Safe Routes to Schools
Alameda County Transportation Commission

School Safety Assessment
Technical Memorandum

BRIDGES ACADEMY AT MELROSE

1325 53rd Ave., Oakland, CA 94601

Oakland Unified School District

April 2022

ALAMEDA County Transportation Commission

The Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program is a program of the Alameda County Transportation Commission (alamedactc.org) and is funded with Alameda County's local Measure BB sales tax, and regional, state, and federal funds..

Bridges Academy at Melrose

A school safety assessment (SSA) was conducted at Bridges Academy in Oakland during the afternoon dismissal on April 19, 2022. The assessment was attended by representatives from the City of Oakland, Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) staff, and Bridges Academy staff, parents, and caregivers.

Participants included:

- Lucas Woodward, engineer, City of Oakland
- Rosana Covarrubias, community schools program manager, Bridges Academy
- Christopher Flores, teacher, Bridges Academy
- Jessica Jung, teacher, Bridges Academy
- Mario Valadez, Alameda County SR2S team
- Kenny Jeong, engineer, Alameda County SR2S team
- Mauricio Hernandez, planner, Alameda County SR2S team
- Lisa Schroer, planner, Alameda County SR2S team
- Flor Beltran, school parent
- Irma Aydoopaiz, school parent

School Information

Location and Enrollment

	Address:	1325 53rd Ave., Oakland, CA 94601
	Morning Bell(s):	8:15 a.m.
	Afternoon Bell(s):	2:45 p.m. (M, T, W, F), 1:53 p.m. (Th)
	Grade Levels:	K-5
	Enrollment:	422
	School Type (neighborhood/ magnet/charter):	Neighborhood

Student Travel Data

Students' Proximity to School (school estimate):	Less than ¼ mile (5-min. walk): 30% Between ¼ and ½ mile (5- to 10-min. walk): 35% Between ½ and 1 mile (10- to 20-min. walk): 15% Greater than 1 mile (more than 20-min. walk): 20%

Student Travel Mode Info:	School Estimate: Walking: 30% Biking: 5% School bus: 3% Transit: 12% Carpool: 20% Family Vehicle: 30% Other: 0%

Bikes, Buses, and Drop-Off/Pick-Up

Does the school have bike racks? What is the capacity? Is it secure bike parking?	The school has a few bike racks located in the back courtyard.	
On a typical day, what percentage of racks are used?	The bike racks are used occasionally by school staff but not often by students.	
Do local transit agencies serve the school? Are there stops within ¼ mile?		The school is next to AC Transit's BRT line on International Boulevard. The closest bus stop is located at the intersection of 54th Avenue and International Boulevard.
Does the school have special pick-up/drop-off policies/ procedures?		Currently, the drop-off locations are split by grade, where kindergarten through second grade use the school's main entrance and third and fifth grades use the other exit door on 53rd Avenue south of the main entrance. The school also places cones in the street to delineate where drivers entering 53rd Avenue from International Boulevard should queue for pick-up and drop-off, depending on their pick-up location.

Note: Bridges Academy is not served by school buses.

Street Profiles

Street Name	Width	Lanes	Posted Speed Limit	Traffic Volumes	Notes
53rd Street	30 feet	Two lanes	15 mph	-	Street parking on both sides
52nd Street	36 feet	Two lanes	15 mph	-	Street parking on both sides
International Boulevard	86 feet	Five lanes	25 mph	23,000 AADT	Transit-only lane

Note: AADT: annual average daily traffic

Pedestrian- and Bicycle-Involved Collision Summary 2016-2020

The collision summary table shows all bicycle- and pedestrian-involved collisions within one-half mile of the school. These collisions may or may not involve school-related travel.

