

5 Highland Park Elementary School

Address: 900 Park Square Drive, Bloomington, IN
Enrollment in 2012-2013: 370
Grades: K-6
Students within Walk Boundary: 69
Students within One Mile: 150

5.1 Existing Conditions

Overview

Highland Park Elementary is one of the three schools in this study – along with Binford and Rogers Elementary Schools – that currently enjoys relatively high rates of student walking and biking to school. At Highland Park, the close proximity of student housing and the availability of a crossing guard at South Park Square Drive are major factors that help students bike and walk to school more often. As Highland Park looks to the future, an example SRTS goal could be to encourage 100 percent of the students within the school walk zone to walk or bike to school, particularly on an event day. The currently good conditions within the school walk zone make this goal achievable. As farm fields surrounding the school become new housing developments, Highland Park should regularly revisit policies and revise and expand its walk zone boundaries to include new students.

School Campus

Highland Park Elementary School is located on the far west side of Bloomington, south of W 3rd Street and on the west side of South Park Square Drive. There is a large loop drive at the front (east) side of the building and the staff parking/parent drop-off is located on the north side of the building. A playground and paved play areas, including four square and two small basketball courts are located on the south side of the building. There is a sidewalk on both sides of South Park Square Drive for the entire length of the campus (1,350 feet). The bike rack is located at the southeast corner of the school, close to the South Park Square Drive and Woodside Drive intersection. This is a good location as all the students approaching the school via bike come from this intersection and they do not have to cross any driveways to access the rack.



Students lock their bikes at the southeast corner of the Highland Park campus.

Surrounding Land Use and Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities

The nearby neighborhood east of South Park Square Drive is fully developed, with a mix of multi-family complexes, single family homes, and park space. Commercial and office buildings are predominant along West 3rd Street. A mix of farm fields and new housing developments lie to the west and south of the school.

The sidewalk network is largely incomplete in the neighborhoods around Highland Park. While newer multi-family housing areas have sidewalks, most areas of single-family homes built in the 1970s and 1980s lack them.



A student and parent walk in to Highland Park Elementary School.

Student Walking and Biking

The Highland Park walk zone includes the homes on the east side of South Park Square Drive, and the neighborhoods just east of South Harvey Drive.

Although the school walk zone is small, it contains 18 percent of the students attending Highland Park Elementary (69 students out of 370 total students). It is conceivable that this school could have 100 percent of its students in the walk zone walking to school.



Figure 5-1. Highland Park Enrollment Area (yellow)

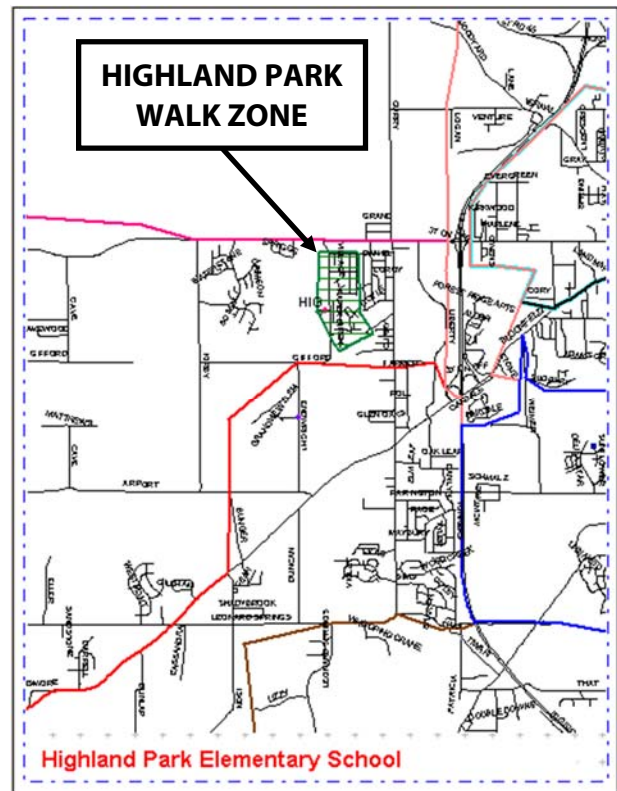


Figure 5-2. Highland Park Walk Zone (green border)

