



2026 WVAMPO/WVDOT Planning Division/WVLTAP Conference

The Tale of Two Zones

06/03/2026

Introduction

KYOVA Interstate Planning
Commission



Chris Chiles

Regional
Intergovernmental Council



Jeffery Mace,
CNU-A, CFE

Mead & Hunt



Donna Hardy,
PE, RSP1

A large, light green ampersand graphic is positioned on the left side of the image, spanning most of the vertical height. It is a thick, stylized symbol that serves as a background element for the text.

Southside Elementary and Huntington Middle Schools

Huntington

- 2nd largest city in WV – approximately 45,000 residents
- Home to Marshall University
- Logical, grid based layout with narrow roads, many still comprised of brick
- Much flatter and easier to navigate than most of West Virginia
- Southside is one of Huntington's oldest neighborhoods and more historically urban
- Schools, churches, older homes, family and long-term community connections
- Southside Elementary and Huntington Middle School Campuses



Southside Elementary



- Enrollment is approximately **380 students**
- Grades Pre-K – 5th Grade
- **43 staff members**
- Highly dependent on walking
- Very active during arrival/dismissal
- Constrained by limited space and narrow streets
- Doors open at **7:30 AM**
- Dismissal begins around **2:40 PM**
- Parent drop-off concentrated mostly on **2nd Street**
- Teachers assisting with drop-off and pick up
- School staff blocks portions of 2nd Street to one way traffic only
- Buses using **10th Avenue** and some surrounding streets
- School (2 Buses)



Huntington Middle School



- Enrollment is approximately **630 students**
- Grades 6th – 8th Grade
- **90 staff members**
- Doors open at **7:00 AM**
- Dismissal begins at **2:55 PM**
- Main entrance on 3rd Street
- No staff available to monitor
- Parent pickup mostly on 3rd Street
- Buses loading on both 3rd Street and 10th Avenue (10 buses)
- Huntington MS feels more independent and less controlled than the elementary school.
 - less supervised
 - more likely to jaywalk



Crash Data



Provided by KYOVA Interstate Planning Commission

- January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2023
- Crashes occurring during drop off and pick up times
- Total of three (3) crashes

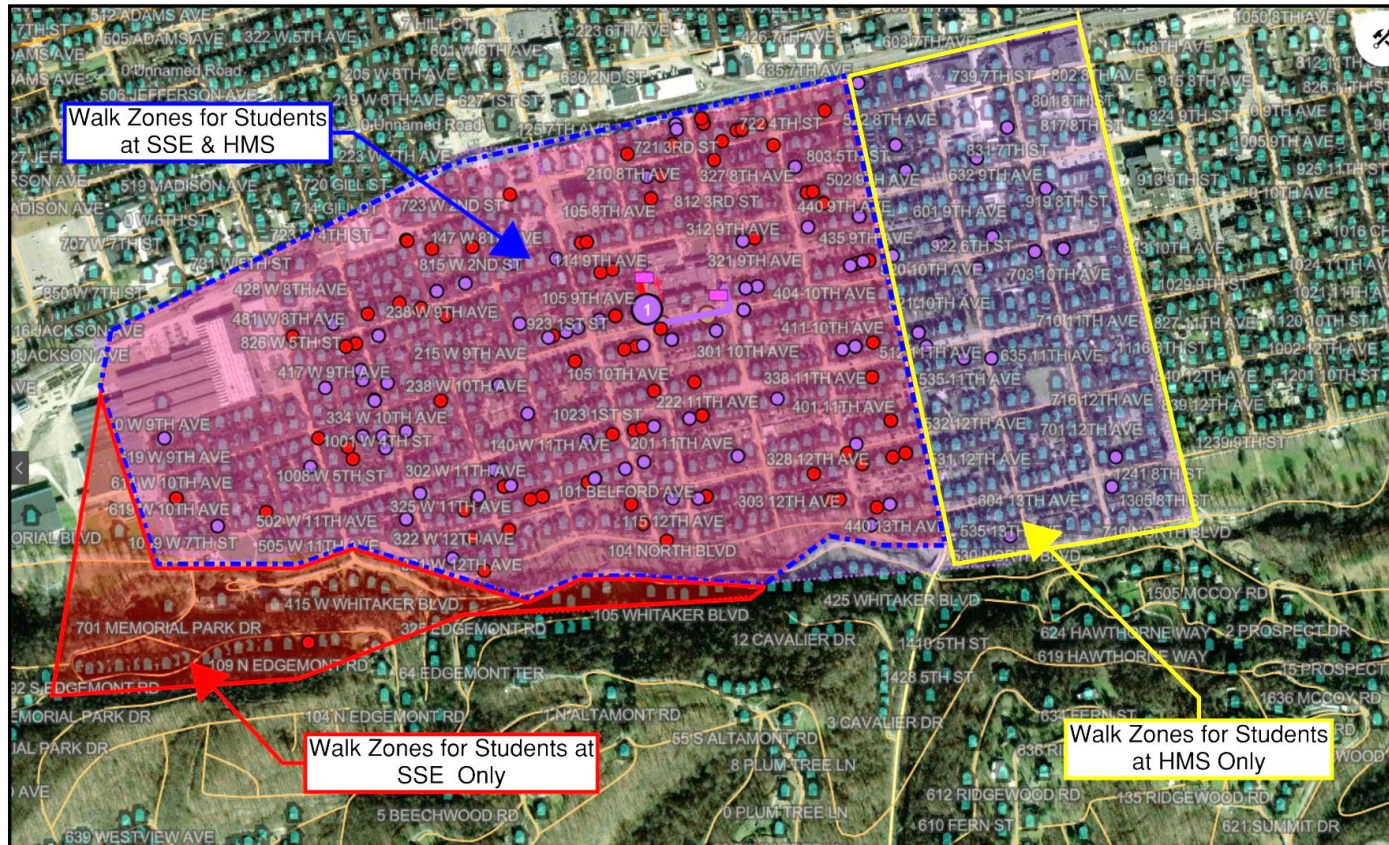
A few notable crash characteristics:

