



School Safety Assessment Technical Memorandum

WALNUT GROVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1999 Harvest Road, Pleasanton, CA 94566

Pleasanton Unified School District

December 2022



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.

Walnut Grove Elementary School


A school safety assessment was conducted at Walnut Grove Elementary School in Pleasanton during the morning arrival on Tuesday December 6, 2022. The assessment was attended by representatives from the City of Pleasanton, Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools staff, and Walnut Grove Elementary staff and parents.

Participants included:

- Cedric Novenario, Traffic Engineer, City of Pleasanton
- Dwight Pratt, Principal, Walnut Grove Elementary School
- Kristina Brown, Pleasanton Unified School District
- Nathan Sharafian, Engineer, Alameda County SR2S team
- Ben Frazier, Planner, Alameda County SR2S team
- Jesús Contreras, Planner, Alameda County SR2S team
- Two school parents
- One school student

School Information


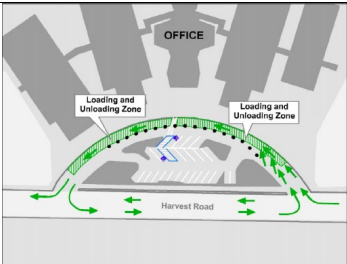
Location & Enrollment

	Address:	1999 Harvest Rd, Pleasanton, CA 94566
	Morning Bell(s):	TK & K <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:10 am • 9:10 am 1 st – 5 th grade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:20 am • 9:20 am (Wednesday)
	Afternoon Bell(s):	TK & Kindergarten <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 pm • 1 pm 1 st – 5 th grade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2:15 pm • 2:55 pm (Wednesday) • 12:55 pm (Minimum Day)
	Grade Levels:	TK – 5 th
	Enrollment:	661

	School Type (neighborhood/ magnet/charter):	Neighborhood
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Student Travel Mode Info:	Recent SR2S Hand Tally Data: Spring 2019 Walking: 25% Biking: 4% School bus: 4% Transit: 3% Carpool: 10% Family Vehicle: 53% Other: 1%
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Bikes and Drop-off/Pick-up

Does the school have bike racks? What is the capacity? Is it secure bike parking? On a typical day, what percentage of racks are used?		<p>There is one main bike parking facility in the northern area of the drop-off loop. This facility has two bike corrals and can fit 36 bikes.</p> <p>There are smaller groups of additional parking slots within the campus gates.</p> <p>On a typical day, about 50% of the bike parking spaces are used.</p>
Does the school have special pick-up/drop-off policies/ procedures?		<p>There is a one-way loop in front of the main office that serves as a drop-off and pick-up location for students driven to or from school.</p>

Note: Walnut Grove Elementary is not served by public transit or a School Bus

Street Profiles

Street Name	Width	Lanes	Posted Speed Limit	Traffic Volumes	Notes
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Black Ave	40 feet	2 lanes	25 mph		
Harvest Rd	40 feet	2 lanes	25mph		Entrance to drop-off/pick-up loop

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 be 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	3	0	0	0	3	1	2
¼ mi – ½ mi	15	0	2	10	3	4	12
Total	18	0	2	10	6	5	14

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 ('20-'21 school year)	MTC Equity Priority Community Designation (2018)	Healthy Places Index Score (2021)	CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Percentile (2021)
3.6%	Not Applicable	95.88	9

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

Walnut Grove Elementary School is located in a residential neighborhood within Pleasanton. The street grid around the school comprises curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs and is bounded by collector and arterial roads. The elementary school is adjacent to Harvest Park Middle School (across Walnut Grove

Park), and many caregivers have students who attend both schools. Consequently, Walnut Grove Park is an unofficial waiting area where siblings who attend both schools meet before getting picked up.

During the morning arrival time, most students get dropped off at the drop-off loop in front of the campus's main entrance on Harvest Road. The drop-off loop is a one-way travel lane. Drivers access the drop-off loop through Harvest Road at the southern driveway and exit from the northern driveway. The limited access points create a backup of traffic along Harvest Road in both directions that extends to Black Avenue and Northway Road. The traffic lasts for about 15 minutes around pick-up and dismissal times.

According to the Hand Tally data, about a quarter of students walk to school. There is a crossing guard at the Black Avenue and Harvest Road intersection. At Harvest Road and Northway Road, a pedestrian path cuts through the block to the north, which many students use to reach both schools.

