



School Safety Assessment
Technical Memorandum

San Mateo High,

San Mateo Union High School District

&

College Park Elementary,

San Mateo-Foster City School District



March 2022

Prepared by: Alta Planning + Design



Introduction

A school safety assessment (SSA) was conducted at San Mateo High and College Park Elementary schools during the morning arrival on March 23rd, 2022. The assessment included representatives from San Mateo High, College Park Elementary, the City of San Mateo, Parents, San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE), and Alta Planning + Design.

Participants included:

- Adam Gelb, San Mateo High
- Bethany Lopez, City of San Mateo
- Sue-Ellen Atkinson, City of San Mateo
- Mike Swin, San Mateo High parent
- Nicolette Chan, City of San Mateo
- Bry Myers, SVBC SM/ SRTS Parent Sunnybrae
- Kathryn Singh, College Park Elementary
- Heather Wolniak, SVBC/ SRTS parent Fiesta Gardens
- Vanessa Castro, San Mateo County Office of Education
- Jasmine Law, San Mateo County Office of Education
- Amy Wong-Thai, College Park Elementary parent
- Binh Thai, College Park Elementary parent
- Carmela Sambo, Alta Planning + Design
- Andre-Anne Cadieux, Alta Planning + Design

In addition to the in-person walk audit, the SMCOE Fellowship Team created an online mapping tool and survey to collect broader input from stakeholders. Sixty responses for both schools were collected from February 24, 2022 to April 6, 2022.

This memo summarizes the data collected during the observation period of the school safety assessment and through the online survey. The document includes educational and encouragement programmatic recommendations that College Park Elementary can pursue with the San Mateo County Office of Education Safe Routes to School program. An Improvement Plan Map is also included and contains infrastructure recommendations that the City of San Mateo can implement.

School Information

Location & Enrollment





Address:	506 N Delaware St, San Mateo, CA 94401
Morning Bell(s):	8:30 am
Afternoon Bell(s):	2:55 pm (Tuesday and Thursday) 3:35 pm (Monday) 3:40 pm (Wednesday and Friday)
Grade Levels:	9-12
Enrollment:	1,713
School Type:	Neighborhood



Address:	715 Indian Ave, San Mateo, CA 94401
Morning Bell(s):	8:13 am
Afternoon Bell(s):	2:00 pm Kindergarten 2:45 pm grades 1-5 12:45 pm for all each Wednesday
Grade Levels:	K-5
Enrollment:	452
School Type:	Magnet (Chinese Immersion program)

Bicycle, Buses, and Drop-off/Pick-up

Bike Rack Capacity and Use	
College Park Elementary	No bike rack on campus
San Mateo High	<p>The bike racks are located at the center of the campus. They are lightly used; 15 bikes estimated the day of the observations. Some of the bike racks are too small for adult-size bicycles.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>

School Buses	
College Park Elementary	No school bus currently serves the school. There are school bus stops that serve the local children near the school at Indian Ave/Fremont St, on N Humboldt Ave, and on N Eldorado St (16 different schools in the district). These busses stop in the middle of intersections (e.g., Humboldt/Indian) to pick up children from the neighborhood to other schools.
San Mateo High	There are 6 school buses that serve the high school students. The bus loading zone is on E Poplar Avenue (near N Eldorado Street).
Public Transit	
College Park Elementary	No public transit route currently serves the school.
San Mateo High	There are SamTrans bus stops on N Delaware Street. Approximately 40 students were seen taking bus the day of the observation.
Drop-off and Pick-up Policies/ Procedures	
College Park Elementary	There are three designated drop-off/pick-up zones, distributed per grade. School staff is assigned at each loading zone/entrance to direct parents and students.
San Mateo High	There are three drop-off/pick-up zones for students and families to use.

Existing Conditions

Overview

San Mateo High and College Park Elementary are located on the north side of the City of San Mateo in San Mateo County, west of Highway 101. San Mateo High is between N Humboldt Street and N Delaware Street, north of E Poplar Avenue. The school is primarily accessed via N Delaware Street. Pedestrian and bicycle accesses are also located on E Poplar Street and on N Humboldt Street.

College Park Elementary has its front entrance on N Eldorado Street and two additional entrances are located along Indian Avenue.

Observations

The following existing conditions were observed or reported by participants during the school safety assessment (SSA).

1. N Eldorado Street

- The front entrance of College Park Elementary is located along N Eldorado Street, between E Poplar Avenue and Indian Avenue, and is the school loading zone for students in Grades 2 and 3.
- Drivers were observed speeding on N Eldorado Street.
- The intersection of N Eldorado Street and Indian Avenue is hard for students to cross.

