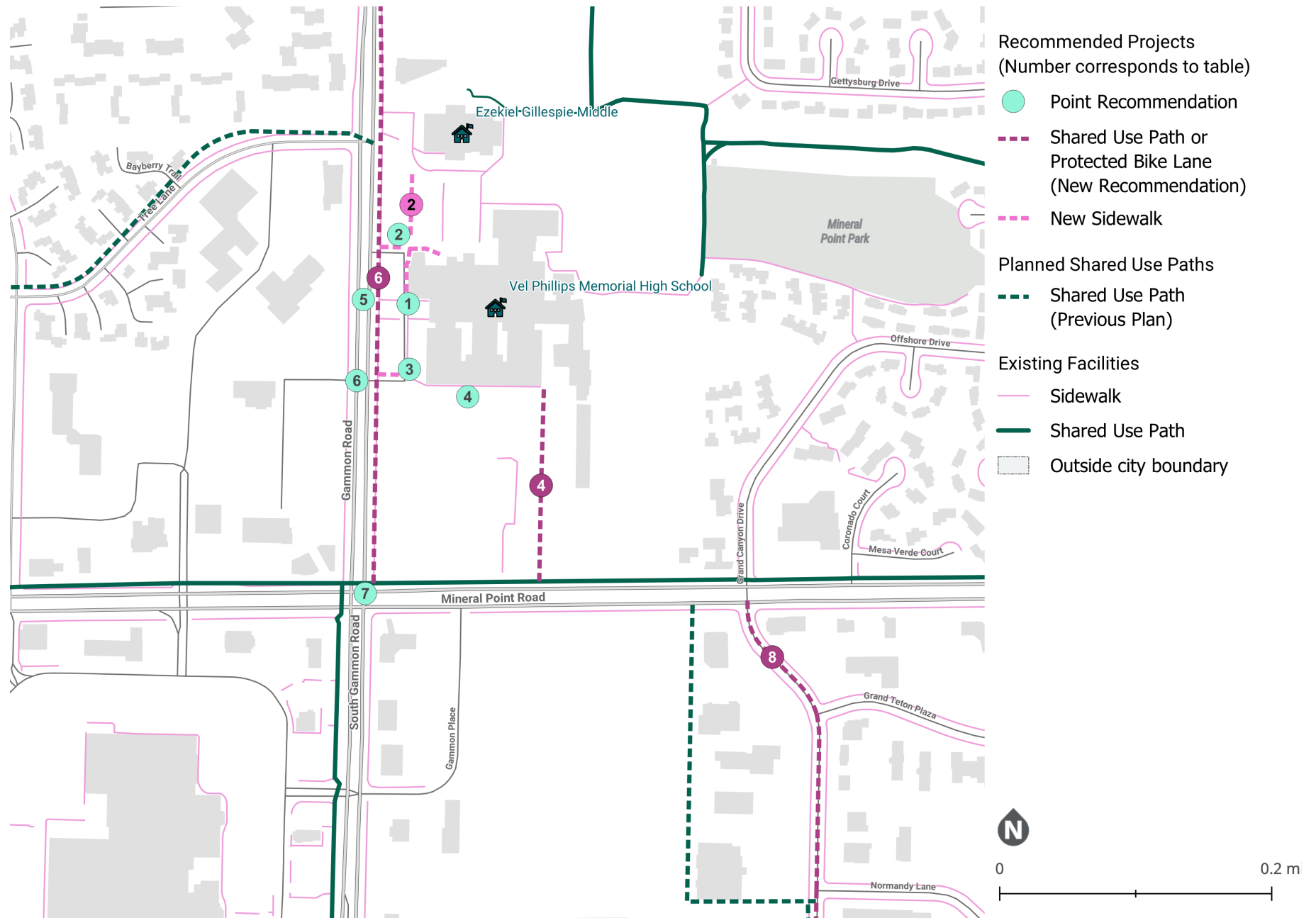
Existing Conditions and Previously-Planned Bikeways and Paths



Arrival and Dismissal Observations

Observation Details	
Observation Date	The consultant team observed arrival on Tuesday, October 14, 2025.
School Buses	A large number of buses, including yellow buses and Madison Metro buses, dropped off on the east side of S Gammon Road.
Specialized Transportation	Specialized transportation vehicles dropped off students in front of the planetarium entrance.
Caregiver Vehicles	- During arrival, caregivers driving entered the southern parking lot from the S Gammon Road driveway and dropped students off at the south door. School staff were there to greet students. - A small number of caregivers dropped off students by the fieldhouse at the north end of campus. - Some caregivers attempted to bypass the driveway from S Gammon Road by using the driveway at Tree Lane, which they reached using the driveway directly in front of the planetarium entrance. This caused conflicts with students getting off buses or crossing S Gammon Road at the midblock crossing, all of whom crossed this driveway. - Toward the end of the arrival period, some caregivers double parked by the door to let out their students, who then had to cross between other caregiver vehicles. One caregiver stopped in the bus/bike lane on the east side of S Gammon Road.
Student Vehicles	Students with parking passes may park in designated portions of the southern parking lot. These students primarily entered from Mineral Point Road. After they park, students must then cross the loop of caregiver vehicles to reach the school.
School Staff Roles	- School staff assisted students from the specialized transportation vehicles by the planetarium entrance - A staff person was present at the main drop off area by the south parking lot.
Adult Crossing Guards	The City of Madison Adult School Crossing Guard Policy does not provide for crossing guards at high schools.
Bike Rack Locations and Use	There are five areas with bike racks around the school – one by the planetarium entrance, one where the S Gammon Road driveway meets the school, one in the southern parking lot, one between the main building and the stadium, and by the fieldhouse entrance on the north side of the school. There were about 20 total bicycles parked at the bike racks on the day of observation, mostly at the racks near the planetarium and fieldhouse entrance.
Students Walking and Biking	- Some students were observed walking and biking to school. - Many students used the midblock crossing of S Gammon Road. However, some of those crossing on foot may have parked in the parking lots or neighborhoods across S Gammon Road.

