

Memo

To: Jon Wertjes, PE, PTOE
Director of Traffic & Parking Services

From: JoNette Kuhnau, PE, PTOE
Traffic and Parking Services

Re: School Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety Program
Yinghua Academy

Date: May 15, 2015

CC: Council Member Reich, Ward 1
Jeremy Brewer, Yinghua Academy, Dean of Students
Forrest Hardy, Assoc. Transportation Planner

Pages: 6

An operation and safety review at Yinghua Academy has recently been conducted as part of the School Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety Program. This is an update to the first review of Yinghua Academy completed in December 2009. Yinghua Academy is located at 1616 Buchanan St NE and is located on the same block as Northeast Park.

The review began with a survey of the parking areas, pick up and drop off areas, bus loading areas and bike rack locations as well as stop signs, crosswalks, and all associated signing. The condition of existing signing and striping was evaluated. Arrival and dismissal operations were then observed. Current operations were compared to the operations noted in the initial study conducted in 2009. A copy of the 2009 study is included with this review. A Travel Demand Management Plan was prepared for Yinghua Academy in February 2014 in preparation for the school's expansion project. Traffic policies, as well as arrival and dismissal procedures were revised for the 2014-2015 school year as a result.

A summary of the observations, actions taken, and recommendations of this review are described in the following bullets:

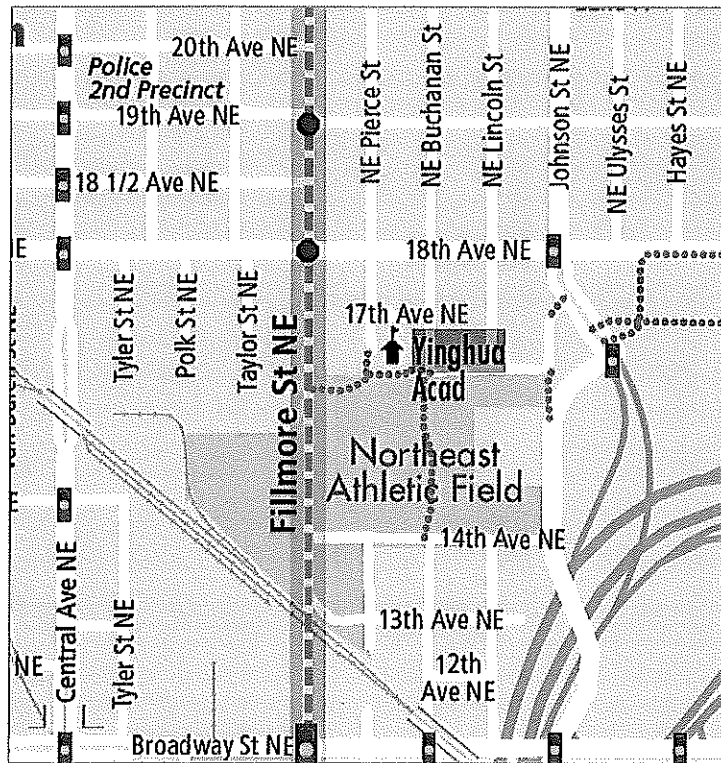
- For the 2014-2015 school year, Yinghua Academy has a total of 668 students in kindergarten through 8th grade, an increase of approximately 370 students since the 2009 review.
- There was no data available from the school regarding students that live within ½ mile, 1 mile, or 2 miles of the school (walk area). However, information was provided by the school that 282 students are registered to ride the school bus, about 320 students are picked up and dropped off by parents, 53 students use some combination of bus and being driven by parents, and 13 students are signed up to walk or bike to school, however only 2 do walk in the spring and fall.
- School hours are from 8:45 AM to 3:55 PM, which is a change from the hours of 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM at the time of the previous review.

- Since the previous review, Minneapolis Public Works installed stop signs at Pierce St NE/ 17th Ave NE, Buchanan St NE/17th Ave NE, and Lincoln St NE/16th Ave NE in accordance with the recommendations from the previous school safety review.
- Buchanan St NE, Pierce St NE, Lincoln St NE, 16th Ave N, and 17th Ave NE are all low –volume local streets for which traffic volumes are not available, and therefore a comparison of traffic volumes adjacent to the school could not be conducted. Based on the expanded area for pick-up and drop-off at the school, the area of study has also been expanded to include Fillmore St NE and 18th Ave NE. Current (2013 count) traffic volumes on 18th Ave NE are 10,700 vehicles per day, which is a 29 percent increase compared to the 2009 count. Current or past volumes on Fillmore St NE adjacent to the park were not available, therefore no comparison could be made.
- A review of the crash history at the intersections around the school was conducted for 2011 to 2013 (the most recent crash data available) and shows no significant changes from the crash pattern noted in the previous review. There have been no crashes reported at the 16th Ave NE/Buchanan St NE, 17th Ave NE/Buchanan St NE, 16th Ave NE/Lincoln St NE, 17th Ave NE/Pierce St NE, or Fillmore St NE/14th Ave NE intersections.
 - Six crashes occurred at the 18th Ave NE/Fillmore St NE intersection, including two pedestrian crashes. Both pedestrian crashes involved a southbound vehicle that did not yield to a pedestrian in the crosswalk.
 - One pedestrian crash occurred on 18th Ave NE due to a pedestrian crossing midblock between Pierce St NE and Buchanan St NE.

The number of pedestrian crashes on Fillmore St NE (3 crashes in 3 years) is higher than average for typical intersections in Minneapolis. The crashes at 18th Ave NE appear to be related to drivers failing to yield to pedestrians, and Public Works will conduct additional studies of the crossings and pedestrian movements in this area to determine if crossing improvements are warranted and feasible as part of the planned reconstruction of 18th Ave NE in 2017/2018.