- All crashes involved Southside Elementary School
- All crashes involved vehicles going southbound on 2nd Street
- 2 crashes were during drop off & 1 during pick up.
- 2 crashes were in clear conditions & 1 crash was in rain.
- 2 crashes involved moving vehicles trying to pass by parked vehicles
- No crashes involved pedestrians or bicyclists.

Walk Zones

WV Code §18-5-13 (f)(1)(A), commonly referred to as the two-mile rule, states:

“adequate transportation will be provided at public expense for all children of school age who live more than a two-mile distance from the school by the nearest available road”



- The walk zone for SSE only is more challenging than the walk zone for HMS only.
- The walk zones account for a significant number of parent drop-off

Challenges

Congestion

Conflicts between pedestrians, buses, parent drop off traffic and neighborhood traffic

Visibility at crossings

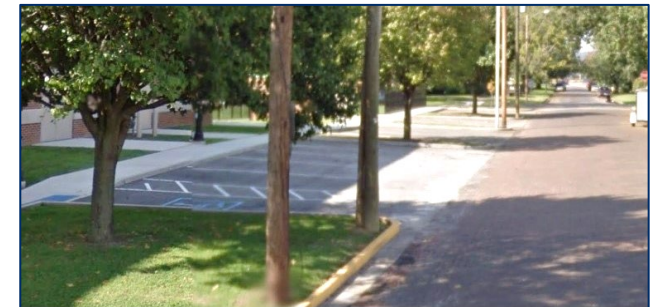
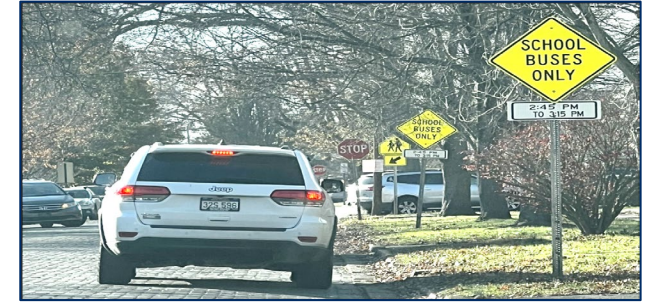
Historical neighborhood with brick streets and old growth trees

Parking



Challenges - Parking

- Parking throughout the study area is limited, with little available off-street parking.
- Parking restrictions and bus-only zones reduce available curb space near the schools
- On-street parking supply is quickly filled by staff, parents, residents, and non-school vehicles.
- Parking demand creates circulation and operational challenges during school arrival and dismissal periods



A large, stylized ampersand graphic in a lighter shade of red, positioned on the left side of the image. It has a thick, rounded, and slightly irregular design, resembling a modern logo or decorative element.

