

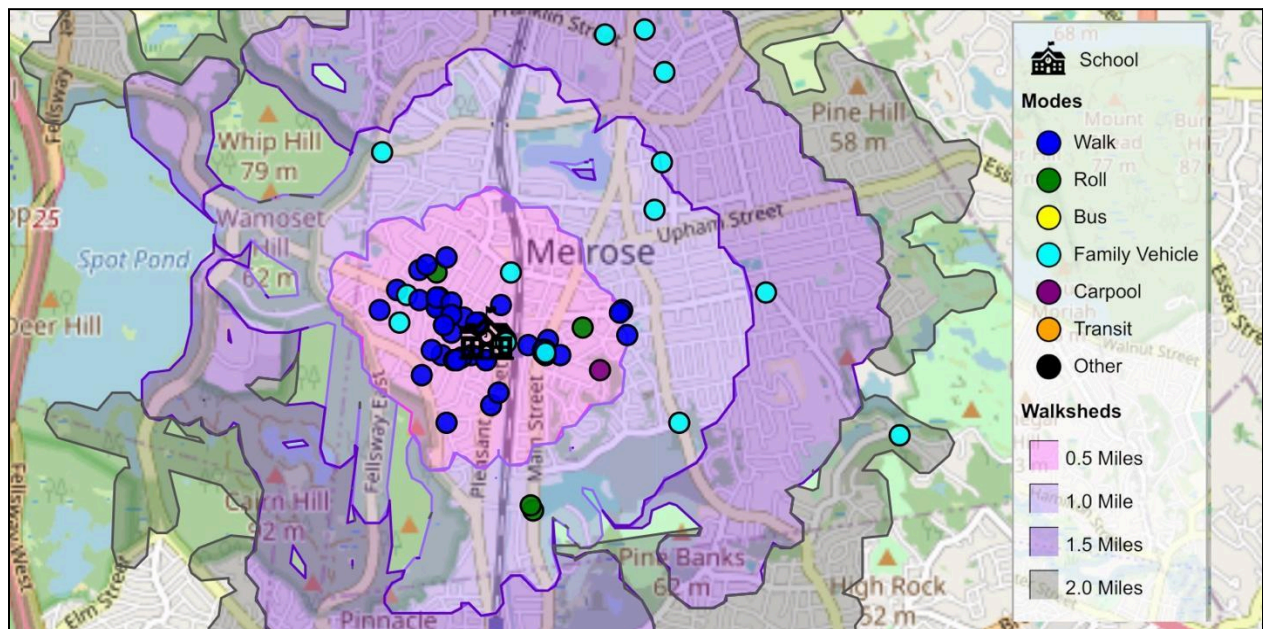


West Wyoming Avenue and Lincoln School Neighborhood Safety Report

During the week of March 23-27, 2026, the [Melrose Pedestrian and Bicyclist Committee \(MPBC\)](#) and volunteers from the Lincoln School PTO hosted city officials on a series of street safety observation walks during arrival and dismissal at the Lincoln School on West Wyoming Avenue. The occasion for the event was Massachusetts Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Crossing Guard Appreciation Day, celebrated on March 25. The reason for it, though, was to observe on the ground how Lincoln School parents, students, crossing guards, and staff navigate street safety challenges on what data shows is Melrose's most dangerous street for vulnerable road users (VRUs)—those who lack the protective metal shell of a passenger vehicle.

