

Seattle Department of Transportation

# SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL 2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT



September 2019 to August 2020



**Seattle**  
Department of  
Transportation

VISION  
**ZERO**  
SAFER STREETS FOR SEATTLE

The Levy to  
**MOVE SEATTLE**

# INTRODUCTION

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national movement to make it easier and safer for students to walk and bike to school. The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) use a combination of strategies to improve safety and get more students walking and bicycling to school. The 6 strategies below are based on the national SRTS movement and have been adapted to best fit Seattle's needs. The 6 E's are best used in concert.

Education	Ensure that everyone learns how to travel safely
Engineering	Design streets for safety and predictability
Encouragement	Promote walking and biking in the school community
Evaluation	Track progress toward our shared goals
Empowerment	Provide resources to school champions
Enforcement	Apply traffic safety laws and target risky behaviors

In 2015, we launched our first ever [Safe Routes to School 5 Year Action Plan](#) for Seattle. This is our fifth annual report tracking our progress. We've broken down the report into each of the 6 E's with relevant case studies for each section.

# RACE MATTERS

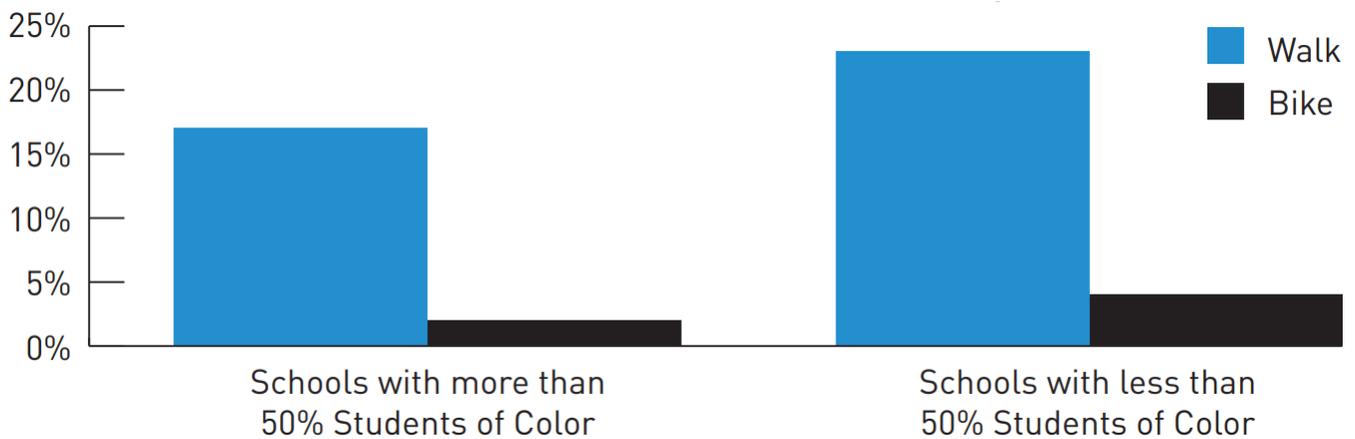
The City of Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative is the City's commitment to eliminate racial disparities and achieve racial equity in Seattle. The Safe Routes to School program engaged in a two-years long racial equity analysis of our program from 2017 to 2019 to better understand how we can increase and improve options for safe walking and biking to school, particularly for Seattle's students of color. In addition to gaining a better understanding of the barriers to walking and biking to school, we worked closely alongside communities of color to create potential solutions addressing the challenges their respective communities identified. These solutions are included in the update to our Safe Routes to School Action Plan.

National student walk and bike rates have sharply declined while youth obesity has almost quadrupled in the last four decades; this has disproportionately affected communities of color.

- Black and Latino children have higher obesity rates and tend to have the least access to parks, playgrounds, or walkable streets

- Nearly 1/4 of Black youth are getting less than the recommended hour of daily physical activity, compared to 13% of White youth
- In Seattle, while overall walk and bike to school rates are increasing, students of color are less likely to walk and bike to school than white students

Students that walk and bike to school are likely to get the recommended 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day that health professionals recommend. Physical activity not only contributes to improved physical health, it is also directly linked to improved mental health, self-esteem, mood, quality of sleep, and academic performance. Physical movement also significantly reduces stress, anxiety, depression and fatigue, which then reduces the risk for obesity, cancers, diabetes, strokes, and respiratory and cardiovascular diseases later in life.