- Cars parked on N Eldorado Street along the drop-off/pick-up lane cause low visibility to drivers exiting the school loading zone.
- It is challenging for pedestrians to cross the exit of the N Eldorado Street drop-off/pick-up area. There is no crosswalk or stop sign and drivers don't stop when exiting the drop-off/pick-up loop.
- N Eldorado Street lanes are narrow.
- Cars were observed parked wrong way on the street.
- Double parked cars were left unattended.
- Cars backed up on N Eldorado Street after the drop-off due to the heavy traffic traveling eastbound on E Poplar Avenue to reach Highway 101.



Left: Car blocking the crosswalk across N Eldorado Street at the with E Poplar Avenue. Cars backing up on Poplar Avenue.

Right: Pick-up/drop-off zone at the front entrance of College Park Elementary on N Eldorado Street.

2. Indian Avenue

- There are two school entrances and designated drop-off/pick-up areas along Indian Avenue. The grades 4 and 5 entrance is located at the intersection of San Antonio Avenue. The grades K and 1 entrance is located at the intersection of N Fremont Street.
- There are blind left turns out of College Park Elementary from the drop-off lanes.
- Drivers parked on the sidewalk along Indian Avenue to drop off students and parked cars created blind spots for when children and parents are crossing Indian Avenue.
- Many pedestrians were observed jaywalking across Indian Avenue.
- There is no crosswalk across Indian Avenue at the intersection with San Antonio Avenue.
- The intersection of Indian Avenue and N Fremont Street are hard to cross for students.
- Cars were lined bumper to bumper on Indian Avenue during the drop-off period.



Car encroaches the sidewalk to drop off College Park Elementary students on Indian Avenue.

- When students were dropped off on Indian Avenue, drivers were waiting in their car to see their children walking into the school gate before pulling out.
- Traffic from the daycare Turnbull Children's Center impacts the drop-off period at Collège Park Elementary on Indian Avenue.

3. E Poplar Avenue

- Many elementary students are being dropped off at the intersection of N Eldorado Street and E Poplar Street instead of at the designated loading zones.
- There is heavy traffic on the street, with cars lined up along N Poplar Avenue.
- Illegal U-turns were observed.
- A pedestrian and bicyclist entrance to the San Mateo High School is located along E Poplar Avenue, at the intersection with N Eldorado Street. The school bus loading zone is also located at this entrance.
- Cars were observed speeding along E Poplar Avenue.
- Many comments in the online survey mentioned distracting driving on E Poplar Avenue.
- Cars block the intersections on E Poplar Street (with N Delaware Street and N Humboldt Avenue) during drop-off and pick-up periods. Cars also blocked the crosswalk at the intersection of E Poplar Ave and N Eldorado Street.
- The student parking lot is located on E Poplar Avenue, between N Eldorado Street and N Humboldt Street. The exit from the student parking lot is a wide diagonal.
- Drivers speeding to exit the school parking lot. Speed limit is 10 mph.
- Illegal left turns into the school bus loop at the high school entrance were observed.
- Drivers stopped at red curbs, in the middle of the street or double parked on N Poplar Avenue to drop off students.
- There is a high-visibility crosswalk and a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) across E Poplar Avenue, at the intersection with N Eldorado Street but a majority of high school students did not push the pedestrian push button at the crosswalk.



Left: High school students being dropped off in the middle of the street on E Poplar Avenue, near the San Mateo High School pedestrian entrance.

Right: Intersection of E Poplar Avenue and N Eldorado Street.

4. N Delaware Street

- The front entrance of the San Mateo High School and the staff parking lot are located along N Delaware Street.
- There is a bike route (class III bikeway) along N Delaware Street.
- The street is very congested during the drop-off and pick-up periods. Left turns into the campus drop-off zone in front of the Performing Arts Center is hard for drivers heading south east on N Delaware Street are very hard.
- The intersection of N Delaware Street and E Bellevue Avenue is hard to cross. Participants mentioned that the crosswalk is not visible enough and cars were observed blocking the ramp.
- Drivers were observed to be speeding on the street.
- Students were being dropped off in the red curb area, in the middle of the street when car double parked or at the beginning of the drop-off/pick-up loop.
- Driveway aprons were also used for student drop-off.
- There is a SamTrans bus stop at the intersection with E Poplar Avenue are used by the San Mateo High school students. Approximately 40 students were seen taking bus.
- Crossing N Delaware Street at the intersection with State Street is hard for pedestrians.