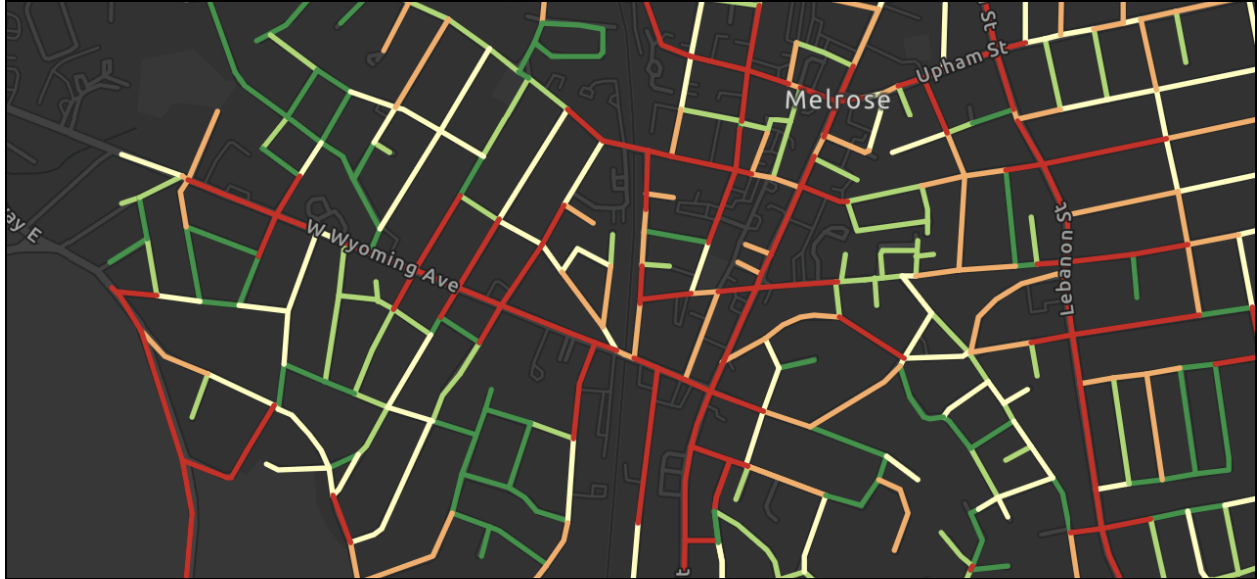
Background

In 2024, Safe Routes to School conducted a city-wide survey on how students get to and from Melrose public schools. The results showed that the Lincoln School had among the highest rates of students who walk, bike, or roll to school, with over 70% of survey respondents reporting that they walk. The results also showed that students who walk to Lincoln come from all directions, meaning that dozens of families regularly cross West Wyoming Avenue and its side streets.



From the 2024 SRTS survey of Melrose students.

Both city and metropolitan data show West Wyoming to be among the most dangerous stretches of roadway in Melrose. The city's own traffic calming prioritization dashboard rates the street as one of its highest priorities for traffic calming interventions, with a road safety score ranging from 0.98-0.99 out of 1 for the stretches nearest the Lincoln School (a score of "1" indicating the highest level of danger).



From the [Melrose Traffic Calming Prioritization Dashboard](#) – red indicates the poorest road safety scores.

The Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO) Vision Zero dashboard likewise indicates that West Wyoming is in the top 5% of the most dangerous stretches of roadway for vulnerable road users in the MPO’s region, which encompasses 97 municipalities.



From the [MPO’s Vision Zero Dashboard](#), showing risk sites for vulnerable road users (VRUs).

Recent experience confirms these dangers. The last year has brought crashes involving both a teacher and a student near the Lincoln School. In 2018, a person driving struck and killed longtime Melrose business owner David O’Donnell while he was crossing in front of his barber shop on West Wyoming and Berwick—it was in response to this that the city installed its first flashing crosswalk beacons in 2020. More recently, a person driving struck and seriously injured a middle school student at West Wyoming and Hurd.

Observing Arrival and Dismissal at the Lincoln School

In light of the above, the Melrose Pedestrian and Bicyclist Committee invited members of the city council, school committee, city administration, and [local media](#) to observe arrival and dismissal at the Lincoln School. During the week of March 23-27, 2026, MPBC members, school staff, and Lincoln parents led seven walking tours of the area while sharing their experiences and insights. City councilors Christopher Park, Elizabeth Kowal, Bradley Freeman, Kim Vandiver, Ryan Williams, Devin Romanul, and Manjula Karamcheti participated, as did School Committee members Sheri Leo, Melissa Holleran, Seamus Kelley, and Jennifer Razi-Thomas. SRTS Outreach Coordinator for Melrose, Deborah Kreithen, also attended. Mayor Jen Grigoraitis and Department of Public Works director Elena Proakis Ellis were unable to attend the guided walking tours, but conducted their own observations that week.



The walking tour observations confirmed what the data shows—West Wyoming is a dangerous stretch of roadway for the many Lincoln students who walk, bike, or roll to school—while also offering insights into the particular challenges that walking families face at specific locations and at different times of day.