2015 Seattle Student Bike and Walk Percentages by Race from Student Travel Surveys Conducted by Seattle Public Schools

# EDUCATION

## WALKING AND BIKING SAFETY EDUCATION

As the COVID-19 pandemic closed schools to in-person learning in the spring of 2020, we worked with Seattle Public Schools to switch the Let's Go program to an online video format with at-home activities to support continued learning and engagement. They also developed online trainings for professional development with both synchronous and asynchronous content.

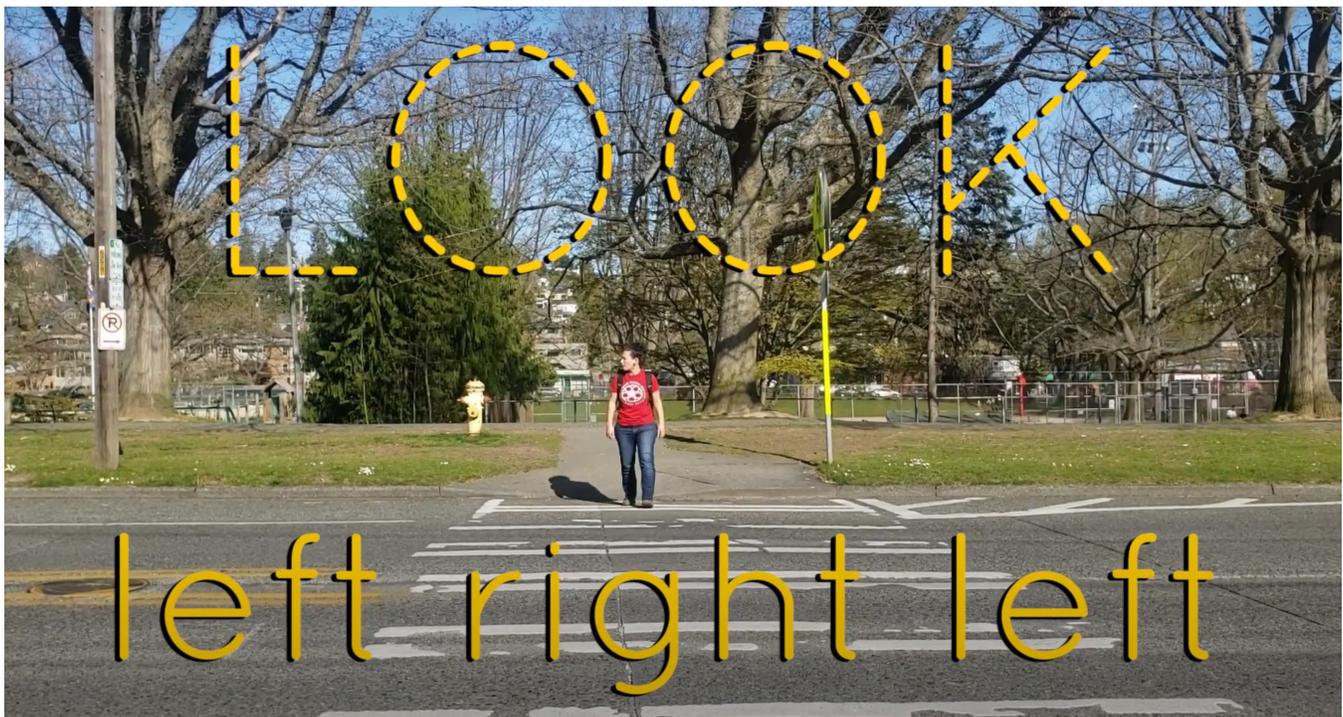
### Video Production in support and alignment with learning objectives:

1. "Crossing Streets Safely"
  - 1b. "Adapted Pedestrian Safety/Helmet Introduction"
2. "Walk Around the Block"
  - 2b. "Adapted Getting Bike Ready!"

3. "Safe Crossing Choices"
  - 3b. "Adapted Getting on Bikes!"
4. "Helmet Safety"
  - 4b. "Adapted Skills and Drills: Start, Steer, and Stop"
5. "Start with Power, Stop with Control"
  - 5b. "Adapted Opportunities for Continued Riding"

### Video production in professional development for teachers and skill development for parents/families:

1. "ABC Quick Check for Kids Bikes"
2. "ABC Quick Check for Adult Bikes"
3. "Tips for Learning to Ride a Bike"
4. "Basic Bike Fit"
5. "Safety Tips for Beginner Bicyclists"



*Crossing Streets Safely video for at-home learning*

# ENCOURAGEMENT

## BANANA BRAKES

During the 2019-20 school year, we held five Banana Brake events at schools where we celebrated kids who walked and biked to school with healthy snacks and small prizes like wrist bands and stickers. We also chatted with their parents about how to find the best route to school and any upcoming or recently completed projects in the neighborhood.

