



Atlanta Community Schoolyards

A Project of the 10-Minute Walk Campaign



Atlanta

An Urban Land Institute Atlanta
Technical Assistance Project Workshop
February 2022

About ULI – Urban Land Institute

As the preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, The Urban Land Institute (ULI) is a nonprofit education and research group supported by its diverse, expert membership base. Our mission is to shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide.

ULI Atlanta

With over 1,400 members throughout the Atlanta region (Georgia and Eastern Tennessee), ULI Atlanta is one of the largest and most active ULI District Councils worldwide. We bring together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs. We share knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, electronic media, events and programs.

Technical Assistance Program (TAP)

Since 1947, the Urban Land Institute has harnessed the technical expertise of its members to help communities solve difficult land use, development, and redevelopment challenges. Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs) provide expert, multidisciplinary, unbiased advice to local governments, public agencies and nonprofit organizations facing complex land use and real estate issues in the Atlanta Region. Drawing from our seasoned professional membership base, ULI Atlanta offers objective and responsible guidance on a variety of land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions.

About the 10-Minute Walk Campaign

The 10-Minute Walk Campaign is a nationwide movement launched in October 2017 to ensure that there is a great park within a ten-minute walk of every person, in every neighborhood, in every city across the United States. Learn more and connect with 10 Minute Walk at 10minutewalk.org and uli.org/parks.

About Atlanta Community Schoolyards

Reimagining community schoolyards is one proven strategy designed to help cities reach the goal of having every resident live within a 10-Minute Walk of a park. While access to parks in Atlanta continues to improve, 29 percent of residents do not live within a 10-minute walk of a park. The Atlanta Community Schoolyards program aims to improve that number by reimagining schoolyards for public use during non-school hours. ULI Atlanta has partnered with the Trust for Public Land and Park Pride to pilot this project with Atlanta Public Schools.



In partnership with



Acknowledgements

The Urban Land Institute would also like to thank the ULI Atlanta member volunteers who have spent countless hours leading this project to advance the goals of the 10-Minute Walk Campaign. This project could not have been completed with you. A special thank you goes to:

- Janet Bozeman, Hyatt & Stubblefield
- Steve Foster, Georgia Power
- Faith Hoople, GreenbergFarrow
- Jonathan Gelber, KB Associates
- Daphne Bond-Godfrey, ULI Atlanta (project staff)

Finally, a special thanks to Georgia Power for the data and technology partnership in producing this report.



Table of Contents

Ten Principles for Building Healthy Places.....	1
Introduction: 10-Minute Walk Campaign and Atlanta Community Schoolyards.....	2
School Selection Process.....	3
ULI Atlanta’s Walk Analysis Assignment	4
Continental Colony Elementary School	6
Background.....	6
Summary of Safe Routes to Parks Walk Audit	7
Recommendations.....	8
Opportunities.....	8
Conclusions.....	8
ULI Atlanta & Atlanta Community Schoolyards to Date.....	9
Appendices	
Appendix A: Route Map of Continental Colony Elementary School.....	10
Appendix B: Detailed Demographic Information on the School.....	11
Appendix C: Detailed Walk Assessment Spreadsheet for Continental Colony Elementary School.....	12
Appendix D: Safe Routes to Parks Walk Audit Checklists.....	14

ULI's Building Healthy Places

The Building Healthy Places Initiative draws from the experience of ULI members and partners to explore issues of equitable access to parks and open spaces through partnerships for equitable parks, the business case for real estate investment in parks, park finance and construction, community engagement, park design, and other topics. A key body of work through this initiative is researching the importance of parks and open spaces. Key publications include:

- [*Five Characteristics of High-Quality Parks* \(2021\)](#)
- [*10 Principles for Enhancing Equitable Access to Parks* \(2021\)](#)
- [*Pavement to Parks: Transforming Spaces for Cars into Places for People* \(2020\)](#)
- [*Successful Partnerships for Parks: Collaborative Approaches to Advance Equitable Access to Open Space* \(2020\)](#)
- [*The Case for Open Space* \(2018\)](#)

Ten Principles for Building Healthy Places



Introduction: 10-Minute Walk Campaign and Atlanta Community Schoolyards

What is the 10-Minute Walk Campaign?