The school arrival window brings a distinct set of challenges. School committee member Melissa Holleran commented, “What I noticed...is the sheer volume of pedestrians and cars in the area at the time of school drop off. There was a noticeable change in congestion in the area when drop off was complete and school started.” Arrival typically brings 8-12 minutes of heavy traffic congestion before quickly dissipating. The greater volume of vehicles does slow traffic, but also provides for much more conflict between people driving and those walking and rolling. This was particularly evident at the intersection of Pleasant and Wyoming—what the Lincoln crossing guards unaffectionately refer to as the “Valley of Death”—where one guard manages multiple crosswalks and where sight lines are particularly poor when crowded with vehicles.



A quieter moment at the Wyoming/Pleasant intersection. (from Nancy Clover of the [Melrose Messenger](#))

Along with identifying challenges came opportunities to highlight what works well, including the path that begins on Pleasant Street. This path continues along the ballfield and crosses the parking lot, providing an almost entirely car-free route for the Lincoln community traveling from the south of West Wyoming. The parking lot is accessible only to staff (who largely arrive before school opens) and roughly 5–8 families with special arrival or dismissal needs, which means a very low frequency of conflict for those on foot and in vehicles.



Ward 3 Councilor Christopher Park, who represents residents of the West Wyoming and Lincoln School area, experiences the calm and car-free path from Pleasant Street.

Dismissal brings a different set of challenges. While all students generally arrive at school at the same time, about 1/3 of students stay on campus for after-school programming and many older students self-dismiss. This means there is less vehicular traffic than at arrival—it also means, however, that people drive at much higher speeds through the school zone and that students are crossing Wyoming and its side streets at more irregular intervals. School Committee chair Seamus Kelley noted, “I found it totally chaotic. I’m sure that quite a bit of work has gone into making dismissal safe, but for someone seeing it for the first time, I was overwhelmed by the situation.”

Participants were unanimous in praising Lincoln School crossing guards (known officially as Traffic Safety Supervisors) and school staff for their work in helping manage arrival and dismissal to improve safety for students and families. The Lincoln School’s crossing guard corps, though, is regularly understaffed, as is the case at several Melrose schools, with 50% of Traffic Safety Supervisor positions currently unfilled. This often leaves individual guards managing multiple crossings and leaves some crossings unguarded altogether.