At the Hamilton Middle School event, one student even added bike lights to a unicycle, which he frequently rides to and from school.

- Aki Kurose Middle School
- Broadview Thomson K-8 School
- Jane Addams Middle School
- Mercer Middle School
- Hamilton Middle School



*Handing out healthy snacks, bike lights, and walk maps to Hamilton MS students*

## Spotlight: Covid Response Grants

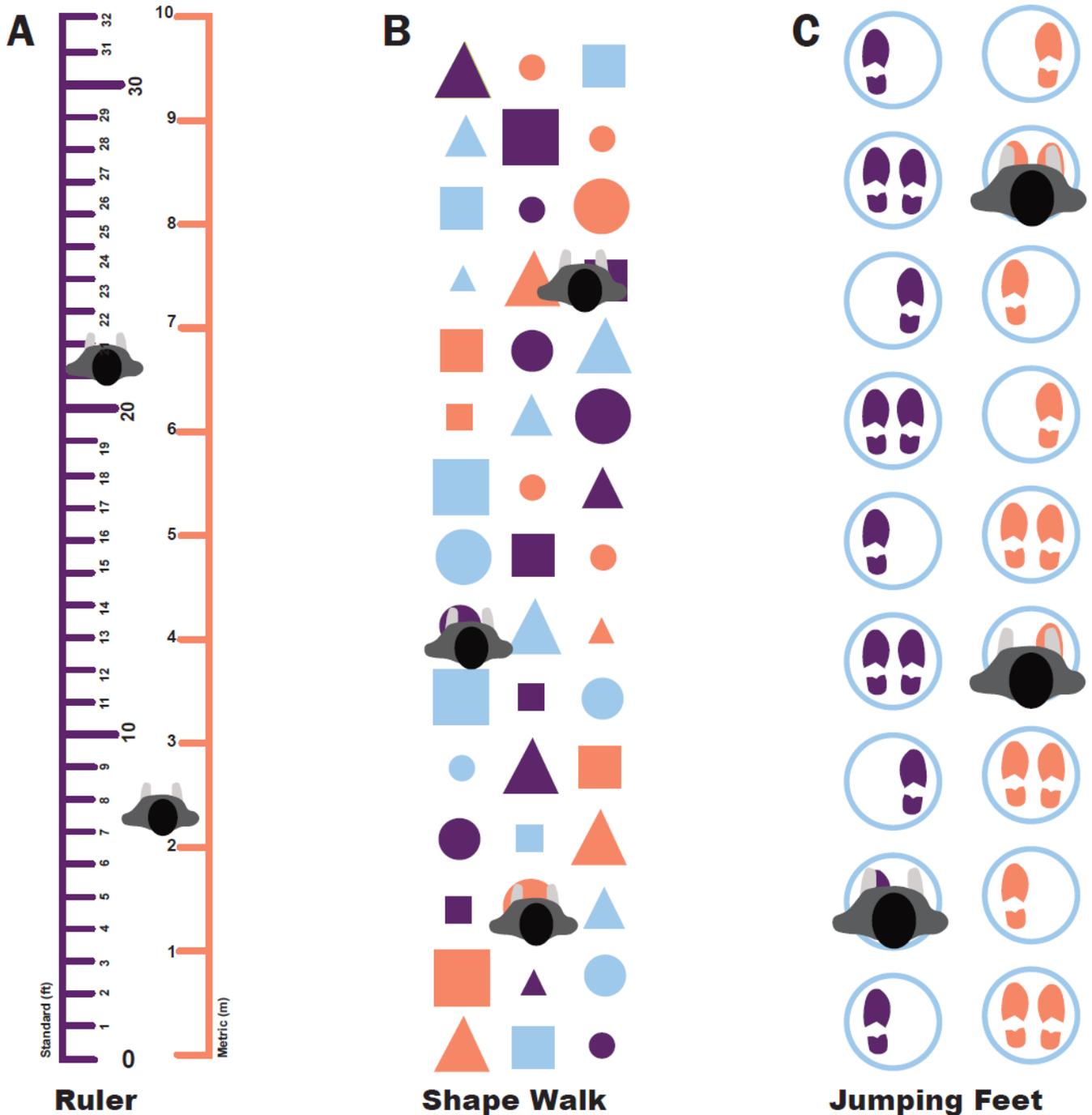
As the COVID-19 pandemic forced schools to send students home for remote learning, the Safe Routes to School program quickly enacted a new COVID-19 Emergency Response Grant in the spring of 2020. Building upon the existing Mini Grant program, the COVID-19 Emergency Response Grant offered funds to schools, PTAs, and education-focused non-profit organizations to facilitate and incentivize safer and more comfortable walking and biking. While students were no longer attending in person classes, many students still walked and biked daily to lunch pickups at school buildings or around their neighborhoods for exercise and other errands.