Radius from School	Total Collisions	Fatal Collisions	Severe Injury Collisions	Visible Injury Collisions	Complaint of Pain Collisions	Pedestrian Collisions	Bicycle Collisions
< ¼ mi	16	0	6	0	10	15	1
¼ mi – ½ mi	67	1	6	16	44	59	8
Total	83	1	12	16	54	74	9

Source: UC Berkeley – Transportation Injury Mapping System, Safe Transportation Research and Education Center, University of California, Berkeley, 2021

Community Health and Demographics (Data from the Census Tract of School Site)

Percent of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Priced Meals (2020-21 school year)	MTC Equity Priority Community Designation (2018)	Healthy Places Index Score (2021)	CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Percentile (2021)
94.5%	High	20.6th Percentile	98th Percentile

Sources: California Department of Education, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Public Health Alliance of Southern California, and California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment

Existing Conditions

Overview

Bridges Academy is located on 53rd Avenue near International Boulevard in Oakland, California. Most students live north of International Boulevard, and the area south of the school is characterized by industrial land uses. The main entrance to the school is on 53rd Avenue. Drivers picking up or dropping off students typically enter from the north via International Boulevard and drive south down 53rd Avenue to their specific pick-up and drop-off zones. Students who walk to school usually come from north of International Boulevard and typically cross it at either 52nd Avenue or 54th Avenue.

The school currently has two special pick-up and drop-off procedures. The drop-off locations are split by grade. Kindergarten through second grade use the school's main entrance on 53rd Avenue, and third through fifth grades use the southern entrance further south on 53rd Avenue. The school places cones in the street to delineate where drivers entering 53rd Avenue from International Boulevard should queue for pick-up and drop-off, depending on their pick-up location. There is an access gate at the back of the school on 52nd Avenue; this gate is currently locked and not used.

Between 2016 and 2020, there were 74 reported pedestrian-related collisions and nine bicycle-related collisions within a half mile of the school. Most of these collisions occurred on arterial roadways, including International Boulevard or Foothill Boulevard, though two pedestrian-related collisions occurred just outside the school on 52nd Avenue. One of these collisions resulted in severe injury.

Observations

Participants observed or reported the following conditions during the SSA:

1. E 12th Street and 53rd Avenue *(Corresponds to #2 on Improvement Map)*

- One faded transverse crosswalk is located at the northeast leg of the intersection across 53rd Avenue.

The following infrastructure recommendations are proposed to improve the previously described existing conditions:

- *Upgrade these existing items: transverse crosswalk to high-visibility crosswalk*
- *Install/construct: one high-visibility crosswalk, curb extensions*
- *Study this location: all-way stop control*

2. 53rd Avenue *(Corresponds to #3 on Improvement Map)*

- Three speed humps are currently located along 53rd Avenue between E 12th Street and International Boulevard. The pavement markings on the speed humps are not up to current CA MUTCD markings.
- Drivers were observed double parking on the west side of the street in front of the school while waiting for pick-up.
- Drivers were observed making U-turns on 53rd Avenue after picking up their students.
- The sidewalks on 53rd Avenue are not wide enough for the observed volume of students and caregivers walking and congregating in front of the school.
    - Street vendors regularly set up in this area and sell snacks on the sidewalk, further limiting available space for people walking and rolling.
    - Along the residential portion of 53rd Avenue, several cars parked in driveways protruded into or blocked the sidewalk, and garbage cans were left blocking sidewalk segments.

Above: Drivers queuing for pick-up on 53rd Avenue (left) and students and families crowded together on the 53rd Avenue sidewalks (right).

The following infrastructure recommendations are proposed to improve the previously described existing conditions:

- *Refreshing/updating these existing items: the speed hump pavement markings*
- *Long-term: consider replacing the planting strip area with a widened sidewalk on the northern side of 53rd Avenue*

3. 53rd Avenue and International Boulevard *(Corresponds to #4 on Improvement Map)*

- A high-visibility crossing with a center median is located across International Boulevard at 53rd Avenue.
- Southbound drivers were observed driving in the transit-only lane to move past drivers queuing to turn onto 53rd Avenue from International Boulevard.

- Drivers were perceived to be speeding on International Boulevard.
- Some students and families walked in the center median along International Boulevard to reach a different signalized intersection.
- Unlike the crossings at 52nd Avenue and 54th Avenue, the median pedestrian refuge island at 53rd Avenue does not have protective bollards.
- Parents noted that drivers make U-turns on International Boulevard east of the 53rd Avenue intersection and sometimes do not adhere to the red light.
    - Drivers use the median refuge area to complete their U-turns; this is possible because of the lack of bollards.
- The distance between the mast arm and the crosswalk across International Boulevard is about 84 feet, which is an unusually long distance. That crosswalk is also only about 107 -feet away from the mast arm for the 54th Avenue crosswalk, an unusually short distance between the mast arms of a neighboring intersection.