The bike rack was full or nearly full during both audit visits, and many students were walking in from neighborhoods to the east of the school. Three major factors encourage high rates of walking and bicycling to school:

- Many students live nearby in a mix of multi- and single-family homes east of South Park Square Drive
- A crossing guard assists students at the intersection of South Park Square Drive and Woodside Drive
- Excellent crosswalk infrastructure at the intersection of South Park Square Drive and Woodside Drive

Though the numbers of children reportedly walking to school have been dropping since 2008, the number of students at this intersection is much higher than the numbers at other crossing guard locations.

Crossing Guard Locations

One adult crossing guard is present at the intersection of South Park Square Drive and West Woodside Drive. This is a busy location with an average of over 60 students crossing in the morning and in the afternoon.



An adult crossing guard helps a student on a bicycle cross the street safely.

Driver Staging Area and Access

Parents use a loop in the staff parking lot on the north end of the campus to drop-off and pick-up students at arrival and dismissal times. While the line of cars during peak times can grow to as many as 20 to 25 cars, the pick-up and drop-off procedure is well-organized and well-understood by parents. Infrastructure improvements around the staging area increase the students' visibility and safety.



Pavement markings and safety cones increase the visibility of students crossing near the parent driver staging area.

Bus Staging Area

School buses at Highland Park use the loop drive on the east side of the school, and arriving students enter the school by the main door. The bus loop is sufficiently large to accommodate the number of buses servicing the school. During field visits, the bus staging area worked efficiently with few exceptions, typically caused by an occasional parent arriving by car attempting to drop-off a student in the bus area.

5.2 Issues and Recommendations

Map 4 on the following page presents the existing bikeways and sidewalks around Highland Park Elementary School. The existing issues identified in black circles correspond with the issues presented in Table 5-1. Issues were generated from existing conditions and school staff input. Many of these issues require working with the City to identify next steps, as discussed in the table.

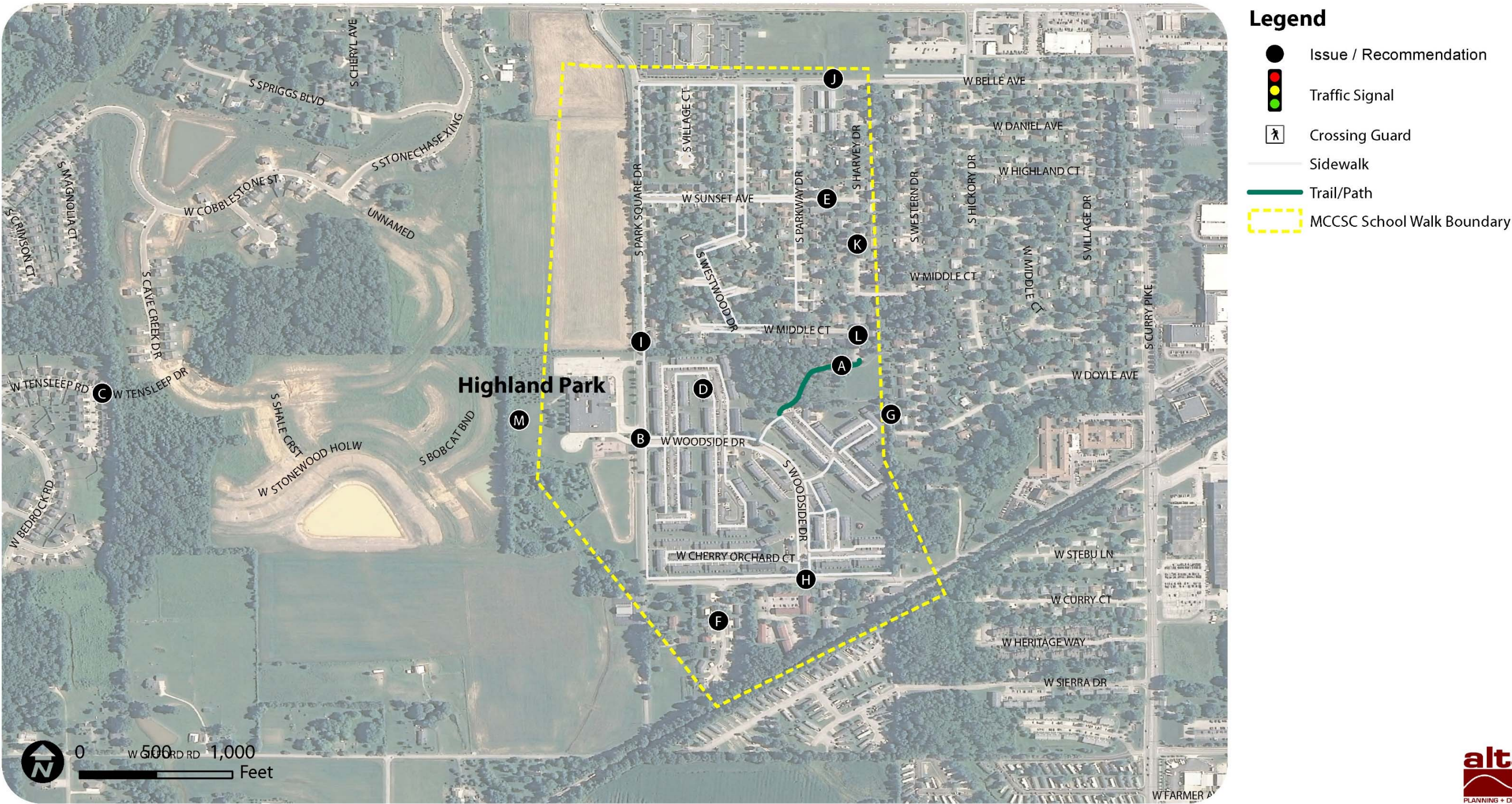
Table 5-1. SRTS Issues at Highland Park Elementary School