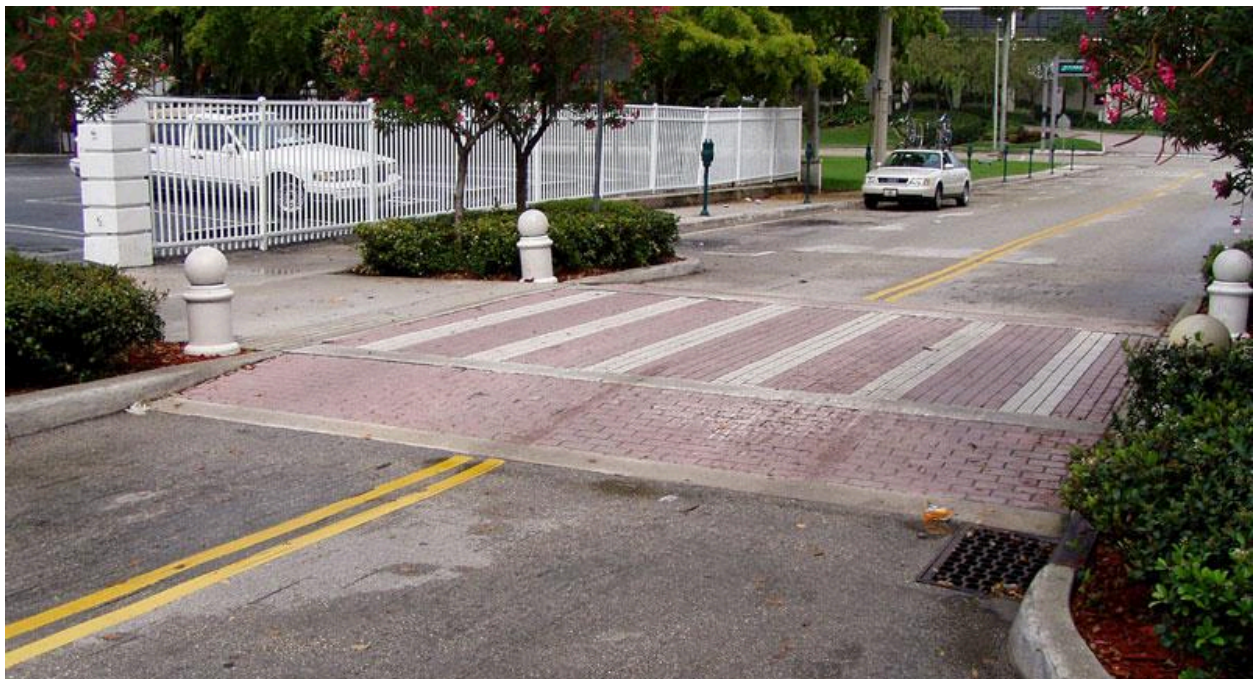


While school arrival and dismissal bring the largest number of walkers and rollers to and from the Lincoln schoolgrounds, Lincoln principal Jessica Patti also noted that Melrose families make use of the grounds—especially the playground and playing field—throughout the year and at all hours of the day. Many Melrose residents also walk to and from the commuter rail station and area businesses. Distraction and speed also pose a risk to people driving, with a disproportionate number of vehicular crashes not involving a pedestrian or bicyclist occurring on West Wyoming. The need to make West Wyoming safer for all road users thus extends beyond the school population—and beyond arrival and dismissal times during the school year.

What Can Be Done?

There are a number of available countermeasures for the problems observed on the walking tours and documented in city and metropolitan data.

The most important factor in determining the likelihood and severity of crashes is vehicular speed. Studies of crash data overwhelmingly indicate that reducing vehicular speed reduces both the likelihood and severity of crashes by reducing kinetic energy and improving reaction time. Evidence likewise indicates that the most effective way to reduce speed is through [vertical deflection countermeasures](#) like speed humps or tables (shown to reduce speed 14-34% with a cost range of \$2,000-\$5,000), raised crosswalks (12-29% with a cost range of \$5,000-7,000), and raised intersections.



A raised crosswalk. (from [PedBikeImages](#))

Also crucial in improving street safety, especially at crossings and intersections, is the promotion of clearer sight lines for both people driving and people walking or rolling. Installing painted or physical barriers to improve sight lines near crossings and intersections is called “daylighting.” Melrose currently maintains a 10’ standard for daylighting at mid-block crosswalks, which is half of the 20’ required in the Melrose traffic code for intersections (and recommended by the National Association of City Transportation Officials [NACTO]). Several participants in the walking tours noted that sight lines for crosswalks were generally poor, even at daylit crossings. Councilor Kim Vandiver also observed “cars repeatedly idling in marked no-parking areas near crosswalks, preventing daylighting.” Expanding daylighting to 20’ at West Wyoming crossings and installing physical delineator posts, flower planters, or bike racks that prevent people from parking illegally would help address both of these problems with quick action and low-cost materials.