The COVID-19 Emergency Response Grant program funded awards of up to \$1,000 to 12 different Seattle schools, PTAs, and educational organizations. These grants funded a variety of supplies and resources for students such as face masks and hand sanitizer, signage for school lunch pickup locations, crossing flags, bike helmets, and gym equipment for P.E. teachers to distribute or loan to students.

## LEARNING LANDSCAPES

The Learning Landscapes project at Northgate Elementary School was put on hold. The Department of Early Learning had intended to fund a before and after study to understand the effectiveness of the designs to encourage adult-child and child-child interaction, however their program funding was impacted by the pandemic. In addition, our crew capacity was

greatly reduced due to the pandemic and projects to mitigate impacts from the closure of the West Seattle bridge. The Northgate Elementary School building will be reconstructed and will re-open fall 2023. The new building main entrance will be relocated to N 120th St, so we plan to install the Learning Landscapes designs on N 120th St after the building construction is complete.



## LOWELL WALK TO SCHOOL ENCOURAGEMENT CAMPAIGN

During October 2019 we supported a Walk to School encouragement campaign at Lowell Elementary School. We set up a meeting place on Friday mornings for parents and students to gather before they walked to school together. The program encouraged families to experience the benefits of walking to school, including avoiding school time traffic, chatting with friends and family, getting daily exercise and fresh air, and improving the safety and air quality around their school. We provided hot cocoa, cider, safety lights, and other prizes. We also partnered with the Woodland Park Zoo to give free zoo tickets to participating students.



*Parents and students enjoy hot drinks while walking to school*

## BAILEY GATZERT WALKING SCHOOL BUS

We worked with Seattle Neighborhood Greenways to plan and coordinate a Walking School Bus (WSB) program at Bailey Gatzert Elementary School. The WSB program was successfully launched in February 2020 with four morning routes run by parents who were provided a stipend for their participation. Due to the pandemic, the program had to be put on hold.

## FREE ONLINE INCENTIVES

In 2015 we launched our free incentives program, where schools can place orders online and receive their choice of free incentives that include stickers, hand stamps, temporary tattoos, and wrist bands. We had about half as many schools as usual participate during this school year, since schools were not in person during the spring.

## BACK TO SCHOOL EVENTS

In the fall of 2019, we attended back to school events at John Rogers Elementary and Lowell Elementary where parents and students. Parents and students met their teachers, picked up their class schedules, and learned the layout of the school. We set up a table at these events to hand out blinking bike lights, coloring books, bike maps, flyers on walking/biking safety, wristbands, temporary tattoos, and stickers. We also handed out maps of recent and upcoming walking and biking projects nearby. Many students and parents stopped by the tables to take home prizes and resources and learn about walking and biking safety.

Join the Gatzert Walking School Bus!

Ku biir Baska Iskuulka Iugaynta ee Gatzert!

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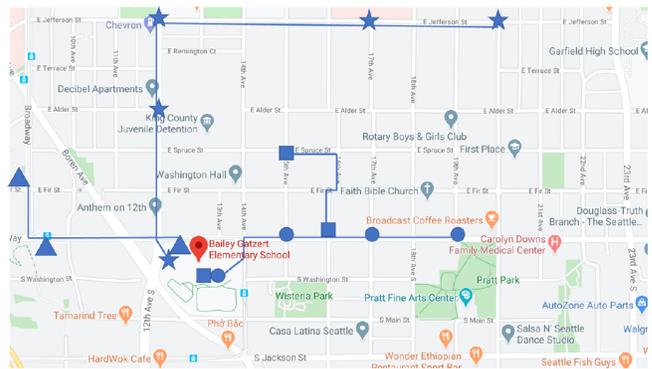
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ፍብ ፍይ Gatzert Walking School Bus

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*Bailey Gatzert Walking School Bus Flyer*

# ENGINEERING

## ENGINEERING IMPROVEMENTS AROUND SCHOOLS

Between September 2019 and August 2020, we completed 9 engineering projects at high-priority schools. Numbers reference the map of all the school engineering projects.