The Alameda County Transportation Commission identifies Santa Rita Road, Valley Avenue, and Hopyard Road as High-Injury Network (HIN) streets. These corridors are where most collisions involving people walking or rolling occurred in the area immediately surrounding the school.

Observations

Participants observed or reported the following conditions during the school safety assessment (SSA).

1. Northway Road and Crestline Road Intersection (*Corresponds to #1 on improvement map*)
 - ◆ This is a four-way, stop-controlled intersection.
 - ◆ There are transverse crosswalks across both Crestline Road approaches.
 - ◆ School staff and caregivers reported that southbound drivers, including school caregivers, are perceived to be traveling at high speeds on Crestline Road.
 - ◆ During the observation, many drivers made rolling stops at the intersection.
 - Some people biking rolled through the intersection.

Recommendations:

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

- Install new: High-visibility crosswalks across Crestline Road.
- Construct new: Speed humps on Crestline Road between Northway Road and Valley Avenue.
- Construct new: Bulb-outs at all corners with directional curb ramps.

2. Northway Road and Harvest Road Intersection (*Corresponds to #2 on improvement map*)

- ◆ Harvest Road and Northway Road is a T-intersection.
- ◆ On the north side of the intersection, a multi-use path cuts through the residential block to Crestline Way.
 - This path is heavily used by students and their caregivers walking and rolling to and from school.
- ◆ During the observation, 40 students on bikes/scooters passed through this intersection to access Harvest Road.
 - During the observation, middle school-aged bicyclists traveling west on Northway Road passed the stop sign without stopping. Some cyclists were wearing earphones.
- ◆ Drivers pulled over to the southeast curb along Northway Road, in front of the park, to drop off students.
 - School staff and caregivers reported that this location is used as an unofficial drop-off/pick-up spot because of its proximity to the middle and elementary schools.
 - During pick-up time, a queue of drivers waiting to enter the middle school parking lot on Northway Road extended into the travel lane. Consequently, vehicles stopped along the curb cannot pull away.
- ◆ School staff and caregivers reported that drivers drop off students at Northway Road west of Harvest Road to avoid the backup of vehicles on Harvest Road.



Top Left: Southeast corner of Northway Road and Harvest Road looking northwest.

Top Right: Pedestrian path and eastern crosswalk connecting to Crestline Way.

Bottom Left: Drivers stopped on Northway Road east of the intersection, in front of Walnut Grove Park.

Bottom Right: Driver turning left onto Harvest Road while a bicyclist is riding through the crosswalk.

Recommendations:

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

- Install new: Loading zone along the southern side of Northway Road east of the intersection with adequate signage (can be limited to school hours).
- Construct new: Bulb-outs at crosswalk landings.

3. Drop-off Loop and North Parking Lot *(Corresponds to #3 on improvement map)*

- ◆ In front of the school's main entrance, there is a one-way drop-off/pick-up loop for drivers.
 - Drivers enter the loop from the southern driveway and exit from the northern driveway.

- There are crumbling speed bumps within the loop.
- There is a crosswalk at the center of the loop in front of the campus's main entrance.
- The exit driveway is wide and acutely angled in a way that limits drivers' visibility of pedestrians and cross-traffic.
- ◆ The vehicle backup extended out from the loop and into Harvest Road in both directions.
 - For the most part, drivers in the loop were traveling at slow speeds and looking for children getting out of vehicles in the loop.
- ◆ Drivers traveling southbound on Harvest Road went around the queue of drivers turning left into the loop.
- ◆ Some drivers heading north on Harvest Road dropped students off in the travel lane and made U-turns to head south.
- ◆ Drivers were seen dropping off students at the red curb areas along the loop's driveways.
- ◆ Students biking through Walnut Grove Park can easily access the north bike parking area located north of the classrooms.
 - There is a transverse crosswalk connecting Walnut Grove Park to the school campus through the north parking lot. There are no curb ramps at this crosswalk.
 - There are two schoolyard-style racks with the capacity for ten bikes or scooters each.
 - Many students kickstand their bikes or leave their scooters near the bike rack.
 - The front-wheel style of the rack is not conducive to the scooters many students are using, nor do they allow for the wider spacing that some cyclists prefer.



