



Independence Elementary

3700 54th St S, Fargo, ND 58104

DISTRICT

West Fargo Public School District #6

GRADES

K-5

AVERAGE ENROLLMENT

515

ARRIVAL

8:20 a.m.

DISMISSAL

2:40 p.m.

Existing Conditions

Independence Elementary is a kindergarten through 5th grade school in the West Fargo Public School District. The school is located approximately 3 miles south of downtown West Fargo. Approximately 14 percent of students at Independence Elementary qualify for free and reduced meals and 6.4 percent are English language learners.

The school was constructed in 2014. The school is bound by Valley View Park to the north, 50th Street S to the east, 38th Avenue S to the south, and 54th Street S to the west. The roads surrounding the building consist of local roads with primarily localized traffic patterns. Sidewalks are located in some areas surrounding the campus, but not all, due to the continued construction of subdivisions. 40th Avenue S, one block south of the school, is a high traffic volume road with long crossing distances but adequate pedestrian space along it.

During dismissal, school staff help facilitate student crossings of the parent loop.

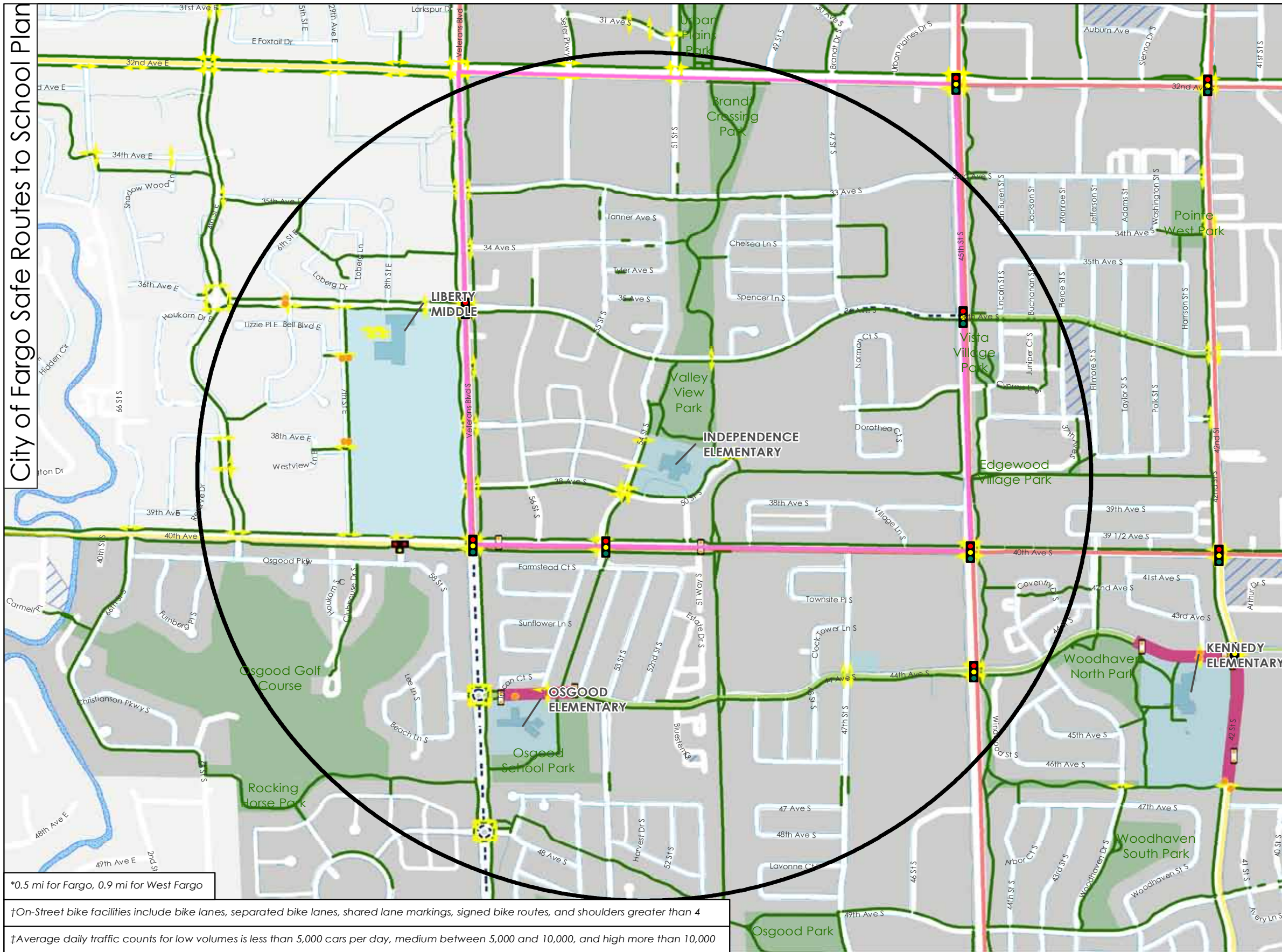


▲ The 54th Street S and 40th Avenue S intersection is very wide and lacks leading pedestrian interval to improve crossing safety.