*Sidewalk on Meridian Ave N for Northgate Elementary School*



*Crossing improvement at 12th Ave E and E Roy St as part of the Lowell Meany Neighborhood Greenway Project*



*Crossing improvement at S Pilgrim St and 60th Ave S*



*Walkway on 37th Ave S for Wing Luke Elementary School*



*Crossing improvement at 21st Ave S and E Yesler Way for Washington Middle School*



*Traffic calming on 20th Ave NE for Sacajawea Elementary School*



*Traffic calming on 15th Ave NE for Sacajawea Elementary School*



- 1 Northgate Elementary School**  
Sidewalk on Meridian Ave N between N 115th St and N 117th St
- 2 Sacajawea Elementary School**  
Traffic calming on 15th Ave NE
- 3**  
Traffic calming on 20th Ave NE
- 4 Lowell Elementary School and Meany Middle School**  
Neighborhood greenway connecting these two schools
- 5**
- 6 Bailey Gatzert Elementary School**  
Leading pedestrian interval at E Yesler Way and 12th Ave S
- 7 Washington Middle School**  
Crossing improvement at 21st Ave S and E Yesler Way
- 8 Wing Luke Elementary School**  
Walkway improvement on 37th Ave S
- 9 Emerson Elementary School**  
Crossing improvement at S Pilgrim St and 60th Ave S

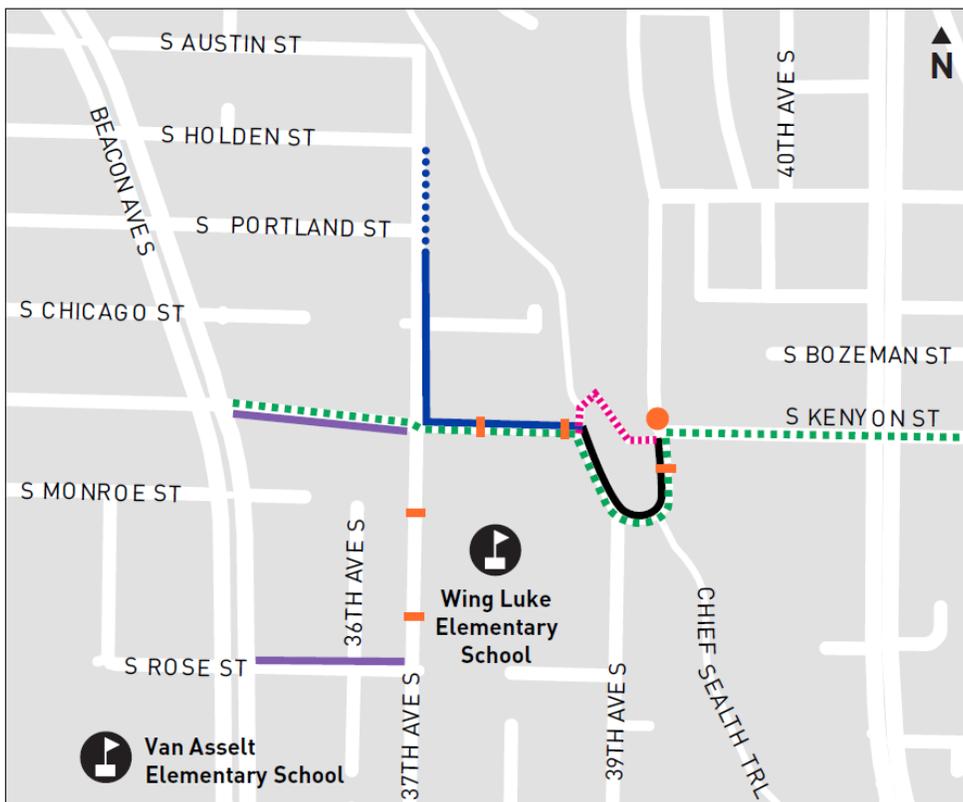
## Spotlight: Wing Luke Elementary School

We're making it safer and easier for kids to walk and bike to the newly rebuilt Wing Luke Elementary School. Wing Luke Elementary School is a high priority school for the Safe Routes to School program. Over the past several years we have been building Safe Routes to School projects for Wing Luke students, including traffic calming, walkways, and pedestrian lighting. By 2023 we'll construct a new wide sidewalk from the bottom of the hill up to the top of the hill on Kenyon Way S.