The 10-Minute Walk Campaign is a nationwide movement launched in October 2017 to improve access to parks and green spaces for every person, in every neighborhood, in every city across the United States.

Research shows that one in three Americans—more than 100 million people do not have a park within a 10-Minute Walk of their home. That’s why the Urban Land Institute (ULI) is collaborating through a partnership with the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) to advance the goals of the 10-Minute Walk campaign nationally. Increasing park access helps to transform local communities and the physical, social, environmental, and economic health of people who live there.

So far, the 10-Minute Walk has been endorsed by more than 220 U.S. mayors—from across the political spectrum and from cities large and small—who have committed to working toward universal park access. First Mayor Reed and now Mayor Bottoms have signed on to make Atlanta a 10-minute walk city and the Community Schoolyards initiative is a powerful approach to help achieve the goals citywide.

WHAT... IS WALKABILITY?

Walkability is the measure of a built environment’s capacity to support a safe, useful, comfortable, and interesting pedestrian experience.

The Four Principles of Walkability:
USEFUL SAFE COMFORTABLE INTERESTING



Atlanta Community Schoolyards Partnership

ULI Atlanta’s primary goal for participation in this project is to advance inclusive, welcoming, and sustainable communities, a commitment that was made in 2019 – and underscored most prominently by the events of 2020 and beyond.

At its most basic level, walkability adds value to a community, allowing children to walk safely to school and providing families with options to more easily access transportation alternatives. ULI has long advocated for the fact that a walkable community is key to a healthy community. The opportunity to walk and safely gather outdoors is inextricably linked to our individual and community health.

Each school selected represents a broad cross-section of APS school clusters and geographic diversity within the city (with schools in the north, south, east, and west). The information collected and related analysis by the ULI Atlanta team are intended to serve as the

foundation for the improvements needed to achieve the goals of the 10-Minute Walk Campaign in each school community – a walk that Jeff Speck, author of Walkable City, describes as useful, safe, comfortable, and interesting. The challenge for the Atlanta region is to find ways to create more walkable environments that incorporate these four key principles, which are simple in concept but challenging in execution.

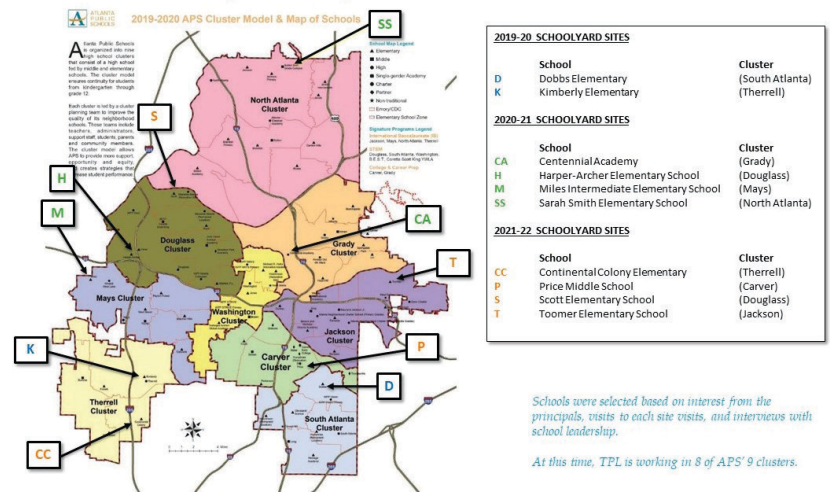
School Selection Process For Atlanta Community Schoolyards

Each year a multi-step process is undertaken with all the Atlanta Community Schoolyards program partners, including Atlanta Public Schools, to determine which schools are selected for program eligibility. This starts with the Trust for Public Land running a ParkImpact demographic analysis to determine what need each school's neighborhood has for a public park.