Poca Elementary and Middle School

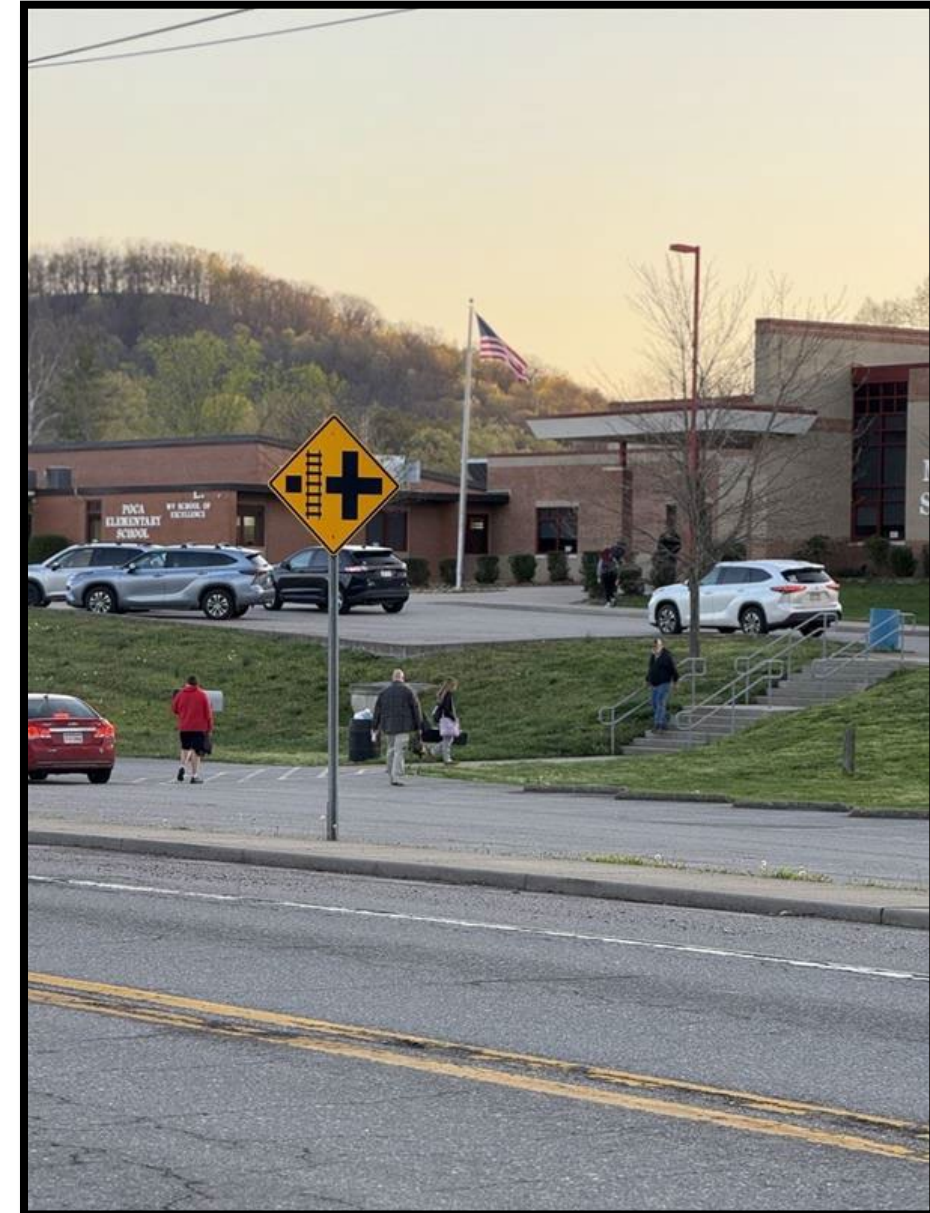
Poca

- Small rural community – 875 residents
- Blends small neighborhoods with hillsides and open land
- In the Kanawha Valley industrial corridor with heavy truck traffic
- Home of The DOTS – voted #1 HS Mascot in the nation
- Highly walkable area even without ideal infrastructure
- The schools, library, and Poca Plaza all sit tightly clustered along WV 62, creating a small-town “main street” feel — but also forces children to interact with highway traffic daily.
- Busing available for all children