The following infrastructure recommendations are proposed to improve the previously described existing conditions:

- *Installing/constructing new: flexible delineators (at a minimum; stronger, more permanent barriers like raised curbs preferred) between traffic and the transit-only lane, and bollards to the center median*
- *Installing "No Pedestrian Crossing, Use Crosswalk" sign modified to have U-Turn instead of an arrow mounted on the median.*
- *Installing "Stop Here on Red" signs on the median and light pole in advance of the 53rd Ave crosswalk, and lengthen the existing red zone from 13 feet to 20 feet.*

4. 52nd Avenue and International Boulevard *(Corresponds to #5 on Improvement Map)*

- 52nd Avenue and International Boulevard is a signalized intersection with four high-visibility crosswalks. The 52nd Avenue approaches are slightly offset from each other.
- The two crosswalks across International Boulevard have pedestrian refuge islands in the center medians.
- Drivers were perceived to be speeding on International Boulevard.

The following infrastructure recommendations are proposed to improve the previously described existing conditions:

- *City of Oakland staff should continue to work with AC Transit and Caltrans on concepts for temporary pilot improvements to International Boulevard to improve pedestrian safety. These improvements are being considered at the intersections of 52nd Ave, 53rd Ave, and 54th Ave. If the pilot/temporary improvements are successful, implement them permanently.*

Left: Students, families, and street vendors during peak drop-off time.

Right: International Boulevard crossing at 52nd Street used by students and families walking to school.

Participant Comments

The SSA participants and school teachers were excited about the potential to improve student safety on the streets and transportation facilities around Bridges Academy. Most of the discussion following the SSA related to safety issues for those walking to school who have to cross International Boulevard and the congestion and space limitations on 53rd Avenue outside the school during pick-up and drop-off hours.

In addition to the SSA discussion, parents and caregivers also provided follow-up comments via survey responses and through email:

- Cars park in front of the emergency exit from the yard on 52nd Avenue.
- Cars park in front of the gate that leads to the school's garbage dumpsters.
- Parents and caregivers want a crossing guard at the intersection of 53rd Avenue and International Boulevard.
- Drivers frequently perform U-turns and double-park on 53rd Avenue in front of the school.
- The school needs additional staff parking near the school and an improved/ coordinated street sweeping schedule.
- Current school zone signs are unclear/confusing.
- There is trash left on the streets and sidewalks around the school.
- There are abandoned cars and RVs parked on the streets around the school.
- The nearby auto shops misuse the limited street parking for their businesses and leave garbage on the public sidewalk where students and families walk to and from school.
- Neighbors double-park near the school.

Recommendations

Engineering Recommendations

Recommendations to improve infrastructure or operations surrounding Bridges Academy can be seen on the conceptual improvement plan found following this memo.

Policy and Program Recommendations

In addition to engineering improvements, the Alameda County SR2S Program has many encouragement and educational activities that can benefit students and the campus community at Bridges Academy.

The school site coordinator for Bridges Academy is Mario Valadez. The site coordinator can help schedule, organize, and promote many of the program offerings of Alameda County SR2S Program. The contact information for the site coordinator is below:

Mario Valadez, mvaladez@alamedacountysr2s.org

Please do not hesitate to contact the site coordinator if you have any questions or concerns or wish to move forward with additional programming activities.

Programs

The following improvements are recommendations for policy and program implementation at Bridges Academy to increase safety and active commutes to school:

- Develop Walk and Bicycle Route Maps:
  - The SR2S Program can create recommended Walk and Bicycle Route Maps. These maps illustrate preferred routes to school for walking and biking and provide safety tips to encourage better travel behavior.
  - These maps can also be used as a part of Walking School Buses, Bicycle Trains, or other Walk and Roll to School activities. Park and Walk, Walking School Bus, and Bicycle Train meeting locations are also shown on these maps where appropriate.
- Encourage and facilitate carpooling:
  - The SR2S Program can assist schools in working with parents and caregivers to connect them with other families who live nearby to increase the number of students carpooling. This can reduce congestion by reducing the number of vehicles coming to campus.
- Encourage families to Park and Walk from designated locations:
  - Consider a partnership with the Latin American Church in Christ to allow parents to use their parking lot as a park and walk location if it does not conflict with their service times.
- Facilitate Walking School Buses and Bicycle Trains:

  - Walking School Buses and Bicycle Trains are groups of students, led by parent/adult chaperones, that meet at designated locations and times to gather and walk or bike to school together. Walking School Buses and Bicycle Trains can be regular events, occurring daily, weekly, monthly, or in coordination with other events like International Walk and Roll to School Day or the Golden Sneaker Contest. SR2S staff can assist schools with the planning, coordination, and execution of the Walking School Buses and Bicycle Trains. Walking and biking in groups with parental supervision can increase the visibility of these road users and reduce barriers to walking or biking for some families while making it fun and exciting for the students.