Next, schoolyard sites are narrowed down by considering metrics like new population served and proximity to an existing park. Discussions with APS Facilities leadership and with the school district's new Center for Equity + Social Justice also help determine which sites would be most accommodating for use as a public park after school hours.

Finally, a list of schools is invited to participate in this program. School leadership is interviewed by representatives from TPL and Park Pride to help further determine program eligibility – as the school is an important partner throughout the process. The students and broader school community are consulted early on to help design and place where capital improvements are needed.

Atlanta Community Schoolyards Pilot Sites



ULI Atlanta's Walk Analysis Assignment

Through this project, ULI Atlanta members are lending their expertise to make sure that more people have access to good mobility options, including sidewalks and safe street crossings. Walkability adds value to the community in so many ways, including providing safe access for students walking to school or persons walking to mass transit stops and stations, providing options for recreation and social engagement, and promoting pride of place. Evaluating and promoting improvements to infrastructure within the 10-minute walk is critical to ensuring that all community members can benefit.

The primary focus of this project was to document the 10-minute walking conditions within a half-mile radius around the four APS schools that were selected for year three of the Atlanta Community Schoolyards program pilot. These schools were:

- Continental Colony Elementary School
- Price Middle School
- Scott Elementary School
- Toomer Elementary School

The major goal is to demonstrate feasibility of using schoolyards as shared public spaces. ULI Atlanta's scope was to assess and document conditions of the sidewalks, crosswalks, and general safety within a 10-minute walk radius of the schools. The information collected and subsequent analysis will be used to understand where improvements need to take place to make the objectives of the 10-Minute Walk Campaign a reality.

The scope of work focused on answering three high-level questions:

- What is nature of 10 minute-walk?
- What improvements are funded or what existing plans could be leveraged?
- What additional improvements are needed to make a desirable and effective 10-minute walk?

The first step in answering these questions was gathering background information to understand the demographic information of the areas surrounding the four schools. This helped to inform population density, land use type, number of school-aged children and families. The team compiled and reviewed existing information, maps, physical conditions and constraints, and demographic information for the study areas. Georgia Power provided spatial data on the 10-minute walkshed area, and the

Trust for Public Land provided data through its ParkScore tool which measures how well the 100 most populous U.S. cities are meeting their residents' need for parks. These tools allowed us to begin the assessment process fully informed.

The second part of the projects was to complete the walk assessments. Each site (school) had a small team of ULI Atlanta volunteers to walk the routes and analyze site conditions utilizing a standard evaluation matrix.

Each assessment began with a project briefing from the ULI Atlanta steering committee that included an overview of the study area/ streets to cover and the survey questions the volunteers were asked to answer. Teams were then organized around walk segments or quadrants depending on the street grid patterns to physically cover the walk assessment portion. Our primary methodology is outlined below.

The fundamental evaluations collected the following information and verifications:

- Existence of sidewalks
- Condition of sidewalks
- Existence of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ramps at crossings
- Presence of pedestrian walk lights
- Visibility ahead, behind and around pedestrian
- Presence of sudden drop offs, holes, or other safety hazards/ barriers
- Slope of road and impact on ease of walk
- Existence of trees for shade
- Presence of litter
- Feeling of personal safety

A standard was established for route assessment rating using a (A-B-C-D-F) classification system with a focus on the following attributes:

- Presence of sidewalks
- Condition(s) of sidewalk: Solid surface + Width
- Compliance with ADA
- Access to residential areas
- Presence of unique features

The (A-B-C-D-F) classification utilized the following rating system:

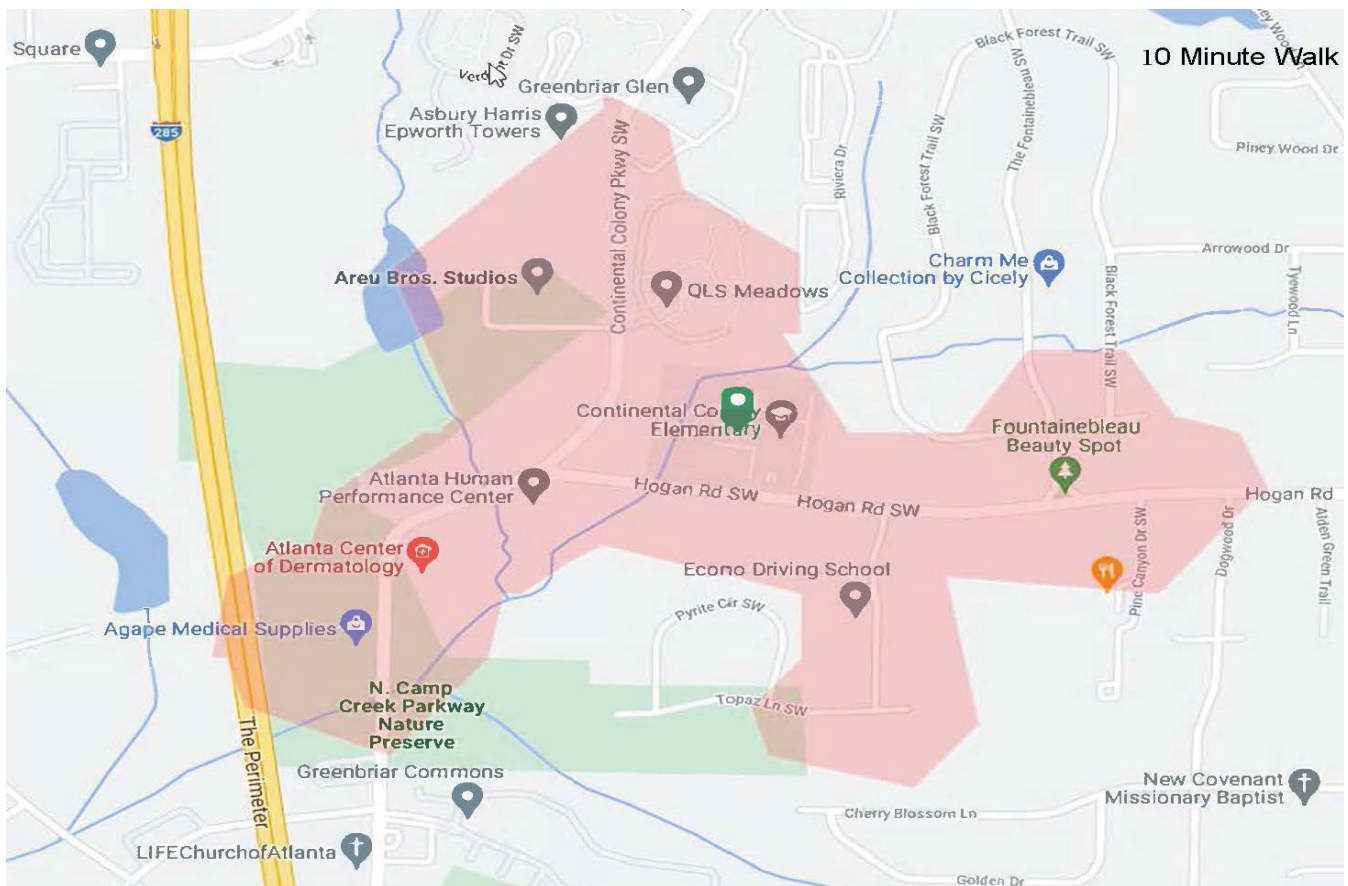
- A – Excellent (There is a continuous, usable sidewalk for the entirety of the walk)
- B – Little improvement needed (There is a continuous, usable sidewalk for the majority the walk)
- C – Significant improvement needed (The sidewalk is not continuous for the majority of the walk)
- D – Major improvement needed (The sidewalk is cracked and broken or not present, with significant accessibility challenges and ADA compliance issues)
- F – Failed (The sidewalk is not existent and/or completely unusable)