5. E Bellevue Avenue

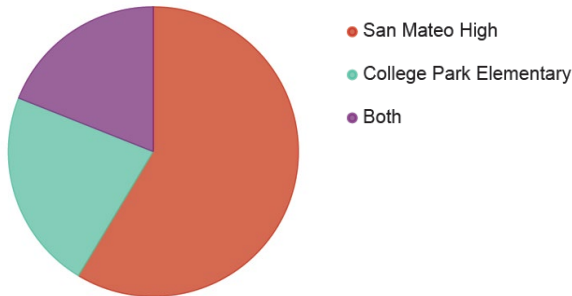
- Some drivers double parked to drop off their students on E Bellevue Avenue and blocked the visibility for other drivers, in particular at the intersection with N Claremont Street.
- Many students crossed along N Delaware Street and E Bellevue Ave.
- Red curb areas at the intersections along the street were used as drop-off location.

Other Comments

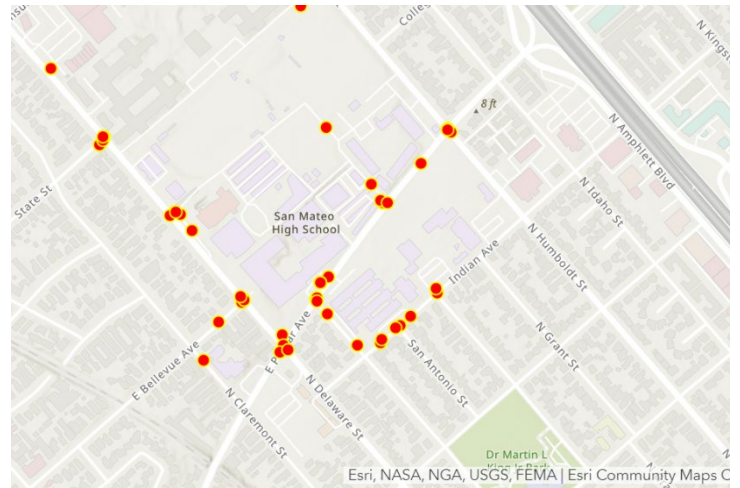
- There are two new Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon to be installed on N Delaware Street at the intersection with E Bellevue Avenue and State Avenue in the upcoming months.
- The participants mentioned that College Park Elementary has funding to hire a crossing guard but recruiting for the position is challenging.
- A student was hit at the crosswalk across N Delaware Street at the intersection with E Bellevue Ave and did not report the collision to the police department.
- There is a pedestrian and bicyclist entrance at the back of the SMHS along N Humbolt Street. The path is not paved and there is no signage to encourage students coming from north east to enter the campus.

Public Input from the Online Mapping Tool and Survey

Sixty responses for both schools were collected from February 24, 2022 to April 6, 2022. The issue categories that collected the more responses are Street Crossings and Intersections (38%) and Driver Behavior (40%).



Left: Proportion of responses per school: 57% for San Mateo High, 22% for College Park Elementary and 18% for both schools (3% of the respondents skipped the question).



Right: Locations of the issues identified by the respondents.

Intersection of N Delaware Street and E Poplar Avenue

- Drivers do not stop at stop signs or stop behind the crosswalk, drivers are distracted
- Hard to make a safe left turn for cyclists heading from College Park Elementary to Poplar bike lanes heading south.

Intersection of N Delaware Street and E Bellevue Avenue

- Stanbridge Academy (private school, grade K-12) is located between E Bellevue Avenue and Poplar Avenue (the front entrance is on E Poplar Avenue). Many SMHS and Stanbridge students are dropped off on N. Claremont between E Bellevue Avenue and E Poplar Avenue.
- During afternoon pickup, a large number of parents wait in their cars on Bellevue, between Claremont and Delaware for 20 minutes leading up to dismissal. The first arrivals will park legally against the curb. The later arrivals will double park, usually in the direction of Delaware. You get 4-5 cars double parked often. As a result, drivers who actually want to drive on Bellevue from Claremont to Delaware must drive in the oncoming traffic lane. It also increases chaos on the crosswalk at Delaware.
- Many drivers on Bellevue do not stop prior to the crosswalk at Delaware.
- Lack of daylighting at the crosswalk. Especially if a truck is parked to the left/North West side, it is very difficult for Bellevue drivers to see Delaware cross traffic heading South East. This encourages the Bellevue driver to pull up in the crosswalk.
- The Delaware / Bellevue crosswalks are extremely busy with hundreds of kids trying to cross each day. My daughter's friend was hit here. Note that cars sometimes get stuck between the crosswalks.
- In the mornings during the drop-off time there's a near-continual stream of pedestrians crossing Delaware. Drivers seem respectful of the pedestrian crossing, but the cars get very backed up going northbound on Delaware. If there were some sort of light there or a crossing guard, the traffic would flow much better.