▲ The 54th Avenue S corridor is a three-lane roadway. It is wide and uncomfortable to cross.

City of Fargo Safe Routes to School Plan



*0.5 mi for Fargo, 0.9 mi for West Fargo

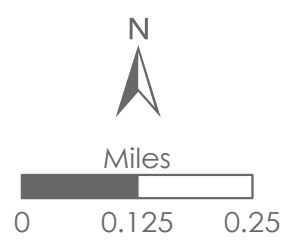
†On-Street bike facilities include bike lanes, separated bike lanes, shared lane markings, signed bike routes, and shoulders greater than 4

‡Average daily traffic counts for low volumes is less than 5,000 cars per day, medium between 5,000 and 10,000, and high more than 10,000

Existing Conditions
Independence
Elementary

- School Study Areas*
- Walk Zones
- Building Footprints
- School Grounds
- Park
- Environmental Justice Areas
- School Speed Zone
- Shared Use Path
- On-Street Bike Facility†
- Sidewalk
- Crosswalk
- Pedestrian Crossing Sign
- 4-Way Stop Sign
- HAWK Signal
- Other Flashing Sign
- Signalized Intersection

- Traffic Volumes‡**
- Low
 - Medium
 - High



Circulation Challenges

The 54th Street S corridor is the primary north-south circulation route for students. It is relatively wide and can be a barrier to students and families walking and biking to school. Installing medians or curb extensions may improve pedestrian crossing comfort and safety. The intersection of 54th Street S and 40th Avenue S is very wide, with long crossing distances. It is controlled with a traffic signal. Incorporating a leading pedestrian interval could further improve pedestrian crossing safety.