Top left: Crosswalk covered with leaves across the north parking lot, connecting to the north bike parking area.

Top right: Bike parking at the northern end of the drop-off loop. Although there is capacity on the racks, students leave their bikes or scooters on the ground near the racks.

Bottom left: Drivers on Harvest Road turning into the drop-off loop.

Bottom right: Drivers in the drop-off loop unloading students with school staff helping direct traffic.

Recommendations:

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

- Repaint existing: Pavement marking on the speed bumps in the drop-off loop.
- Repaint existing: Crosswalk striping in the drop-off loop and repaint the crosswalk in the north parking lot to high-visibility.
- Construct new: curb ramps at both sides of the crosswalk in the northern parking lot by the bicycle parking.
- Update existing: School-yard bike racks to standard U-bicycle racks.
- Install new: Post and striping to reduce the width of the drop-off loop exit driveway and tighten the angle to be more perpendicular to Harvest Road.

4. Harvest Road and Black Avenue Intersection *(Corresponds to #4 on improvement map)*

- ◆ This is a four-way, stop-controlled intersection.
 - There are yellow transverse crosswalks at all approaches except the west approach.
- ◆ Black Avenue has shared lane markings.
 - There was a minor bicycle collision at this intersection in 2017.
- ◆ A crossing guard facilitates the crossing of students and caregivers.
- ◆ During the observation, there was heavy vehicle traffic, mainly coming from the western and northern approaches.
- ◆ School staff reported that middle and high school students bike through this intersection on their way to and from school.
- ◆ The northeast corner sidewalk landing at the intersection of Harvest Road and Black Avenue is approximately 8' wide. North and east of the corner, the sidewalk is the 4' wide standard. (see top left photo below).
 - Due to high volumes of people walking and rolling (in both directions) during the school commute periods, the 4' wide sidewalk along the school frontage becomes congested, and some pedestrians walk in the roadway along the curb.



Top Left: 4' sidewalk width on Harvest Road along the school frontage is not wide enough to meet pedestrian demand during school commute periods.

Top Right: Crossing guard at Harvest Road and Black Avenue directing students and caregivers.

Bottom Left: Student getting out of the grey van in the travel lane on Harvest Road.

Bottom Right: Narrow sidewalk on Black Avenue east of the intersection.

Recommendations:

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

- Repaint existing: Crosswalks to high-visibility and install advanced stop markings.
- Construct new: Widen the sidewalk to 8' along the Harvest Road school frontage between the entry driveway and Black Avenue (school property).
- Construct new: bulb-outs at all corners.

5. Black Avenue and Crestline Road intersection (*Corresponds to #5 on improvement map*)

- ◆ This is a T-intersection. The Crestline Road approach is the only stop-controlled approach.
 - There is a white transverse crosswalk at the Crestline Road approach.
 - There was a minor bicycle and a minor pedestrian collision at this intersection in 2019.
- ◆ During the observation, many students bicycling through the intersection were riding on the northern sidewalk heading east.
 - The sidewalk is 4-feet wide and does not accommodate the high volumes of students who walk and bike to school. This creates challenging conflicts for students and families walking and biking, as there is not enough room for those on bikes to safely maneuver around people walking.
 - The narrow sidewalk also makes it difficult for caregivers to walk alongside their student.
- ◆ School-related congestion backed up vehicle traffic in the eastbound direction to the east of this intersection.
- ◆ Drivers traveling south on Crestline Road (approaching the intersection) were perceived to be traveling at high speeds.
 - For the most part, drivers looked for crossing students when approaching the intersection.
 - Drivers turning right were seen stopping in the crosswalk to get a better view of cross-traffic on Black Avenue.



Top Left: Driver stopped in the crosswalk as a bicyclist crosses Crestline Road.

Bottom Left: Bicyclist traveling on the sidewalk on Black Avenue.

Right: Vehicular traffic congestion extending from the Harvest Road and Black Avenue intersection.

Recommendations:

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

- Repaint existing: Crosswalk to high-visibility.
- Install new: Speed humps on Crestline Road between Black Avenue and Northway Road.
- Construct new: Bulb-outs at the Crestline Road approach.
- Study: Study Black Avenue to consider bicycle facilities to foster safer travel for students and families.