Poca Elementary

- Enrollment is approximately **290** students
- Grades Pre-K through 5th Grade
- **43 staff members**
- Students are supervised at arrival and dismissal
- Teachers escort children across WV 62
- Upgrades to sidewalk around school are used by students/parents
- Doors open at **7:15 AM**
- Dismissal begins at **2:55 PM**
- Buses loading in designated loop in front of school (9 buses)



Poca Middle School

- Enrollment is approximately **295 students**
- Grades 6th–8th Grade
- **46 Staff Members**
- One staff member assigned to monitor pickup/drop-off
- MS students traveling freely between the school and Poca Plaza
- Doors open at **7:15 AM**
- Dismissal begins at **3:05 PM**
- Buses loading in designated loop (12 buses)
- Poca MS feels more independent and less controlled than the elementary school.
 - less supervised
 - more likely to jaywalk
 - more likely to cross WV 62 independently



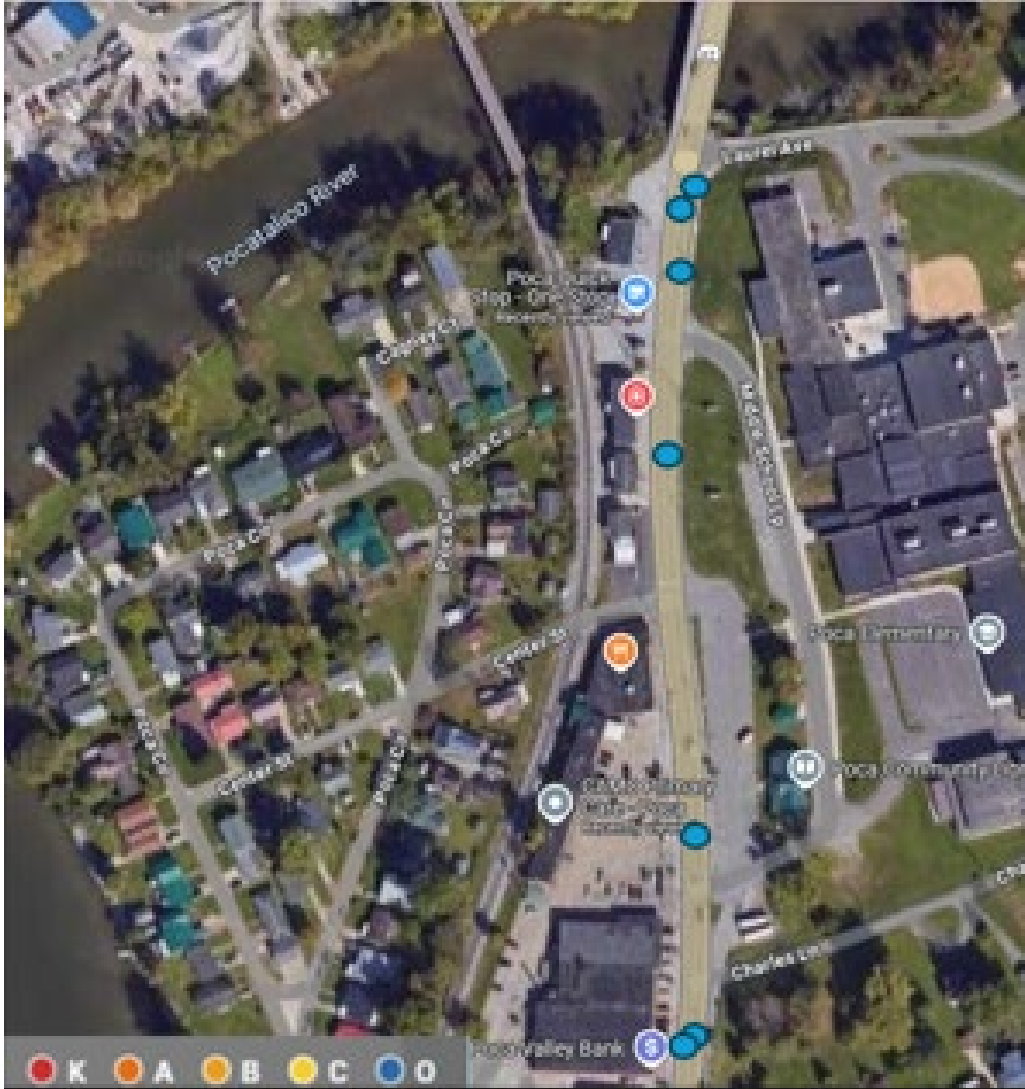
Accessibility Issues

- There are sidewalks in various width from 4-5 feet located on both sides of the roadway.
- Also, large gaps within the sidewalk network requiring pedestrians and those using mobility assistance devices to enter highway.



- The sidewalk on the western side (WV 62) has fire hydrants within the sidewalk narrowing the sidewalk width to less than the required 36 inches for ADA compliance.
- Wheelchairs to move into the street to continue along WV 62

Crash Data Overview (7 Crashes)



- Crash data from 2018-2023
- 1 crash within the school zone
- 6 crashes in dry & 1 in wet conditions
- 6 crashes in clear weather & 1 in rain.
- Environmental Circumstances:
 - 1 crash - animal in the roadway
 - 1 crash impacted by weather conditions
 - 5 crashes - no contributing environmental circumstances
- 6 crashes were in daylight, & 1 was under dark – lighted conditions.
- First Harmful Event:
 - 1 crash struck a parked vehicle
 - 1 crash involved a utility pole
 - 5 crashes involved another moving vehicle