Priority Recommendations at Memorial High



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	Driveway in front of planetarium entrance	- Many students cross here, including all those who arrive via bus or cross S Gammon Road at the marked midblock crossing. - Two wide sidewalks connect the driveway and school entrance to S Gammon Road. Both sidewalks lead to marked crossings, but the southern crossing lacks curb ramps. - The driveway lacks sidewalks. Some students were observed walking down the driveway from the parking lot between Memorial High and Gillespie Middle. - Specialized transportation vans drop off in this location. School leadership said there is not enough sidewalk space for the students to load and unload here. - A few caregivers were observed driving down the driveway from both directions to drop off students in front of the entrance. Pavement markings indicate that drivers can leave either direction but should only enter from the south.	<i>Immediate Priority:</i> - Add high visibility crosswalk markings across the driveway between the north sidewalks. Consider thermoplastic to better resist high traffic and frequent plowing. <i>Medium Term (2-6 years):</i> - Construct a sidewalk on the east side of the driveway, running the length of the driveway from the planetarium entrance to the band/orchestra entrance on the north side of the building. - Construct a raised crosswalk from the planetarium entrance to the sidewalk south of the flagpole.
2	Parking lot between Memorial and Gillespie Middle (north of the school)	- Pavement markings in the Gillespie parking lot seem to point traffic one-way southbound into the driveway in front of the Planetarium. Staff reported that after a “Do Not Enter” sign was damaged during the previous school year and not replaced, caregivers will drive the wrong way into the driveway by the Planetarium during arrival and dismissal. - Some caregivers drop off students at the fieldhouse entrance. A few were observed driving in an unsafe manner around stopped vehicles. - Students walking or biking from the north or from the athletic fields east of school have to navigate around the school to the planetarium entrance. There are no sidewalks or paths that separate them from traffic in the parking lots and driveways.	<i>Immediate Priority:</i> - Consider changing the arrival and dismissal process by allowing students biking or walking to enter the school by the fieldhouse. Communicate expectations by sharing the traffic safety plan. - Replace the “Do Not Enter” signs and install new signs and markings in parking lot that reflect the school’s traffic safety plan. <i>Medium Term (2-6 years):</i> - Build sidewalks next to all driveways where they are missing in the Gillespie and Memorial parking lots.

#	Location	Issues or Observations	Recommendations
3	Entrance to Planetarium driveway (south of Planetarium entrance)	A few caregivers were observed driving down the driveway from both directions to drop off students in front of the entrance. Pavement markings indicate that drivers can leave either direction but should only enter from the south.	<i>Immediate Priority:</i> Install One Way sign at entrance to driveway.
4	Main parking lot (south of the school)	- There was a pedestrian crash in the parking lot involving a teen driver on a school day in 2023. - Most caregivers dropping off students do so here, as directed by school staff. Drivers enter using the driveway from S Gammon Road and drive to the far side to form a loop and drop students off in front of the school entrance. - The driveway to Mineral Point Road lacks sidewalks. Students were observed walking and biking in the driveway next to traffic. Students and many staff also park in this parking lot. People walking from their parked cars must cross both lanes of caregiver vehicles. Two sets of crosswalk markings run from the southern portion of the parking lot to the school entrance.	<i>Immediate Priority:</i> - Install signs directing drivers not to block crossings. - Add STOP signs on both approaches to the crosswalk in front of the school entrance - Add high visibility crosswalk markings to crosswalks. Consider thermoplastic to better resist high traffic and frequent plowing. - Consider restricting parking adjacent to crosswalks to improve visibility of people walking. - Put conditions on parking privileges, such as revoking parking permit unsafe behaviors <i>Medium Term (2-6 years):</i> - Install a 12' wide shared use path east of the driveway entrance and provide a continuous separated pedestrian and bicycle connection to Mansfield Stadium and the school. <i>Long Term (6+ years):</i> - Construct raised crosswalks from the school to the ball field at the southern end of the parking lot.