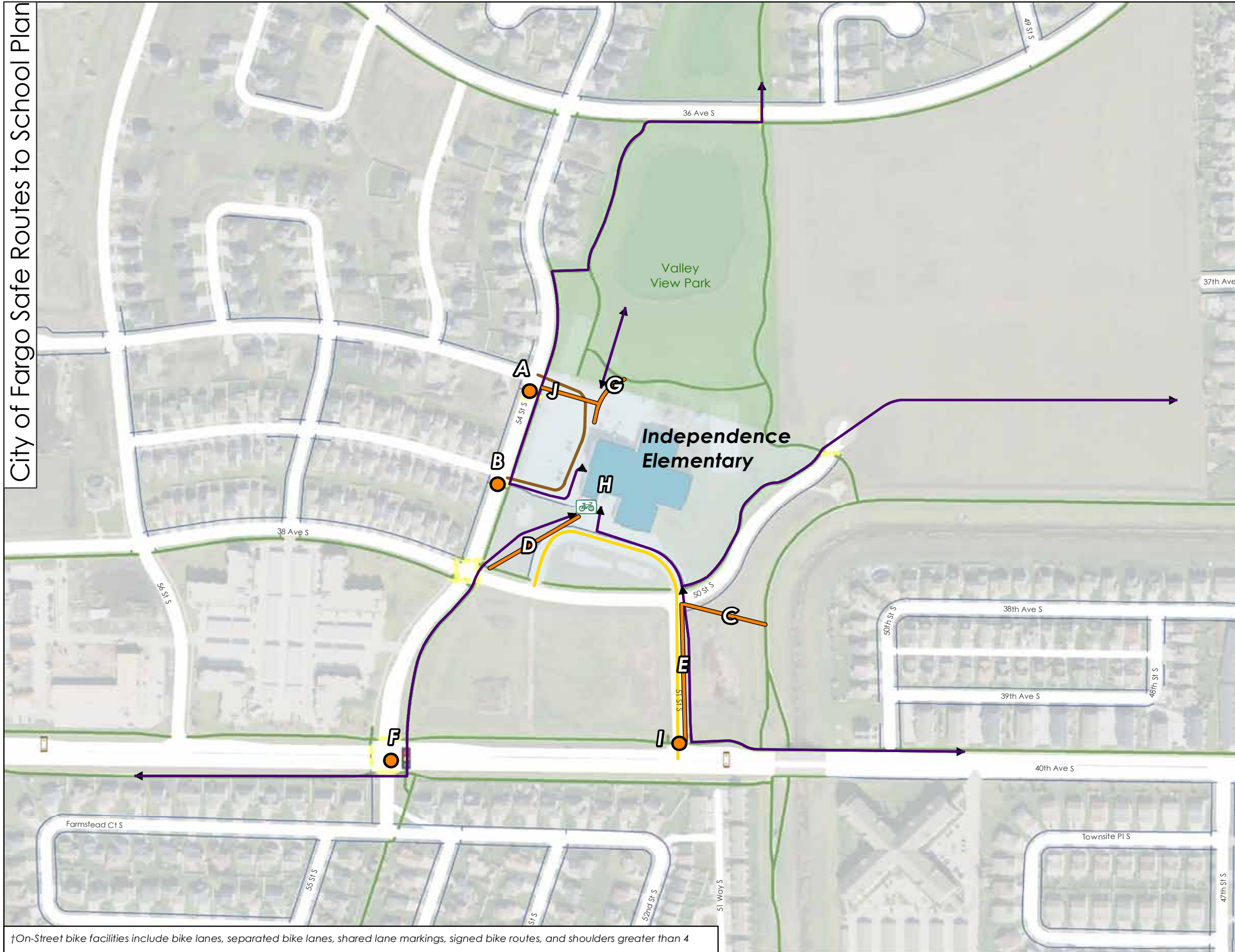
Between campus and housing to the east, there is a large drain that separates the two. There are no connections over the drain, except at 40th Avenue S, which requires students to take a circuitous route to get to the trail that runs behind the school building. Additional concerns were noted by parents and students in this area during the winter months, specific to snow and wind.

On campus, there is no separated pedestrian circulation routes along the bus loop towards 40th Street S. The campus also lacks a direct pedestrian and bicycle connection between the intersection of 38th Avenue S and 54th Street S and the front door. Students were observed cutting through the grass to access the school building.

A high-quality network of shared use paths exists in the area immediately to the north of the school and along 54th Street S, but connecting to them from the west side of school can be a challenge. Students were observed traveling through the parking lot to reach the shared use paths.

INDEPENDENCE ELEMENTARY CHALLENGES

LOCATION	CHALLENGE
A 54th Ave S / 37th Ave S	Long crossing distances
B 54th Ave S / Justice Drive S	Long crossing distances
C Southeast side of school	No separated pedestrian space connecting on-campus sidewalk to trail along drain to trail network
D Green space connecting school to 54th St S and 38th Ave S	No pedestrian space along most direct route
E 51st St S between 40th Ave S and 38th Ave S / 50th St S	No separated pedestrian space along bus loop connecting to 40th Ave S
F 54th St S / 40th Ave S	Long crossing distances No leading pedestrian interval
G Connection from main entrance to trails to the north	No pedestrian space along most direct route
H South entrance of school	Comb style rack does not allow locking of frame and can lead to wheel damage
I 51st St S / 40th Ave S	Long crossing distances
J Connection from Location G to 54th St S	No designated pedestrian space for students crossing the parking lot to 54th St S