Participant Comments

School staff and caregivers reported the morning traffic congestion lasts about 15 minutes. During this time, Harvest Road, Black Avenue, and Crestline Road are backed up with drivers trying to access the

school drop-off loop, Walnut Grove Park, and Harvest Park Middle School. Participants were primarily concerned with the road safety conditions on Crestline Road at the Black Avenue and Northway Road intersections. These locations were highlighted because of prior collisions and perceived high travel speeds. Additionally, the high number of students walking and biking to school further increases the need for safety improvements.

Recommendations

Engineering Recommendations

Recommendations to improve infrastructure or operations surrounding Walnut Grove Elementary School can be seen on the conceptual improvement plan found following this memo.

Policy & Program Recommendations

In addition to engineering improvements, the Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program has many encouragement and educational activities that can benefit students and the campus community at Walnut Grove Elementary.

The School Site Coordinator for Walnut Grove Elementary is Jennifer Ledet. The Site Coordinator can help schedule, organize, and promote many of the program offerings of Alameda County SR2S. The contact information for the Site Coordinator is below:

Jennifer Ledet, JLedet@alamedacountysr2s.org

Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Site Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns or if you wish to move forward with additional programming activities.

Programs

The following improvements are recommendations for policy and program implementation at Walnut Grove Elementary School 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 (WSBs), Bicycle Trains (BTs), or other Walk and Roll to School activities. Park and Walk, WSB, and BT meeting locations are also shown on these maps where appropriate.
- ◆ Encourage and Help Facilitate Carpooling
 - The SR2S Program can assist schools in working with parents 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.

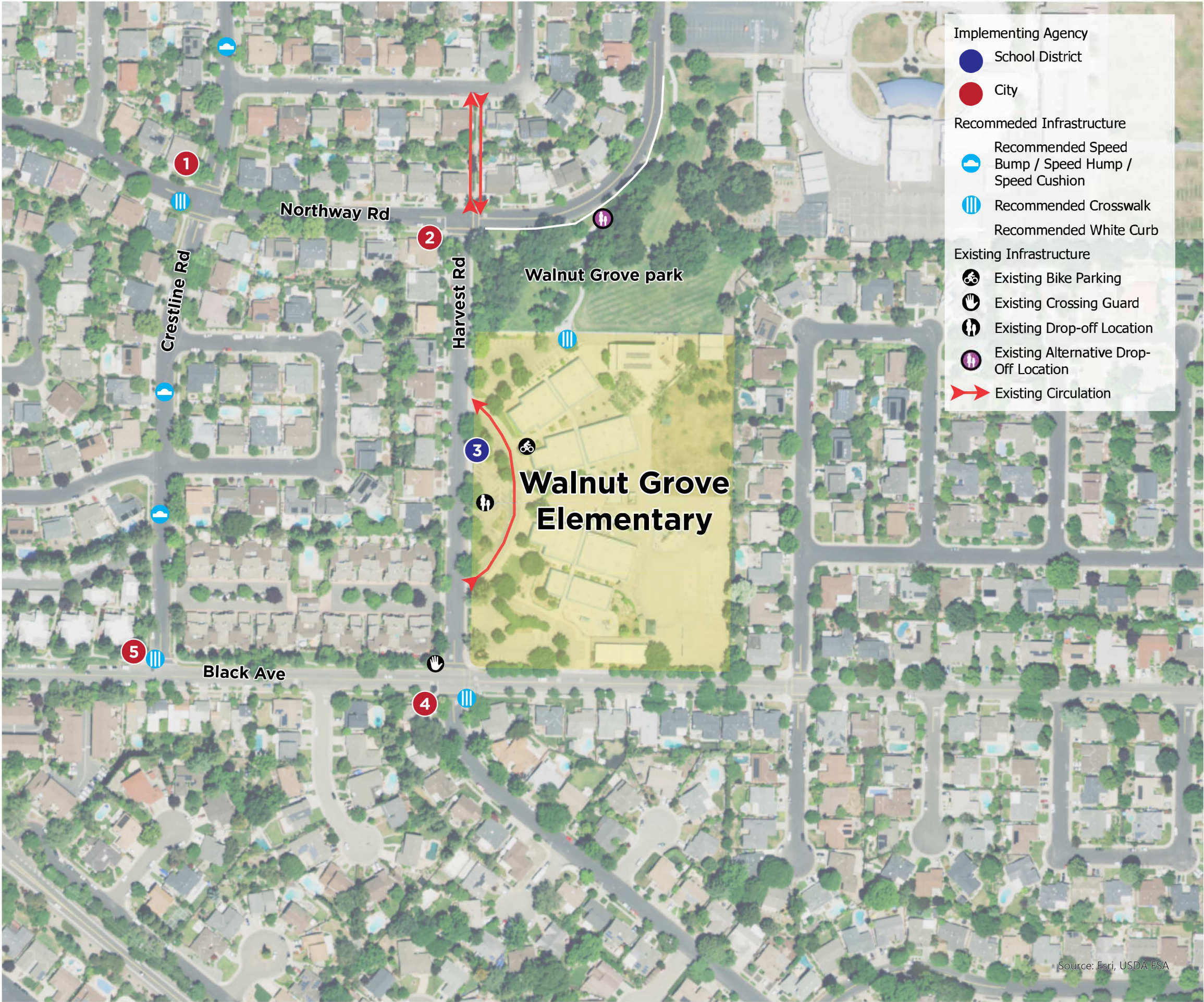
- ◆ Encourage Parents to Park and Walk from Designated Locations
 - Potential park and walk locations have been identified on the Improvement Plan Map.
 - Northway Road west of Crestline Road
 - Black Avenue west of Crestline Road
 - Harvest Road south of Golden Road (Harvest Park)
 - The school should encourage parents to utilize these locations to reduce congestion in and near existing drop-off/pick-up locations.
- ◆ Alternative drop-off locations
 - Walnut Grove Park
- ◆ Facilitate Walking School Buses and Bicycle Trains
 - Walking School Buses (WSBs) and Bicycle Trains (BTs) are groups of students, led by parent/adult chaperone(s), that meet at designated locations and times to gather and walk and/or bike to school together. WSBs and BTs 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 WSBs and BTs. 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, from understanding traffic signals and signs to bicycle hand signals to how to safely cross the street. Pedestrian Safety Rodeos and Bicycle Safety Rodeos are geared towards elementary school students.
- ◆ Participate in International Walk and Roll to School Day (IRW2SD), the Golden Sneaker Contest (GSC), and Bike to School Day (B2SD)
 - These are the three 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. The Golden Sneaker Contest, held in spring, is for elementary and middle schools and is a two-week contest both within schools and across the county challenging classrooms to travel to/from school using active and shared modes. 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.