Continental Colony Elementary School

Background

Continental Colony Elementary is located on Hogan Road in Greenbriar Area of Atlanta adjacent to East Point. The Greenbriar area was developed in the early 1960s, with Greenbriar Mall opening as the largest enclosed mall in the Southeast in 1965. Along with the completion of the southwest portion of I-285 and GA 166, the area enjoyed a period of great prosperity and affluence. Originally, Delta Airlines had a large reservation center located in the area. Most notably, Chick-Fil-A introduced their famous chicken sandwich to the world in the food court in Greenbriar Mall in 1967. The surrounding neighborhoods were developed as low-density single-family neighborhoods. Continental Colony Elementary dates from this era.

Continental Colony Elementary school currently serves about 450 students, with most living outside the 10- minute walk radius due to the low density near the school.



The 10-Minute Walk Area

The 10-minute walk area for Continental Colony now consists of the original houses built in the late 1950s early 1960s. These are all single-family units with a mix of architectural styles prevalent of that era. Most appear very well maintained. Twenty-four percent of the homes are owned occupied with 69.5% rental units. The median home value is \$202,000. There is no evidence of new construction or for sale signs anywhere in the walk zone, indicating the surrounding neighborhoods are very stable.

The most recent demographic information indicates a population of 269 in 128 units within the walk zone. Thirty-six percent of households have children. The median household income is less than \$30,000 per year.

The average age of the area has increased from 30.7 years old in 2010 to 35.4 in 2021. This also indicates the area is stable with residents aging in place and very little relocation to the area. Population growth is only 0.95%.

The residents of the area primarily work in services related jobs attributing to the low median household income. The balance work in lower paying transportation/logistics jobs. The reported unemployment rate for workers greater than 16 years old is 14%.

Summary of Safe Routes to Parks Walk Audit

Only two streets in the Continental Colony walk area had sidewalks. Those are Continental Colony Parkway (which becomes Stone Hogan Connector South of Hogan Road) and Hogan Road. Continental Colony Parkway runs roughly North-South and is a highly traveled four lane suburban street. The Georgia Department of Transportation indicates 5,900 cars per day pass their traffic meter. While traffic was very light at the time of the walk (10:00 AM on a Saturday), much heavier traffic can be expected on weekdays before and after school hours. Many of the cars travelling this route the day of the walk were driving well in excess of the posted 35 MPH speed limit.

Continental Colony Parkway has sidewalks on both sides of the street, street lighting, well identified street crossings and school zone signs. For the most part, the sidewalks North of Hogan Road are in good condition with minor tripping hazards. The intersection and crosswalk at Hogan Road, though, is confusing and offers poor sightlines for both drivers and pedestrians. Some improvement is needed to increase the safety of this intersection. A round-about would provide traffic calming and better safety due to better sightlines for cars turning left onto Hogan Road or for cars turning left or right out of Hogan Road.

South of Hogan Road, Continental Colony changes into Stone Hogan Connector. While the road is the same four lane road, the character of the walk to Continental Colony Elementary School changes dramatically. The sidewalks on the school side of Stone Hogan Connector end. The sidewalks on the West side of Stone Hogan connector become overgrown, poorly maintained with many large cracks and flooded with mud and debris. Additionally, there is no pedestrian crossing from the sidewalk side of the street to the school side of the street at Hogan Road. Also, as previously noted, this is in a curved section of road, so sightlines are very short.

Hogan Road runs East-West and connects Continental Colony Parkway to other neighborhoods in the City of East Point. Hogan Road is still a highly trafficked road with GDOT traffic meters showing an average of 2,200 cars per day. While well-traveled, Hogan Road is still suburban residential in character with low-density single-family homes lining the route. Sidewalks are only on



Intersection of Hogan and Stone Hogan



Continental Colony Pkwy

the North side of the street. However, the sidewalks are in reasonably good shape with only minor tripping hazards noted. However, the sidewalk ends at The Fontainebleau, leaving a gap of about 200 feet to sidewalks in East Point. The East Point side of the city limits has sidewalks on both sides of Hogan Road. These sidewalks are in good condition, but narrow.

