

*Recommendation Review for Discovery  
Elementary School, Grand Forks*

Final Report

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Prepared for:  
Grand Forks-East Grand Forks MPO

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## INTRODUCTION

The Grand Forks – East Grand Forks MPO contacted ATAC with intent to review the current status of ATAC’s recommendations for Discovery Elementary School, Grand Forks. The study was based on new elementary school site plans (now Discovery Elementary) and was completed in November 2013. The construction of the new premises was completed late summer 2015 and the school started its first session in fall 2015.

## RECOMMENDATION REVIEW

The table below provides review of ATAC’s recommendations per potential issue as identified during the prior study. In addition to current status of the recommendation and its corresponding implication(s), this review also includes comments by school staff.

Table 1. Recommendation review for Discovery Elementary, Grand Forks

Issue	Recommendation	Status	Implication	Staff Comments*
<b>Stacking Length</b>	45 car lengths	28 car lengths	Queue spillover on 43 <sup>rd</sup> Ave S/S 32 <sup>nd</sup> St	This is not an issue at the 8am arrival time. This is only an issue at the 3pm pick up time. We continue to educate parents on an “airport loop” philosophy where we ask that parents slowly drive thru the passing lane 1 time if no parking spots are available until a curbside parking spot is available.
<b>Diagonal Parking</b>	Not recommended	Not built	None, issue resolved.	No diagonal parking necessary.
<b>Short-term parking location</b>	Short-term parking to be downstream of loading/unloading area	Built somewhat past loading/unloading area		We currently have a visitor parking lot that parents use at 3pm. All of these spaces are filled each day until about 3:05 pm. An additional visitor lot is recommended on the south side of the current visitor lot. This would allow visitors to park facing north or south. The spaces in the visitor lot is not full at arrival time at 8am. All of the visitor lot spaces are used during

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\* Corresponding staff: Principal Ali Parkinson

Issue	Recommendation	Status	Implication	Staff Comments*
<b>Short-term parking spaces</b>	More spaces	Not built	Inadequate number of parking spaces	school events. Parents also use this lot when picking up their child mid-school day for appointments. Parents currently use the visitor parking lot and east parking lot for short-term parking. There are enough spaces at the 8 am arrival time. There are not enough spaces at the 3pm dismissal time. There are also not enough spaces for parents to park during school events.
<b>Exclusive left-turn lane in to school @ 43<sup>rd</sup> Ave S</b>	Okayed as per consultant concept	Built	Potentially improved traffic operations and safety	This left turn lane to enter the drive thru lane works well at the 8am arrival time. It sometimes becomes backed up at the 3pm dismissal time as parents wait to turn into the curb side parking lane instead of using the drive thru passing lane. We continue to educate parents on an “airport loop” philosophy where we ask that parents slowly drive thru the passing lane 1 time if no parking spots are available and loop around until a curbside spot is available.
<b>Exclusive left-turn lane out of school @ S 34<sup>th</sup> St</b>	Okayed as per consultant concept	Built	Potentially improved traffic operations and safety	No issues with parents turning left on to 34 <sup>th</sup> street at arrival or dismissal time.
<b>Exclusive right-turn lane out of school @ S 34<sup>th</sup> St</b>	Okayed as per consultant concept	Built	Potentially improved traffic operations and safety	Parents sometimes have issues turning right on to 34 <sup>th</sup> street at the 3pm dismissal time if cars are back up trying to enter the 43 <sup>rd</sup> Ave. drive thru lane. No issues turning right on to 34 <sup>th</sup> street at the 8 am arrival time.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Implication</b>	<b>Staff Comments*</b>
<b>Sidewalk on north side of east parking lot</b>	Recommended	Built	Students arriving on foot/bike don't have to cross driveway potentially eliminating conflict point, leading to better traffic safety	A bid is in progress for the district to have this completed in the spring/summer of 2016.
<b>Raised crosswalk connecting sidewalks on the north and west side of the east parking lot</b>	Recommended	Not built	If the driveway leading to the north entrance of the school is in use during drop-off/pick-up, this may lead to decreased safety due to reduced visibility of students in the crosswalk	A bid is in progress for the district to have this completed in the spring/summer of 2016.
<b>Driveway @ S 34<sup>th</sup> St</b>	Recommended to be built further north, lining up with a future street	Built to the south	Reduced stacking length resulting in queue spillback. Also, potential future safety/operational issues due to staggered access from opposing legs (school + future street) onto S 34 <sup>th</sup> St	Currently no issues with the 34 <sup>th</sup> street driveway during arrival, dismissal and/or school events.
<b>East parking lot use</b>	Recommended for exclusive use of staff and buses.	Currently being used for K-1 pick-up/drop-off. In-pavement crosswalk sign being used on an unmarked crosswalk. Far end of same crosswalk leads into a parking space.	Safety issues arising from concurrent use by multiple modes of transportation.	We added safety patrol and teacher supervision to this area at dismissal time for K & 1 <sup>st</sup> grade students who are picked up at this location at 3pm. Continued education occurring with K & 1 <sup>st</sup> grade parents and bus drivers to prevent issues. No issues with 8 am arrival time. Busses arrive at 7:30 am, prior to parents dropping off students. A majority of parents drop off their child in the front of the school drop off lane. Ideally if an additional parking lot was built for staff and if ample parking spots were available for parents to park, it would

Issue	Recommendation	Status	Implication	Staff Comments*
<b>East parking lot use by buses</b>	Bus staging okayed as per consultant concept	Concurrently being used by buses and for K-1 pick-up/drop-off.	Parents and students have to walk between parked buses. Multiple conflict points introduced which could potentially lead to crashes/safety issues.	alleviate some of the current congestion in the east parking lot. A bid is in progress to put in a northeast sidewalk in the spring/summer of 2016. Busses would then pull up along this sidewalk for pick up, freeing up the crosswalk area to the parking lot. An extended slab of concrete is also going to be built by this sidewalk to house the bike racks. Students would then exit on this sidewalk when leaving, freeing students on bikes from having to be in the parking lot area with cars.

## NEXT STEPS

It is envisioned that this report would encourage the GF-EGF MPO to bring all the stakeholders together, including Grand Forks School District, Discovery Elementary School, the police, engineering, and planning departments of City of Grand Forks, in order to spark a discussion regarding how to best tackle the persistent issues. The discussion may also include topics such as funding opportunities.