N Delaware Street / High School Entrance and Drop-off Loop

- Residents park their car in the drop off zone in front of the Performing Arts Center (PAC).
- Hard to exit the drop off area in front of the Performing Arts Center (PAC).
- Delaware is very congested during morning and afternoons. Danger is high when drivers heading SE on Delaware attempt to turn into campus just beyond the District Office and at the entrance to drop off in front of the PAC. Given traffic in the opposite direction, it is hard to make a left turn, backing up traffic.
- Unlike the Poplar entrance, at the Delaware entrance there is no speed limit shown to drivers entering campus.

Intersection of N Delaware Street and State Street

- Crossing Delaware at State Street is challenging. Long stretch without stop signs or lights. The road widens there, so cars get going pretty fast. The ends of the crosswalk are somewhat obscured by parked cars. There is considerable foot traffic here, not just to the schools, but also between the neighborhood and the Woodlake shopping center.
- The right turning angles from Delaware to State and State to Delaware are very gentle, encouraging drivers to speed through crosswalks.

N Claremont Street

- Adjacent to the Stanbridge Academy, a K-12 private school which fronts on Poplar. Lots of parents drop off students for SMHS and Stanbridge on N. Claremont between Bellevue and Poplar.

Intersection of E Poplar Avenue and N Eldorado Street

- Illegal stoppings: on Poplar, on N El Dorado, often in the crosswalk.
- Existing vegetation blocks the crosswalk sign and flashing light when it is full of leaves.
- Beg button at the crosswalk on the College Park side of the street is not conveniently located for pedestrians and thus usage is not optimal.
- Crossing distance is long.
- In both directions, traffic backs up. This encourages traffic to form a second lane and speed by backed up cars, without being to see kids crossing in front of stopped cars.
- Intersection has the most disruptive drop off, crosswalk and driving patterns.

Intersection of Indian Avenue and N Eldorado Street

- Unsafe for walkers. Lighted crosswalk would be helpful.

E Poplar Avenue / San Mateo High School Entrance

- Driver behavior, distracted drivers.
- The two small signs are not very visible to drivers entering this drop off area. Several parents drop off in this area without permission, holding up bus access.
- The 5-mph sign is parallel to Poplar. It is not visible to the majority of traffic heading SW and turning right into the drop off.

Recommendations

Engineering Recommendations

Recommendations to improve infrastructure or operations surrounding San Mateo High and College Park Elementary can be seen on the conceptual improvement plan found on the following page. [The San Mateo County Office of Education Safe Routes to School program](#) can provide resources and technical assistance to implement the following recommendations.

Programmatic Recommendations

The following recommendations are for College Park Elementary School. The City of San Mateo is hiring a part-time SRTS Coordinator. The new SRTS Coordinator can assist the school with the implementation of the recommendations.

- **Suggested Walk/Bike Routes to School Maps:** The City of San Mateo has created a [suggested routes to school map for Colle Park Elementary](#). The map illustrates preferred routes to school for walking and biking and existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This map can also be used as a part of Walking School Buses (WSBs), Bicycle Trains (BTs), Park and Walk programs or other Walk and Roll to School activities.
- **Facilitate Walking School Buses and Bike Trains to the High School:** Walking School Buses (WSBs) and Bike 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/BTs can be regular events, occurring daily, weekly, or monthly or occur in coordination with other events like International Walk and Roll to School Day or the Golden Sneaker Contest. Safe Routes to School staff can assist schools with the planning, coordination, and execution of the WSBs. Walking or biking in groups with parental supervision can not only increase the visibility of these road users, but can reduce barriers to walking or biking for some families while making it fun and exciting for the students.
- **Participate in event days**, including International Walk and Roll to School Day (IRW2SD), Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day (RBW2SD), the Golden Sneaker Challenge and Bike to School Day (B2SD). These are encouragement events that occur throughout the academic year in San Mateo County. These events are great ways to promote safe walking and biking, learn the benefits of an active lifestyle and engage students and families in the SRTS program.
- **Encourage parents to Park and Walk** from designated locations. Potential Park and Walk locations have been identified on the Improvement Plan Map at the following locations:
 - E Bellevue Avenue and N Claremont Street.
 - Shopping Center Parking lot at the intersection of N Delaware Street and Peninsula Avenue.
- **Host an education campaign:** Implement educational and encouragement messages to educate students and families on e.g., how and why to use the pedestrian push button at the crosswalk, what to do in case of near miss or collision.
- **Crossing Guard Program and Training**
 - Advertise the position in the neighborhood, e.g., neighborhood association, Churches, social media.
 - Provide crossing guard training to the current volunteers.