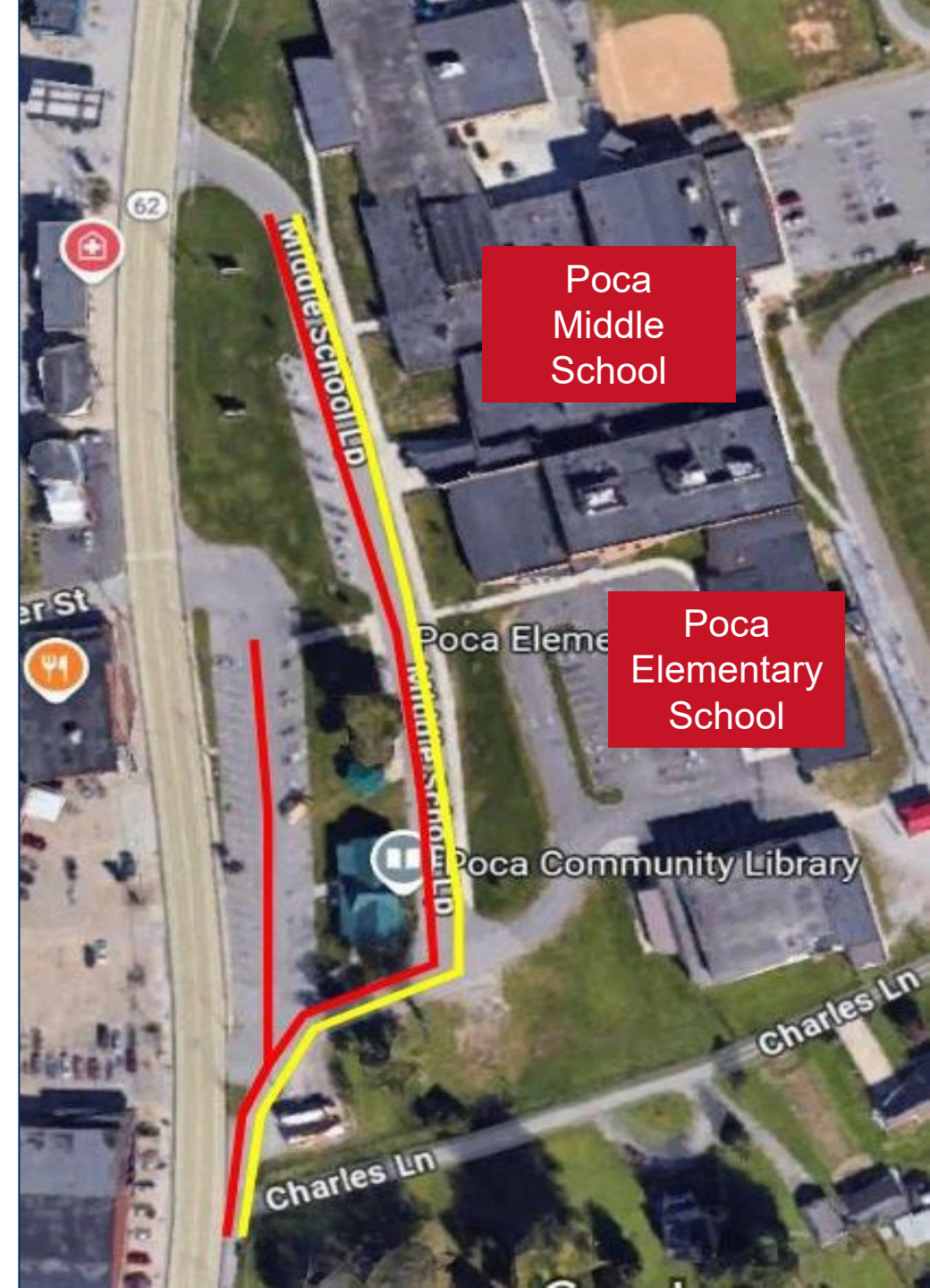
Challenges

Access management

Missing pedestrian
Infrastructure

Crossing major highway

Potential for speeding





Observations

Observations - Huntington



Traffic Operations

- Queueing and congestion observed on 10th Ave and surrounding streets
- Driver confusion and inconsistent movements at intersections
- Vehicles rolling through stop-controlled intersections
- Longest vehicle queues observed on 10th Avenue

Parking & Circulation

- Parking demand exceeded available curb space
- Vehicles parked in designated bus/loading areas
- Non-school traffic using school parking areas
- Vehicles blocking crosswalks and circulation paths

Pedestrian Safety

- Jaywalking observed despite available crosswalks
- Limited crossing supervision at intersections
- Conflicts between pedestrians and vehicle operations

School Operations

- School staff actively managing loading and student pickup
- Temporary traffic control implemented by school personnel
- Early parent arrivals contributed to queue buildup
- Heavy pickup activity concentrated around elementary dismissal periods

Observations - Poca

Pedestrian Safety & Behavior

The middle school area was the center of pedestrian conflict activity

Students frequently crossed midblock to access nearby plaza

Vehicles stopped unexpectedly to allow students to cross

Traffic Operations

Queueing and congestion occurred near the school loop and library lot

Access-management conflicts observed near Poca Plaza

Traffic operations did not align with natural pedestrian movement patterns

Infrastructure & Safety Deficiencies

Missing sidewalks limited safe pedestrian connectivity

Poor lighting reduced visibility and safety

Unsafe crossing conditions were observed

