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MEMORANDUM

To: Chelsea Biklen and David Stillman, City of Cupertino

From: Lola Torney, Alta Planning + Design

Date: July 6, 2017

Re: Lawson Middle School Walk Audit Recommendations

Introduction

The City of Cupertino conducted a walk audit for Lawson Middle School with staff from Alta Planning + Design. The audit was held in the afternoon of May 18, 2017 to observe the afternoon pick-up time at the school.

A walk audit is an assessment of travel behaviors for drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians (both parents and students), developed by observing a school pick-up or drop-off period on and around school grounds. Walk audits provide insight into the specific barriers to walking and biking at each school. The assessment team included Alta Planning + Design staff; City of Cupertino staff, and concerned parents. The audit began with a discussion of current challenge areas and the types of issues to focus on for the walk audit. The team then observed student and parent travel activities during the drop-off period, and reviewed the immediate school zone area for quality of sidewalks, curb ramps, signage, and other engineering elements and patterns of activity. After the audit period was over, audit participants returned to discuss and document their findings on a large scale school area map. Based on observations and input provided by school staff, audit participants, and others, the project team developed recommendations which are presented for Lawson Middle School in a narrative and graphical format.

This memo provides programmatic and project recommendations for Lawson Middle School. It includes both on-campus recommendations that can be implemented by the school district and off-campus improvements that can be implemented by the City. The map of recommended projects is attached to this memo.

Existing Conditions

Lawson Middle School is located on Vista Drive between Merritt Drive and Lazaneo Drive/Forest Avenue. There are two drop-off areas on campus: in the northern parking lot off of Merritt Drive and a drop-off loop off of Vista Drive. Drop-off/pick-ups also occur on Mariani Avenue. Staff park in the northern lot and the southern lot off of Lazaneo Drive. Visitors park in the northern lot.

Bicycle access is available from Merritt Drive, but most students arrive by bicycle from Vista Drive. Bicycle parking is available on Vista Drive. Pedestrian access is available from Merritt Drive and Vista Drive.

Project Recommendations

1. Mariani Avenue/Infinite Loop
 - Conduct traffic study along Mariani Avenue/Infinite Loop to better accommodate school pick-up/drop-offs, bike lanes, and Apple employees.
 - Convert transverse crosswalk to yellow high-visibility crosswalk.
2. Merritt Drive/Larry Way/Vista Drive
 - Install in-street school crossing signs (R1-6) in the crosswalks across Merritt Drive.
3. Northern School Drop-Off
 - Install signage to encourage drivers to pull forward.
 - Install crosswalk with ADA-compliant curb ramps across parking lot.
 - Close Merritt Drive exit driveway to drop-off vehicles. Exit still needed for bus access.
 - This can be done with cones or flexible delineators depending on how frequently the bus requires access.
 - Allow only left turns only out of parking lot to Vista Drive.
 - This will reduce the amount of backup that occurs on Vista Drive southbound.
4. Apple Tree Lane/Vista Drive
 - Install KEEP CLEAR markings in both the northbound and southbound directions of the intersection.
 - Install in-street school crossing sign in the crosswalk across Vista Drive.
5. Eastern School Drop-Off
 - Remove center delineators.
 - Install signage to encourage drivers to pull forward.
6. Vista Drive
 - Install Class III Bike Route signage and markings (sharrows).
7. Southern Parking Lot
 - Prohibit parent drop-off/pick-up in this lot.
 - This can be done with cones.
 - Move bicycle parking to the southern end of the school.
 - Students exit the current bicycle parking location, travel south on Vista Drive, then continue south on Vista Drive past Forest Avenue/Lazaneo Drive. This contributes to the congestion along Vista Drive. Moving the bicycle parking to the southern end of campus will reduce the vehicle congestion and bicycle/vehicle conflicts on Vista Drive.
 - Exact location for bicycle parking will need to be coordinated with the school to determine the most efficient access points for students.
8. Forest Avenue/Vista Drive
 - Conduct crossing guard warrant analysis.

Program Recommendations

1. In the school welcome packets, remind parents to not drop students off at intersections and to not idle their vehicles.
2. Conduct bike rodeos to ensure all students understand and practice proper signaling while riding a bicycle.
3. Work with Lawson PTA to begin a valet program in order to speed up pick-up/drop-offs.
4. Encourage bicyclists to dismount prior to crossing at crosswalks.

5. Work with parents to explain the new drop-off/pick-up loop system.
 - o With the new system, drivers who use the Northern Drop-Off will only be able to turn left onto Vista Drive and leave the school area on Merritt Drive. Drivers who use the Eastern Drop-Off will continue to turn right only onto Vista Drive and leave the school area on southbound Vista Drive.
 - This will reduce the traffic congestion on southbound Vista Drive.
 - o Encourage drivers who use the Northern School Drop-Off to arrive to the school area from Merritt Drive. Encourage the drivers who use the Eastern School Drop Off to arrive from Apple Tree Lane or from south Vista Drive.
 - This will reduce traffic congestion and potential conflicts between vehicles around the school area.
 - o Further study and data collection is recommended prior to implementation in order to determine the traffic patterns from both exit locations.
6. Train crossing guard stationed at Merritt Drive/Vista Drive to watch vehicle backup in the Northern Drop-Off to reduce any potential backup.