Map Key	Location	Issue/Discussion	Recommendations
A	Trail through Highland Village Park	Trail presents opportunity to connect neighborhoods to campus	Include information about this trail in the school newsletter and consider a Walking Wednesdays program from this park to raise awareness of its easy connection to the school
B	S Park Square Drive and Woodside Drive	The pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and the crossing guard are key to the school's high walking and bicycling rates	Maintenance of the intersection should be a top priority
C	Neighborhoods to the west	There is an opportunity to connect these future neighborhoods to campus via trails	Work with the City of Bloomington and the County to connect trails in the neighborhood to the school campus
D	Multi-family complex	Many students live in this apartment complex and walk to school	Continue to encourage the students to walk and expand incentives into the surrounding neighborhoods
E	W Sunset Ave from S Parkway Dr to S Harvey Dr	Missing sidewalks detract from an excellent walking route via the neighborhoods and park to the crossing guard	Work with the City to fill in sidewalk gap (see Table 5-2)
F	S Hickory Grove Lane	This street has sidewalk gaps, which present barriers to walking to school	Fill gaps in sidewalk network for improved connectivity
G	Connection from W Doyle Avenue to park trail	There is an opportunity to connect this corridor and provide a good route to school	Work with the private land owner to add a short connection trail from W Doyle Avenue to Sugar Maple Place, from there the students benefit from the crossing guard at S Park Square and Woodside Drive
H	W Gifford Road and S Woodside Drive	Students living south of Gilford could take advantage of the existing crossing guard to access the school, if they could cross Gilford safely	Work with the City to consider a crosswalk either at this intersection or at S Hickory Grove Lane to allow students living south of W Gilford Rd to walk towards the crossing guard at S Park Square and the school (see Table 5-2)
I	S Park Square Drive between W Sunset Avenue and W Woodside Drive	A speed feedback sign is located here but traffic speeds are not regularly enforced	Consider increasing speed enforcement at the beginning of the school year