Lack of crossing guards increased pedestrian risk



Similarities

- 
- Elementary & Middle School overlap creates operational conflicts
 - Walking is a transportation mode
 - Shared concern is conflict and risk
 - Driver behavior is a major issue
 - Both campuses lack infrastructure designed for modern pickup volumes
 - Both campuses are important to the community

Differences



Huntington

- Urban
- Dense
- Grid-based
- Parking-constrained
- Congestion-dominated



Poca

- Rural small-town
- Highway-oriented
- Lower traffic volume
- Pedestrian-infrastructure deficient
- Visibility/access-management dominated

A large, light blue ampersand graphic is positioned on the left side of the slide, spanning most of the vertical height. It is a thick, stylized symbol.

Recommendations

The goal is to preserve what
makes these schools valuable
while improving safety and
accessibility

Recommendations – Short Term (Huntington)

- Install high-visibility crosswalks (6' wide) and signage from 8th Avenue to 11th Avenue and 1st Street and 4th Street
- Install flashing lights on all school zone speed limit signs
- Add traffic control to Alleyways to run one way from school during school hours
- Convert 2nd Street and 3rd Street to one-way pairs from 10th to 9th during bell time
- Add signage to 3rd Street for Buses Only
- Add No Parking Parent Pick Up only signage to 10th Avenue
- Add No Parking During School Hours to westside of 2nd Street between 10th and 11th Avenue
- Work with Huntington City police to increase police presence and parking enforcement during school hours
- Send flyers reminding parents drop off/pick rules and discourage dropping off kids outside of school zone
- Perform a safety campaign that discourages risky behavior including speeding, jaywalking, and blocking crosswalks