Observed Circulation & Challenges

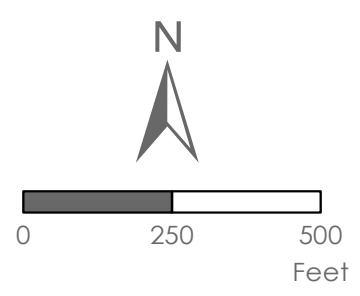
Independence Elementary

Key*

- Bus Circulation
- Challenge
- Shared Bus and Vehicle Lane
- Vehicle Drop-off and Pick-up
- ↔ Observed Walking and Biking Routes
- Bike Rack
- Challenge

Existing Infrastructure*

- Building Footprints
- School Grounds
- School Speed Zones
- - - On-Street Bike Facility†
- Sidewalk
- Shared Use Path
- ⚡ Crosswalk Marking
- Signalized Intersection
- HAWK Signal
- Other Flashing Sign
- Pedestrian Crossing Sign
- 4-Way Stop Sign



*Legend Common to All Maps - Not all Features Present on All Maps

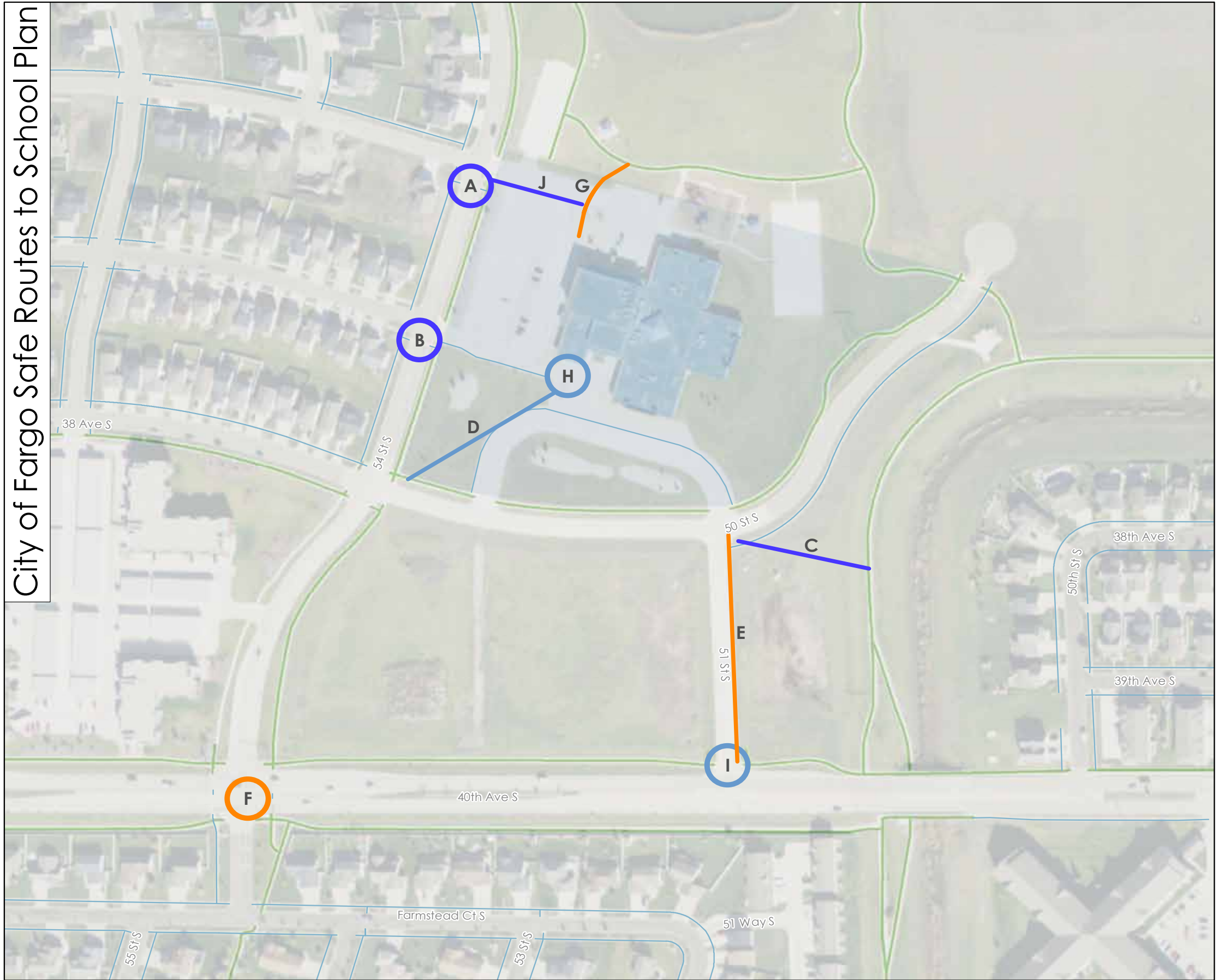
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Opportunities for Improvement