Safe Routes to Schools Improvement Plan
Walnut Grove Elementary
Pleasanton

School Safety Assessment held December, 2022

Improvement Detail

- 1a. Repaint crosswalks accross Crestline Rd to high-visibility.
- 1b. Install speed humps on Crestline Rd between Northway Rd and Valley Ave.
- 1c. Construct bulb-outs at all intersection corners at Crestline Rd and Northway Rd.
- 2a. Install a white curb along the southern side of Northway Rd east of Harvest Rd White curb restrictions may be signed just for school hours.
- 2b. Construct bulb-outs at all intersection corners and crosswalks.
- 3a. Repaint and repave speed bumps in drop-off loop.
- 3b. Repaint existing crosswalk in drop-off loop and existing crosswalk in northern parking lot to high-visibility.
- 3c. Construct new curb ramps at the crosswalk in the north parking lot.
- 3d. Study reducing the width of the exiting driveway and sharpening the angle to be more perpendicular to the roadway.
- 3e. Replace the existing "school-yard style" bike racks with more secure U-racks. Provide alternative parking facilities for skateboards and scooters.
- 4a. Repaint existing crosswalks to high-visibility and install advanced stop markings at Black Ave and Harvest Rd.
- 4b. Widen the sidewalk to 8 feet along the Harvest Rd school frontage between the entry driveway and Black Ave (school property).
- 4c. Construct bulb-outs at all intersection corners.
- 5a. Repaint existing crosswalk at Crestline Rd and Black Ave to high-visibility.
- 5b. Install speed hump on Crestline Rd between Northway Rd and Black Ave.
- 5c. Long-term: Study Black Ave, Northway Rd, and Harvest Rd for implementing bicycle facilities to improve bicycle connections to campus.



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.
This figure is intended only for reference, conceptual planning, and informational purposes. This figure should not be used to establish boundaries, property lines, location of objects, or to provide any other information typically needed for final design, construction or any other purpose when engineered plans are required.