Examples of Signs



Recommendations – The Trade Off

- Parking restrictions within 20 feet of all crosswalks
- Curb extensions using pavement markings to identify area as no parking
- Add Pull In Parking to 3rd Street – Remove 1 tree
- Additional Parallel Parking on 2nd Street –Signing Exclusive Parking for school personnel.
- Add Raised Pedestrian Crossings to crosswalks
- Crossing Guards to reduce pedestrian risk
- On street parking bans during school hours on 2nd and 3rd Street



4 Standard Pull In Spaces
No Tree Removal
Necessary



5 Standard Pull-in Spaces
1 Tree Removed and
Entrance blocked by Parking

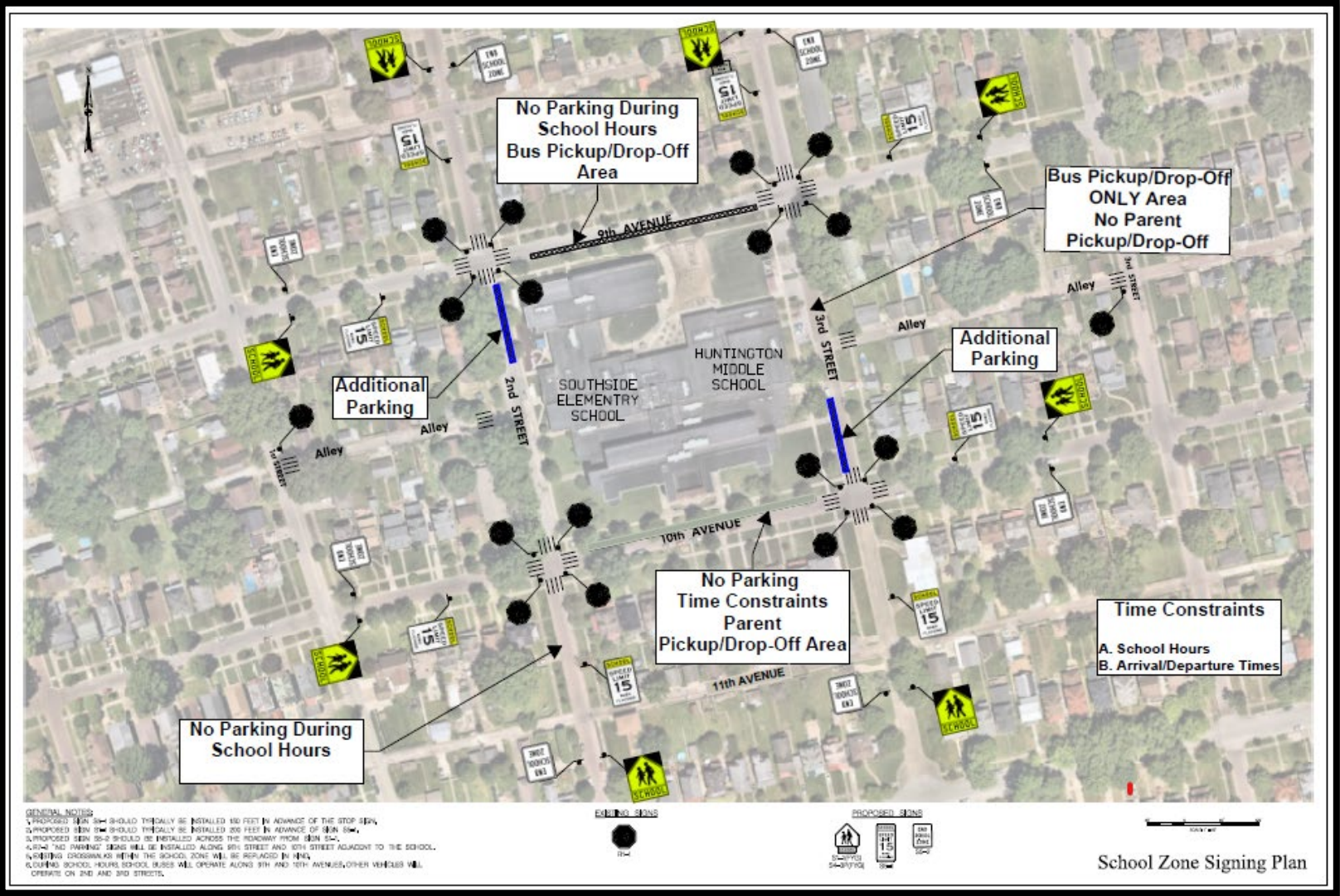


3 additional Standard Pull In Spaces
or 1 additional Standard/1 Handicap
No Tree Removal Necessary