WING LUKE ELEMENTARY



# Safe Routes to School projects



### LEGEND

#### 2023

— New wide sidewalk

#### 2020

— New sidewalk

••• Walkway improvements

■ Neighborhood greenway with speed humps and crossing improvements

#### 2018

■ Staircase lighting

#### 2017

■ Speed humps

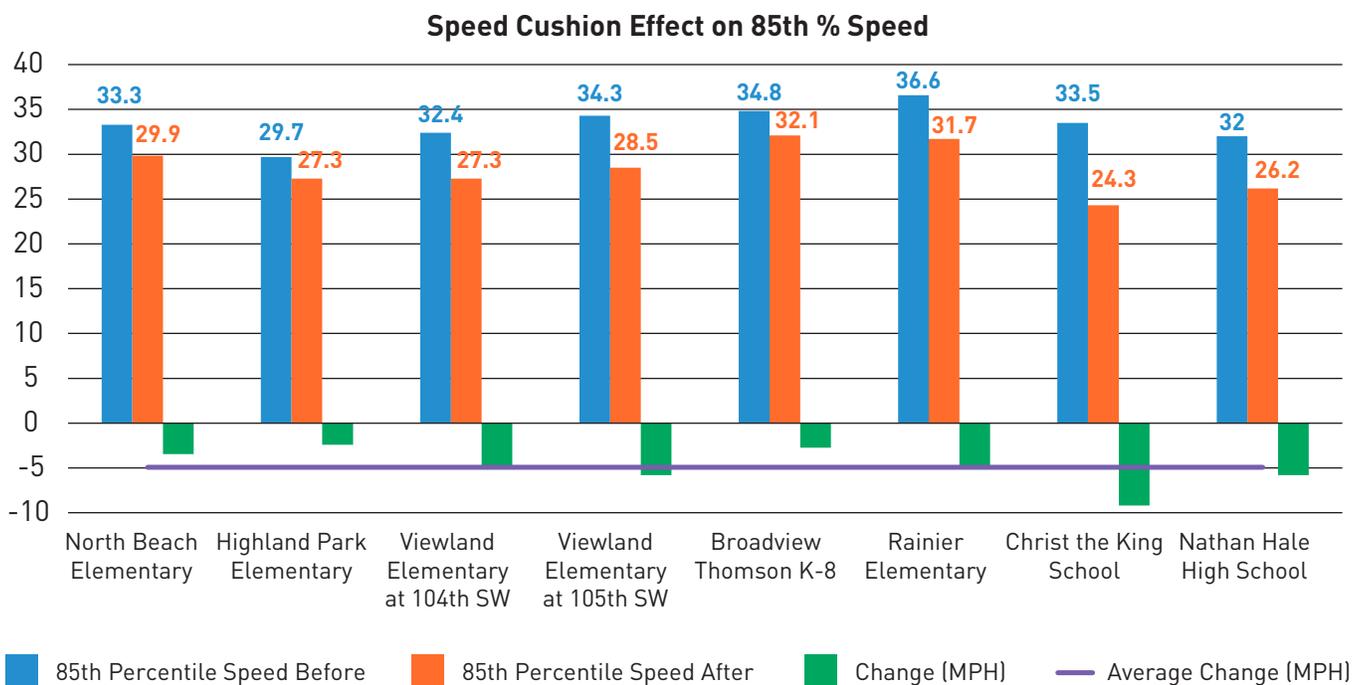
● Crosswalk

#### 2016

— Walkway improvements

# EVALUATION

We evaluated the effectiveness of speed cushions that we have installed over the past decade and found that they are typically very effective at slowing down people driving. After installation, most people drive below the arterial speed limit of 30mph. The 85th percentile speed is the speed at or below which 85 percent of the people drive on a given street. In almost all cases, the 85th percentile speed was 28MPH or below. The average speed reduction after installing speed cushions was 5MPH. We will continue to use this arterial traffic calming tool in school zones where people are driving above the speed limit.



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