Connections to the developing neighborhoods west of 54th Street S are high impact opportunities for improvement. Shortening the crossing distances and calming traffic along the segment of 54th Street S bordering the school would provide more comfortable routes for students and families walking and biking to school. There may be an opportunity to remove the existing center turn lane and use that space as a refuge island for people walking and biking, or to calm traffic.

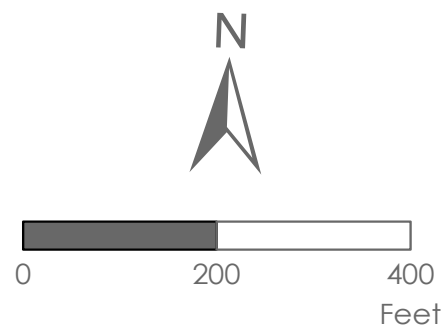
Additionally, the connections on campus to the surrounding neighborhoods could be improved by installing sidewalks and in particular, a pedestrian bridge over the existing drain to the east of school. Campus connections across parking lots and driving spaces to the existing shared use path network should also be prioritized.

INDEPENDENCE ELEMENTARY OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT				
LOCATION	POTENTIAL SOLUTION	LEAD AGENCY	IMPACT	
A 54th Ave S / 37th Ave S	Consider removing center turn lane and installing median safety island or curb extensions to shorten crossing of 54th Ave S	City of Fargo	High	
B 54th Ave S / Justice Dr S	Consider removing center turn lane and installing median safety island or curb extensions to shorten crossing of 54th Ave S	City of Fargo	High	
C Southeast side of school to trail network	Install shared-use path along desire line connecting existing sidewalk to trail alongside drain	City of Fargo; West Fargo Public Schools	High	
D Green space connecting school to 54th St and 38th Ave	Install shared-use path connecting south school entrance to intersection of 54th St and 38th Ave	West Fargo Public Schools	Low	
E 51st St S between 40th Ave S and 38th Ave / 50th St	Install sidewalk or shared-use path	City of Fargo	Medium	
F 54th St S / 40th Ave S	Install curb extensions to decrease curb radii; consider leading pedestrian interval; install high visibility crosswalks	City of Fargo	Medium	
G Connection from main entrance to trails to the north	Install sidewalk or shared-use path to fill gap between existing on-campus sidewalk and shared-use path	West Fargo Public Schools	Medium	
H South entrance of school	Install bike parking to provide two points of contact with bicycle frame (e.g., Inverted U or Post and Ring style rack); consider installing additional bicycle parking on west side of school	West Fargo Public Schools	Low	
I 51st St S / 40th Ave S	Install curb extensions or median safety island on the north crossing; install high visibility crosswalk; install forward stop bar	City of Fargo	Low	
J Connection from Location G to 54th St S	Install raised pedestrian space and consider raised crosswalk where vehicle space crosses pedestrian space; install high visibility crosswalks	West Fargo Public Schools	High	