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Map Key	Location	Issue/Discussion	Recommendations
J	W Belle Avenue Parkway Drive to S Harvey Drive	Missing sidewalks detract from an excellent walking route via the neighborhoods and park to the crossing guard	Work with the City to fill in sidewalk gap (see Table 5-2)
K	S Harvey Drive	Missing sidewalks detract from an excellent walking route via the neighborhoods and park to the crossing guard	Work with the City to consider sidewalks along either side of S Harvey Drive (see Table 5-2)
L	South end of S Harvey Drive at the park entrance	Parents may not be aware that the park trail leads to the school	Consider adding directional signage to the school (see Table 5-2)
M	Karst Greenway and Neighborhood Trail Connectors	The County plans to build the Karst Greenway along the west side of the school property and connect to the school via an existing paved trail	Coordinate with the County to connect the school and neighborhoods during trail planning and as the development of the neighborhoods to the west continues (see Table 5-2)

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Map 5-1. Highland Park Elementary School Issues Map



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Priority City-Led Infrastructure Recommendations

Table 5-2 lists key improvements that would be led by the City of Bloomington to improve conditions for students traveling to Highland Park Elementary School. A map showing the location of these recommended improvements, along with other recommendations for other MCCSC schools, can be found in Appendix A.

Table 5-2. Infrastructure Recommendations at Highland Park Elementary School

ID	Location	Issue	Recommendation
13	W Belle Avenue Parkway Drive to S Harvey Drive	Missing sidewalks detract from an excellent walking route via the neighborhoods and park to the crossing guard	Fill in sidewalk gap
14	Sunset Ave from S Parkway Dr to S Harvey Dr	Missing sidewalks detract from an excellent walking route via the neighborhoods and park to the crossing guard	Fill in sidewalk gap
15	S Harvey Dr	Missing sidewalks detract from an excellent walking route via the neighborhoods and park to the crossing guard	Consider sidewalks along either side of S Harvey Dr to connect this neighborhood via the park and Woodside Dr to the school
16	South end of S Harvey Dr at the park entrance	Parents may not be aware that the park trail leads to the school	Consider adding directional signage to the school
17	W Gilford Rd and S Woodside Dr	Students living south of Gilford could take advantage of the existing crossing guard to access the school, if they could cross Gilford safely	Consider a crosswalk either at this intersection or at S Hickory Grove Lane to allow students living south of W Gilford Rd to walk towards the crossing guard at S Park Square and the school
18	Karst Greenway and Neighborhood Trail Connectors	The County plans to build the Karst Greenway along the west side of the school property and connect to the school via an existing paved trail	Coordinate with the County to connect the school and neighborhoods during trail planning and as the development of the neighborhoods to the west continues

One-Year Action Plan

The Action Plan is a one-year forecast of attainable goals for each school as determined by MCCSC staff. The Plan complements the above infrastructure recommendations by prioritizing short-term non-infrastructure and infrastructure improvements. It should be updated periodically with new tasks as the previous ones are accomplished or new opportunities arise. Appendix A outlines the infrastructure recommendations in greater detail, while Appendix E provides best practices for SRTS across all the “E’s.”

Table 5-3: Highland Park Elementary School One Year Action Plan

Non-infrastructure	
Encouragement	Implement Parent Pledge
	Participate in the International Walk to School Day celebration in October 2014 with a Celebrity Walking School Bus
	Begin "Walking Wednesdays" or Ongoing Walk and Bike to School Days leaving from W Belle Avenue and S Harvey Drive traveling south down S Harvey Drive to the park, through the park and then to the crossing guard at Woodside Drive
	Advertise the presence of the crossing guard to the parents repeatedly to encourage them to allow their students to walk or bike to school
Education	Include a SRTS Fact Corner in the monthly school newsletter (see Appendix C)
	Focus an education effort on safe walking practices for the students living east of South Park Square Drive
Enforcement	Implement School Safety Campaign
Evaluation	Conduct parent surveys and student hand tallies
Infrastructure	
Intersections	Maintain the excellent crosswalk pavement markings and signage at Woodside Drive and S Park Square Drive
	Consider adding a crosswalk and pedestrian signs across W Gifford Road
Signage for School Area Traffic Control	Install school zone signage as recommended in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)