- Schedule Pedestrian Rodeos and Bicycle Rodeos:
  - These interactive rodeos are great educational opportunities to teach and refresh safe walking and bicycling behavior. These workshops cover many relevant topics, including understanding traffic signals and signs, bicycle hand signals, and how to cross the street safely. Pedestrian Safety Rodeos and Bicycle Safety Rodeos are geared toward elementary school students.
- Participate in International Walk and Roll to School Day and Bike to School Day:
  - These are the two main countywide encouragement events that occur throughout the academic year. All schools can participate in International Walk and Roll to School Day, held in October every year. All schools can also participate in Bike to School Day, held in tandem with Bike to Work Day, which encourages schools to sponsor Energizer Stations and students and families to bike to school.

Non-Transportation Related Recommendations

Many factors contribute to transportation decisions that students and families make about traveling to and from school, and transportation infrastructure is essential in that decision-making process. Still, the SSA process may identify other factors, including personal safety and the environment. The SR2S Program will work closely with the jurisdiction's staff to ensure that these non-transportation recommendations are directed to appropriate city departments:

1. Abandoned Cars

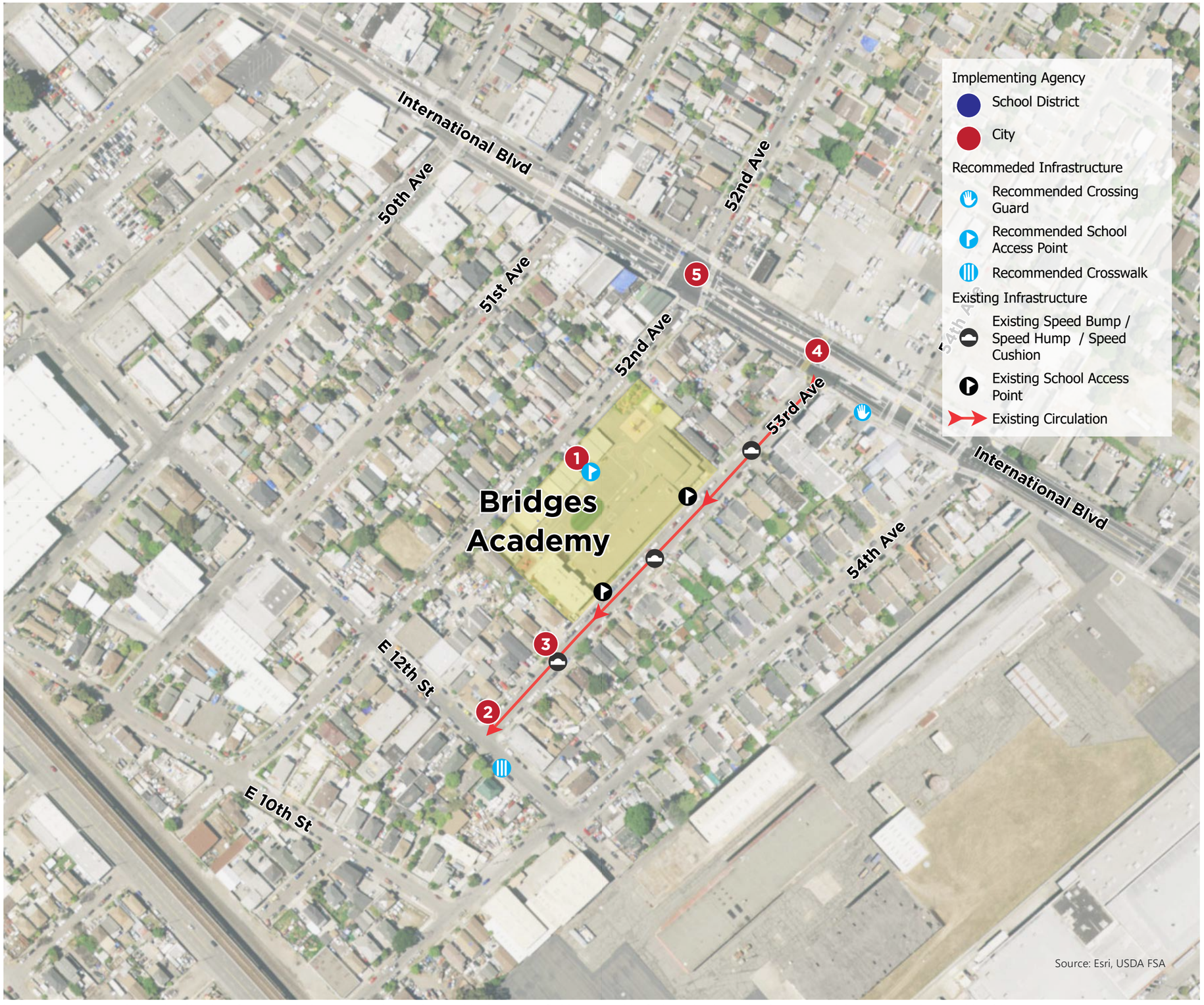
- Abandoned cars left on the streets surrounding the school's campus are a source of concern for school staff, parents, caregivers, and students. With constrained parking, the removal of these abandoned cars is critical to a smooth pick-up and drop-off circulation, keeping sidewalks free of debris and barriers, and increasing the amount of parking available to teachers during the school day.