The balance of the streets walked were low volume neighborhood residential streets with no sidewalks at all. Given the very low density of these neighborhoods, no sidewalks are needed or suggested.

Recommendations

ULI recommends the intersection at Continental Colony and Hogan Road be reviewed by the City of Atlanta's Transportation Department for adequacy of design and safety. Given traffic speeds are much higher than the posted 35 MPH limits, either a traffic light or a roundabout should be considered. We also recommend establishment of sidewalks on the East side of Stone Hogan Connector as adequate right of way exists. This sidewalk could also tie into The North Camp Creek Nature Preserve if a trail was developed along the existing creek and flood plain.



Sidewalk Ends

Opportunities

There is a large vacant lot adjacent to the school that could be developed into a nice corner park, just outside the school property. This would seem to allow much more space and provide opportunities the small Continental Colony School grounds wouldn't permit. The Area Brothers Studio property on the West side of Continental Colony Parkway is proposed to be an affordable housing project. If developed as an affordable multi-family project, the vacant corner lot could provide a much-needed public park for both new and existing residents. However, street crossing improvement would be required to both to calm traffic and to provide pedestrian safety at the intersection of Continental Colony and Hogan Road. The existing Camp Creek Parkway Nature Preserve also offers experiential habitat learning opportunities for Continental Colony Elementary students, if developed into something other than a flood plain. The Trust for Public Land, Park Pride and the City of Atlanta Parks department should perform an assessment of the existing preserve and determine its full potential as a functional nature preserve with nature trails and other amenities.

Conclusion

Following ULI's walkability assessments, TPL and Park Pride are engaging schoolchildren and residents from the surrounding communities to give input on design improvements to their communities' schoolyard. Construction will soon follow, bringing those designs to life, creating inviting, accessible, and safe spaces for school-day play, after-hours recreation, and much needed community greenspace, the importance underscored now by a global pandemic. All told, ten schools will participate in the pilot program over its three-year lifespan.

ULI ATLANTA & ATLANTA COMMUNITY SCHOOLYARDS TO DATE

Since the beginning of the Atlanta Community Schoolyards program, ULI Atlanta has been primarily focused on the 10-minute walk to and from the community schoolyards. We have evaluated the 10-minute walk infrastructure from the perspective of access, safety and comfort and made detailed recommendations to improve residents' access to community schoolyards by foot and bike as well as those that impact the ability for students to walk to and from school. The entire program is founded on a belief is that a city in which students can safely walk to school is one that is healthier and more resilient.

Over the last three years, ULI Atlanta member volunteers have assessed the walking conditions for the following schools:

- Dobbs Elementary (2019)
- Kimberly Elementary (2019)
- Harper-Archer Elementary (2020)
- Centennial Academy (2020)
- Miles Elementary (2020)
- Sarah Smith Elementary (2020)
- Price Middle (2021)
- Toomer Elementary (2021)
- Scott Elementary (2022)
- Continental Colonty (2022)

All archived reports can be found here: <https://atlanta.uli.org/resources/reports/atlanta-community-schoolyards-10-minute-walk-campaign/>