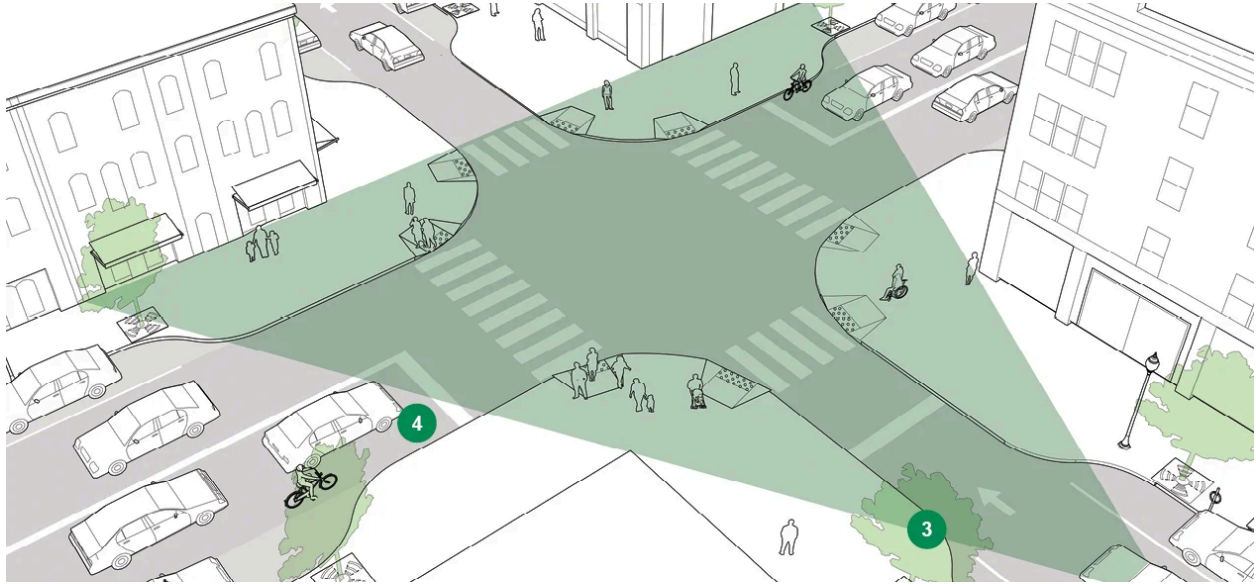


A vehicle standing on top of painted daylighting on West Wyoming, blocking sight lines at the crosswalk.



Hoboken, NJ, which hasn't experienced a traffic fatality in nine years, has used countermeasures including 20' daylighting at intersections throughout the city.

Concrete curb extensions also serve to improve sight lines and slow vehicles. Both visually and physically reduce the width of the roadway, which encourages slower driving, and both can help prevent dangerous blindside passing in crosswalks and intersections. These treatments also make pedestrians more visible to people driving and vice versa.



Curb extensions tightening an intersection and expanding sight lines. (from [NACTO](#))

These kinds of physical and design interventions have been proven to make streets safer—including in nearby communities like [Medford](#), [Somerville](#), [Cambridge](#), and [Belmont](#). In slowing drivers and promoting better sight lines, they would also make the work of Lincoln crossing guards and school staff more manageable during arrival and dismissal. Crucially, physical interventions would also make West Wyoming safer at all hours and all times of the year—when crossing guards and school staff are not available to manage traffic.



A raised crossing with bulb-out near the Argenziano School in Somerville. (from [Streetsblog Mass](#))

What Opportunities are Available?

Thankfully, there are significant funding opportunities available for testing and implementing street safety interventions on West Wyoming Avenue. Last year, the Boston MPO published its [regional Vision Zero plan](#), which aims to eliminate serious and fatal crashes in the Boston region, including Melrose. To facilitate the plan, the MPO has received two federal Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grants of \$9.4 million in 2024 and \$7.5 million in 2025 for demonstration projects and safety education in ten Boston-region communities. Melrose is one of the communities coordinating with the MPO to implement their planning and demonstration grants and so is in position to access hundreds of thousands of dollars for projects in line with the MPO's priorities. Because the MPO has identified West Wyoming as a primary risk site for vulnerable road users, Melrose has a particularly good opportunity to secure considerable funding for street safety demonstration projects around the Lincoln School.

The city is also in line for state funding for studying the area. In March of 2026, the Massachusetts House of Representatives passed a supplemental budget that included a \$20,000 earmark to conduct such a study. While the guidelines for this study have not been publicized, the city should ensure that it is conducted in line with the Traffic Commission's September 2025 recommendations that study of the West Wyoming corridor prioritize safety and focus on vulnerable road users.

MPBC's Recommendations

West Wyoming is on the 2026 Multi-year Roadway and Utility Program schedule for improvements to curbing and sidewalks and paving. Ahead of this, the city should move quickly to access MPO funding this year, deploy quick-build traffic calming measures before the 2026-27 school year, and use the traffic study funding to document their effectiveness. This would prepare the city for integrating permanent street safety improvements during the upcoming repaving process. It would also mark a significant first step towards Mayor Grigoraitis's stated goal of making Melrose a Vision Zero city.

What Comes Next?

The Melrose Pedestrian & Bicyclist Committee is hosting a community design brainstorming session on site at the Lincoln School on June 8, from 5-6:30pm. Lincoln PTO members, school staff, and city officials are invited to come and sketch out their own visions of how to address the challenges raised in this report and ultimately make West Wyoming safer for all road users, all year round. MPBC will then condense these ideas into a presentation for the city. No experience with transportation or site planning is necessary—MPBC members who are also transportation planners and urban designers will be on hand to provide support.