#	Location	Issues or Observations	Recommendations
5	S Gammon Road near Planetarium entrance	• Many students use the marked midblock crossing in front of the planetarium entrance, including those who walk or bike from the west and some who drive and park on the far side of S Gammon Road. It is a high-visibility school crossing with overhead RRFBs. • All First Student and Madison Metro buses stop in the bus lane to unload students. Color-coded temporary signs are affixed to existing poles to demarcate bus loading zones. The frontmost bus stops at the pavement yield markings, approximately 20 feet from the crosswalk markings. The placement of the buses potentially blocks the visibility of students crossing at the RRFB. This may be worst at dismissal, when students are emerging from in front of the frontmost bus. Some drivers did not yield to students at this crossing. • A few caregivers were observed dropping off students in the bus lane when no buses were present.	<i>Immediate Priority:</i> • Communicate expectations by sharing the school's Traffic Safety Plan, which illustrates this location as being for bus use only. • Install permanent signage approximately 50 feet south of the crosswalk markings indicating the position of the frontmost bus, and communicate this change to bus drivers. (Coordination with School leadership, MMSD Transportation, and City of Madison).

Recommendations for City of Madison

#	Location	Issues or Observations	Recommendations
5	S Gammon Road near Planetarium entrance	- Many students use the marked midblock crossing in front of the planetarium entrance, including those who walk or bike from the west and some who drive and park on the far side of S Gammon Road. It is a high-visibility school crossing with overhead RRFBs. On both approaches, yield markings are 20 feet from the crosswalk. - All First Student and Madison Metro buses stop in the bus lane to unload students. Color-coded temporary signs are affixed to existing poles to demarcate bus loading zones. The frontmost bus stops at the pavement yield markings, approximately 20 feet from the crosswalk markings. The placement of the buses potentially blocks the visibility of students crossing at the RRFB. This may be worst at dismissal, when students are emerging from in front of the frontmost bus. Some drivers did not yield to students at this crossing. - A few caregivers were observed dropping off students in the bus lane when no buses were present.	<i>Immediate Priority:</i> - Install permanent signage approximately 50 feet south of the crosswalk markings indicating the position of the frontmost bus, and communicate this change to bus drivers. (Coordination with School leadership, MMSD Transportation, and City of Madison) - Move the yield markings at least 50 feet from the crosswalk and move back existing YIELD HERE FOR PEDESTRIAN (R1-5) signs to be in line with new yield markings.
6	S Gammon Road at south driveway entrance	- The driveway to Gammon Road lacks sidewalks. - Students cross S Gammon Road midblock south of the driveway entrance during arrival, dismissal, and at lunch to get to the restaurants on the other side of Gammon Road. - The distance between the two crosswalks across Gammon Road (in front of the Planetarium and at Mineral Point Road) is 1,100 feet. Pedestrian crossings should ideally be less than 600 feet apart. - Five-foot-wide sidewalks are present on both sides of the street. An all ages and abilities bicycle connection is planned for Gammon Road.	<i>Medium Term (2-6 years):</i> - Install curb ramps, a protected median island, and a marked crosswalk. <i>Long Term (6+ years):</i> - If students continue to cross south of the new crosswalk, consider installing a fence in the median to deter midblock crossings. - Construct a sidepath on the east (school) side of the street.

#	Location	Issues or Observations	Recommendations
7	Mineral Point Road and Gammon Road	- Mineral Point Road and Gammon Road are on the City's High Injury Network. - School administration reported a history of incidents at this intersection. Students most frequently cross here at lunch or after school to reach the West Towne Mall area, which entails crossing both streets. - The posted speeds are 30mph on S Gammon Road and 35mph on Mineral Point Road. However, both streets are designed for high speeds. Crossing distances are long due to the bus lanes and right-turns. - There are medians with pedestrian refuge islands on each leg of the intersection. Only the north leg includes a raised nose to create a protected pedestrian area. - Signs prohibit right turns on red from Mineral Point to S Gammon Road (northbound) and from S Gammon Road onto Mineral Point Road (westbound).	<i>Immediate Priority:</i> - Install signs No Turn On Red (R10-11) for Mineral Point Road (eastbound) onto S Gammon Road (southbound). Consider installing No Right Turn (R3-1) LED blank-out signs that illuminate when called for by a pedestrian crossing, on all legs. - Review traffic cameras (if present at intersection) or complete a study to look for violations and close calls to provide enforcement and determine other traffic calming modifications. <i>Medium Term (2-6 years):</i> - Extend the existing medians on the south, east, and west legs of the intersection to provide a raised pedestrian refuge for pedestrians. Narrow curb radii to the extent feasible, given bus and other large vehicle traffic. - In order to accommodate geometry changes, narrow traffic lanes approaching this intersection to accommodate any geometry changes and to reduce vehicle speeds.
8	Grand Canyon Drive	- According to a survey taker, students living south of the Beltline can cross the Beltline safely at the Struck Street underpass but then do not have a direct path to the school. The commenter suggested a shared use path on Grand Canyon Drive. - The initial All Ages and Abilities bike network published in the 2022 Madison Complete Green Streets Guide recommends a low-stress bicycle facility on Grand Canyon Drive.	<i>Long Term (6+ years):</i> Install a sidepath or protected bike lanes on Grand Canyon Drive south of Mineral Point Road.

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.