Appendices

Appendix A - Route Maps of Continental Colony Elementary

10-Minute Walk Impact Report

The Trust for Public Land

April 11, 2022

Page 1 of 2



Project Areas

Continental Colony Schoolyard

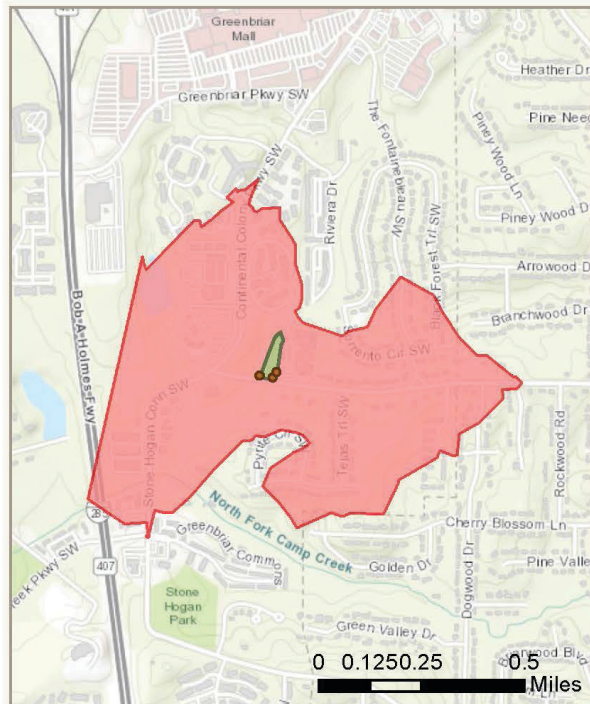
All statistical results are aggregated for the listed project areas and their service areas. Service areas are based on 10-minute (1/2 mile) walk times from project access points defined for each project area and based on the walkable road network. Accuracy of demographic calculation diminishes outside of cities, where population served may be underestimated.

For TPL staff only: Acres listed for Land Protection Projects are official from Finance, while Park Development Project acres are estimated based on GIS calculations.

Area Statistics	Value
Project Area Count	1.00
Project Acres	1.31
Service Area Acres	180.94

Map Legend

- Access Points
- User-Defined Project Boundary
- 10-minute walk service areas



This report was created on April 11, 2022 using the Project Impact or Project Summary interactive mapping site. It is for informational purposes only. The providers of this report disclaim any and all warranties, express or implied, including fitness for a particular purpose or merchantability, and make no representation that the report is complete, accurate, or error free. Use and reliance on this report is at the sole risk of the party using same.

© 2019 The Trust for Public Land.

Appendix B - Detailed Demographic Information On The School

10-Minute Walk Impact Report

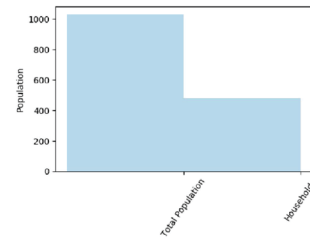
The Trust for Public Land

April 11, 2022

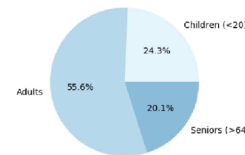
Page 2 of 2



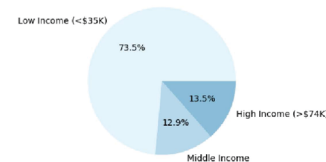
Population	Served
Total Population	1,029
Households	480



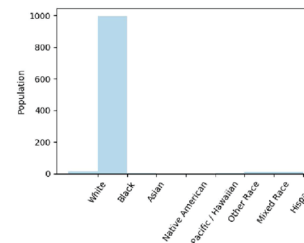
Age	Served	Percent
Children (less than age 20)	250	24.30
Adults (age 20 to age 64)	572	55.59
Seniors (age 65 and up)	207	20.12



Income	Served	Percent
Low (less than \$35,000)	353	73.54
Middle (from \$35,000 to \$75,000)	62	12.92
High (\$75,000 and up)	65	13.54



Race/Ethnicity	Served	Percent
White	16	1.55
Black	998	96.99
Asian	2	0.19
Native American	1	0.10
Pacific / Hawaiian	0	0.00
Other Race	2	0.19
Mixed Race	10	0.97
Hispanic *	12	1.17



* US Census captures Hispanic origin separate from race

Demographic Information is derived from ESRI 2019 Demographic Forecast Block Groups data.

This report was created on April 11, 2022 using the Project Impact or Project Summary interactive mapping site. It is for informational purposes only. The providers of this report disclaim any and all warranties, express or implied, including fitness for a particular purpose or merchantability, and make no representation that the report is complete, accurate, or error free. Use and reliance on this report is at the sole risk of the party using same.

© 2019 The Trust for Public Land.