- There are ‘No Parking 8AM-5PM School Days’ zones on the south side of 17th Ave NE and the west side of Buchanan St NE. The south side of 16th Ave NE and the east side of Fillmore St NE are signed ‘No Parking’. Yinghua Academy has requested that the city modify the times of the school zones to 8:30-9:30 AM and 3:30-4:30 PM in order to lessen the parking impact on the surrounding neighborhood.
- No intersections near the school are signed as school crossings. Since the previous review, the school crossing signing and advance warning signs were removed from the 18th Ave NE/Pierce St NE and 18th Ave NE/Fillmore St NE intersections because they are not school patrolled.
- The existing bicycle facilities near the school include bicycle boulevards on 22nd St NE and Fillmore St NE. The Minneapolis Bicycle Master Plan also identified 18th Ave NE for a future trail and Johnson St NE as a future shared use facility. The design or implementation schedule of these projects has not yet been identified.
- There are 2 bicycle racks on the school site, and 3 bikes were parked during the site visits in April 2015. As stated in the Travel Demand Management Plan, the school is investigating the Minnesota Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program to determine if there are opportunities to receive funding to develop the program. There are also plans to install 114 bicycle parking stalls throughout the school’s campus.

- The Minneapolis Walking Routes for Youth Map designates Fillmore St NE as the primary walking route. Fillmore St NE provides good connections to the school via the walking paths within the park, and has all-way stop control at 18th Ave NE and a traffic signal at Broadway St NE to facilitate crossings.



An excerpt of the Minneapolis Walking Routes for Youth Map near Yinghua Academy.

- Arrival and dismissal operations have changed significantly since the last review. The school's Traffic Instruction Map for the 2014-2015 school year is included at the end of this memo. During the morning arrival period, school buses use the designated school zones on Buchanan St NE and 16th Ave NE, while parents drop off students at the designated parent drop off zone on Fillmore St NE and along 17th Ave NE. During the afternoon dismissal period, school buses pick up students at the same location, while parents predominantly queue on Fillmore St NE. Students are encouraged to use the entrance at the southwest corner of the school during arrivals and dismissals instead of the main entrance.
- Yinghua Academy has recently implemented a new parent pick up software called School Carpool. Every parent vehicle is assigned a number. When a parent vehicle arrives at the queue on Fillmore St NE, their number is input into the system by school staff and the student is then released from the supervised school area. Yinghua Academy has noted that School Carpool has provided a much more efficient and safe environment for student during dismissals. The queue along Fillmore St. NE clears out at roughly 4:20 pm following the 3:55pm dismissal.
- There are currently no school patrols at intersections adjacent to the school. However, during the dismissal period, 3 staff members manage the vehicle queue and direct traffic along Fillmore St NE.



Photo of staff member directing traffic and managing the queue at the intersection of Fillmore St NE/14th Ave NE

- During the arrival period, several vehicles were temporarily stopped or parked in the 2 designated disabled parking only spots in front of the school entrance. None of the vehicles observed had visible disability placards or license plates.



Photo of vehicle temporarily stopped in the designated disabled parking zone.

- During arrival and dismissal, there were several instances when parents and students crossed midblock on 17th Ave NE from a parked vehicle to get to the school. This is a safety concern because approaching drivers do not expect to see pedestrians at mid-block locations and the visibility of pedestrians stepping into the street is significantly limited due to parked vehicles. The safest place to cross the street is at the intersection, and parent and students should be directed to only cross at these locations.

- Several u-turn maneuvers were observed at the intersection of Pierce St NE and 17th Ave NE. Several vehicles were also observed using the Yinghua staff parking lot and the private alleyway to make U-turns. Yinghua plans to install a new and more visible sign at the front entrance of the staff parking lot to discourage these maneuvers. Yinghua Academy has requested that a sign be placed at the end of the alley, on 17th Ave NE between Buchanan St NE and Pierce St NE, that states 'Do Not Block, Residential Traffic Only,' making it clear for vehicles to not block or use the alleyway.



Photo of the current sign at the entrance of the staff parking lot on Pierce St NE at 17th Ave NE

As a result of this review, the following updated recommendations have been developed:

- Yinghua Academy should continue to educate and remind students and parents about their role in providing a safe environment at the school. Students should be instructed to only cross the street at intersections, and parents should be directed to only pick-up/drop-off students in designated areas, preferably along Fillmore St NE.
- Issues during pick-up/drop-off periods such as illegally parking in the designated disabled loading area or blocking the private alleyway should immediately be directed to Minneapolis Traffic Control at 612-335-5932.
- Yinghua Academy will improve signing at the staff parking lot, to discourage drop-off traffic and u-turns. It is recommended that Yinghua staff continue to monitor and enforce with parents that this area is not to be used for pick-up traffic.
- Public Works will investigate the feasibility of signing at the alley on 17th Ave NE to discourage u-turns by parents and school traffic.
- Public Works will consider modifying the school's request to modify the 'No Parking 8AM-5PM School Days' zones to 'No Parking 8:30-9:30AM and 3:30-4:30PM School Days'.
- Yinghua Academy should consider encouraging students to walk to and from school if they live within a reasonable distance. Walk-to-school efforts reduce automobile congestion around the school, and can improve health and mental focus in students. More information can be found on the City's Safe Routes to School page:

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/publicworks/saferoutes/index.htm>

- Public Works will conduct additional studies of the crossings and pedestrian movements at Fillmore St NE/18th Ave NE to determine if crossing improvements are warranted and feasible as part of the planned reconstruction of 18th Ave NE in 2017/2018.