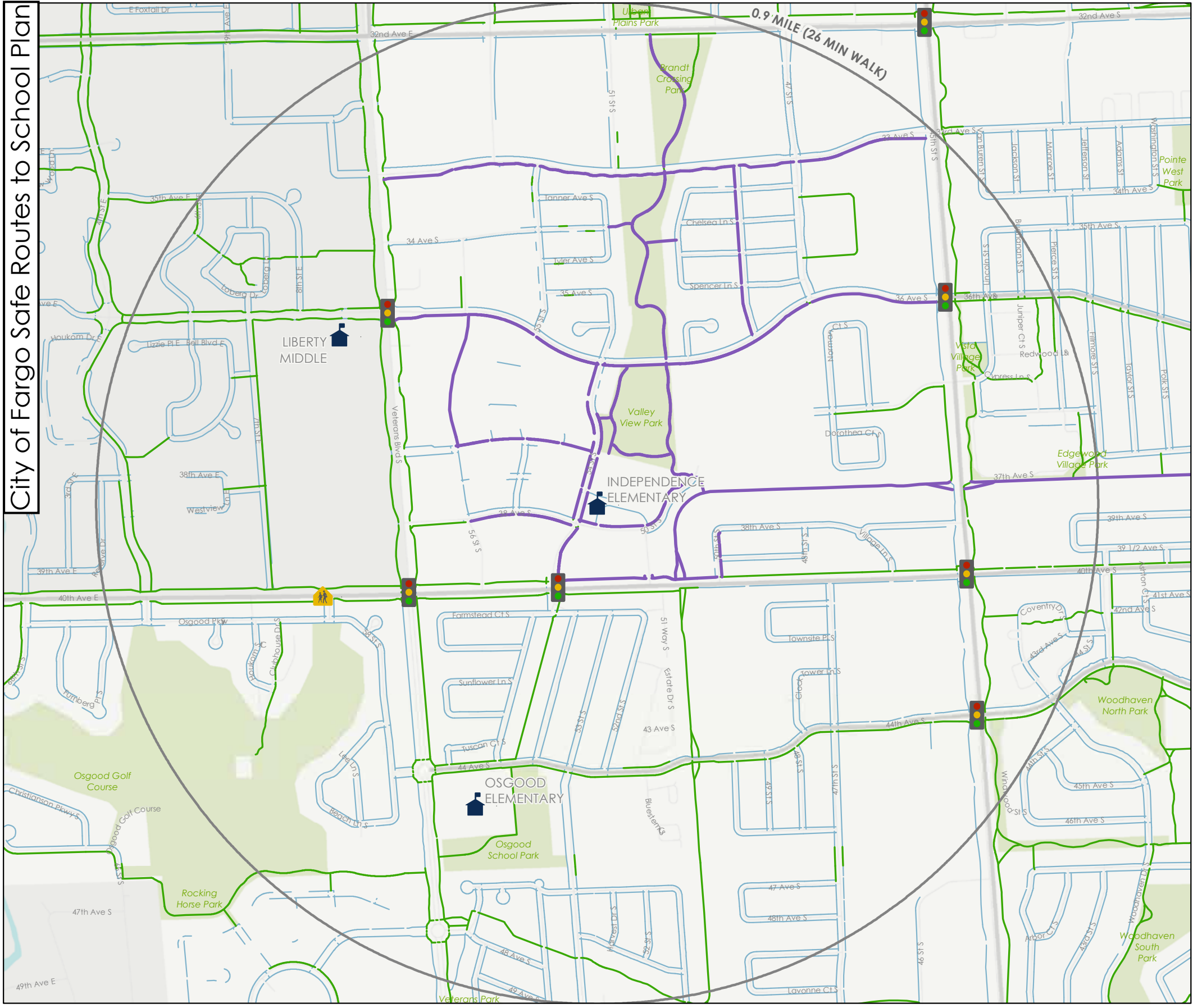


Infrastructure Opportunities
Independence Elementary







-  Opportunities for Improvement Locations
-  High Impact
-  Medium Impact
-  Low Impact
-  Opportunities for Improvement Segments
-  High Impact
-  Medium Impact
-  Low Impact
-  Shared Use Path
-  Sidewalk
-  Building footprint
-  School grounds



City of Fargo Safe Routes to School Plan



Suggested Routes to School
Independence Elementary

-  Suggested routes
-  Sidewalks
-  Shared Use Path
-  All-way stops
-  Traffic signal
-  Pedestrian crossing signal