Safe Routes to Schools Improvement Plan

Bridges Academy

Oakland

School Safety Assessment held April 19, 2022



Improvement Detail

1a	Open back entrance to school during pick-up and drop-off to ease congestion. Consider splitting dismissal locations by grades, with half of the school using the front entrance and the other half using the back entrance.
1b	Consider installing speed humps on 52nd Street (based on a successful community petition process).
2a	Re-paint the existing high visibility crosswalk on the northeast leg of the intersection of 53rd Ave and E 12th Street. Add new high-visibility crosswalks on the northwest and southeast legs of the intersection. Consider conducting an all-way stop sign warrant study.
3a	Re-paint the three existing speed humps on 53rd Avenue with current CAMUTCD pavement markings, including warning pavement markers. Check that speed hump spacing and signage placement is also current with CA MUTCD standards.
4a	City of Oakland staff should work with AC Transit to improve the International Blvd crossing by adding delineators or other barriers between traffic and the transit-only lane to minimize cars using the bus lane as a passing area. Consider adding two bollards to the center median (similar to nearby refuge islands) to provide increased protection in the waiting area for people walking.
4b	Consider stationing a crossing guard at the International Blvd/53rd Avenue during school drop off and pick up hours.
4c	Install "No Pedestrian Crossing, Use Crosswalk" sign (R-49) modified to have U-Turn instead of an arrow mounted on the median.
4d	Install "Stop Here on Red" signs on the median and light pole in advance of the 53rd Ave crosswalk, and lengthen the existing red zone from 13 feet to 20 feet.
5a	City of Oakland staff should continue to work with AC Transit and Caltrans on concepts for temporary pilot improvements to International Boulevard to improve pedestrian safety. These improvements are being considered at the intersections of 52nd Ave, 53rd Ave, and 54th Ave. If the pilot/temporary improvements are successful, implement them permamently.

Universal Recommendations

U1 Parking enforcement recommendation on 53rd Ave and 52nd Ave to encourage drivers to adhere to "No Parking from 8am to 4pm on Weekdays" signs and to deter abandoned cars left on the streets.

0 80 160 ft

Improvements not to scale

The Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program is a program of the Alameda County Transportation Commission (alamedactc.org) and is funded with Alameda County's local sales tax Measure B, regional, state and federal funds.

The above items are recommendations only and based on Safe Routes to Schools site assessment best practices. Feasibility determination, final design, accessibility, funding, and implementation of any recommended improvements is the responsibility of the appropriate governing agency.
**Red curb and/or parking restriction signage should be provided between advance stop/yield markings and the crosswalk. Exact red curb distance should be determined in accordance with the CA-MUTCD and City policies/standards. Red curb not symbolized on map.