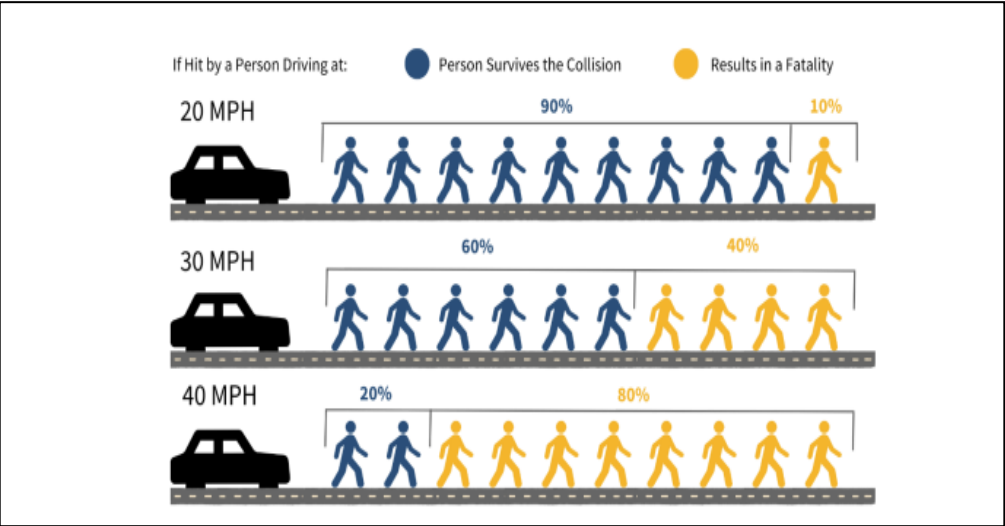


Up to 4 Parallel Parking Spaces
3 Trees Removed

Recommendations



Recommendations



Location	Direction	Posted Speed	Avg. Speed	85 th Percentile	% Traveling 5 mph (or more) Over Posted Speed Limit
Southbound Along WV 62 Adjacent to the Poca Middle School	SB	35	34	37	3.7%

Short Term:

- Enhance signing and marking on Laurel Avenue and Center Street
- Use tubular markers to create access management at the shopping center.
- Work with City to do a safety campaign that discourages risky behavior including speeding, jaywalking, and blocking crosswalks
- **Consider reducing speed limit to 25 mph**



Short Term Recommendations – School Zone

- Install high-visibility signage from the end of the bridge to Charles Lane
- Add school zone signage to Laurel Avenue and move existing sign with flashing beacon on southbound WV 62 to be more visible to traveling public
- Work with schools to find volunteers to work as crossing guards.
- Send flyers reminding parents drop off/pick rules and discourage dropping off kids outside of school zone



Long Term Recommendations



- Install LED Street Lighting and sidewalk to area in front of shopping center
- Install permanent access management at Poca Plaza including removal of parking places adjacent to roadway with cross hatching, planters, benches and/or bike racks

Mead
& Hunt



Recommendations – Pedestrian Crossing

- Relocate longitudinal bars crosswalks on WV 62 to line up with Center Street intersection and existing pedestrian facilities on school campus. Fully eradicate existing crosswalk.
- Install Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) to assist children crossing WV 62.
- Install sidewalks on both sides of WV 62 including ADA ramps to complete the gaps in the sidewalk network



Conclusion



Rural and urban school zones face different traffic patterns, roadway conditions, and safety risks.



Urban school zones focus on pedestrian and multimodal safety, while rural zones prioritize speed management and visibility.



School safety improvements must be tailored to the unique context of each community.

Observations are as important as data
Develop a solution for the community with the community

Questions?



Chris Chiles
KYOVA Interstate Planning
Commission

Jeffery Mace, CNU-A, CFE
Regional Intergovernmental
Council

Donna Hardy, PE, RSP1
Mead & Hunt