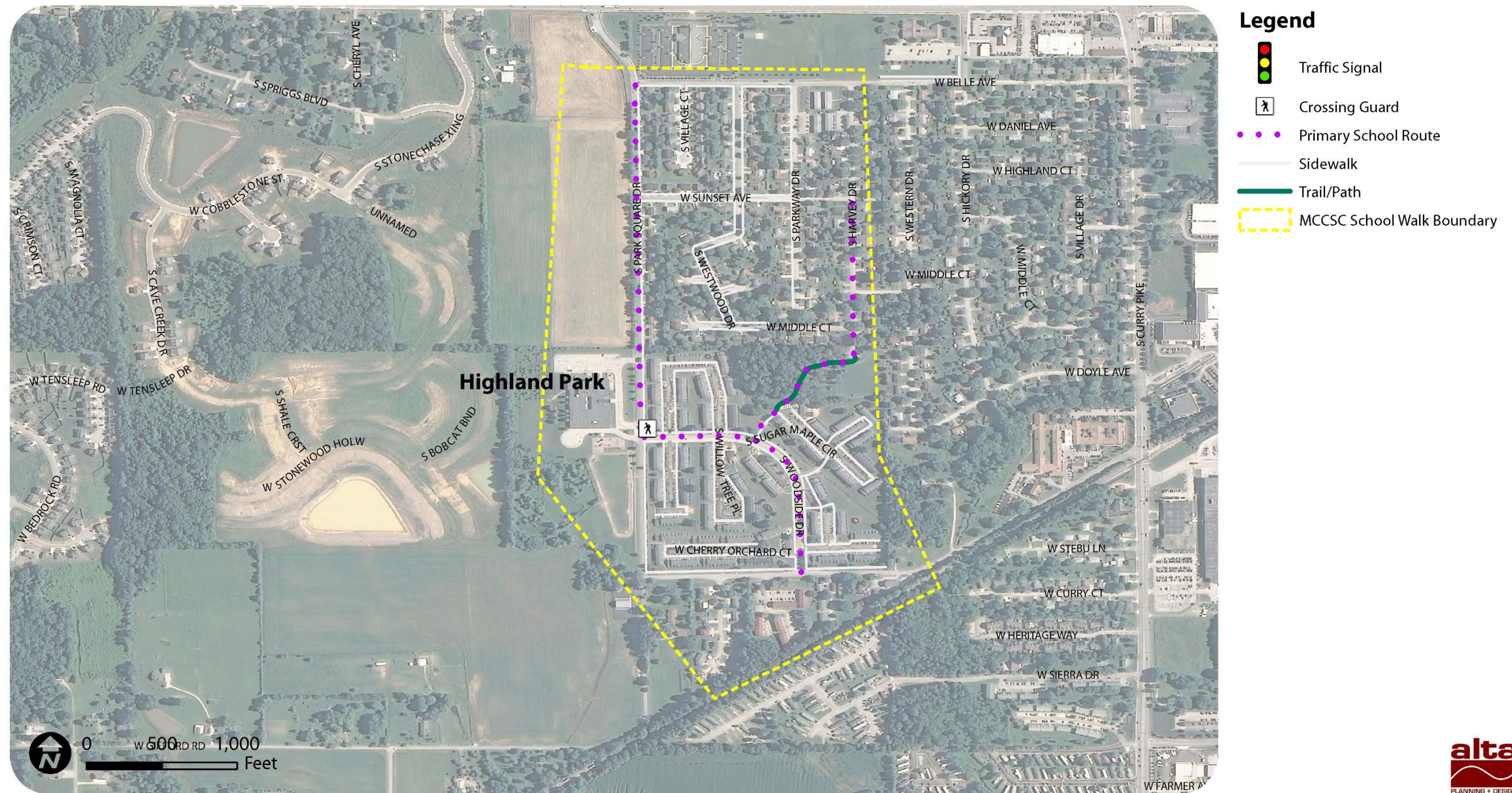
Primary School Route Map

The map on the following page shows recommended walking and bicycling routes to Highland Park Elementary.

This map can be shared with parents during school orientation and during the publicity for Walk to School Day or similar events. Parents who live too far from school to walk could consider meeting at a location along one of the routes and walking as a group to school.

The map also establishes priority locations for improvements. It can support a grant application for infrastructure funding. As improvements are made, the maps should be revised to reflect the most recent conditions for walking and bicycling to Highland Park Elementary.

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Map 5-2. Highland Park Elementary Primary School Route Map

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