



Walkable Neighborhoods for Seniors

Making Boyle Heights a Safer and More Walkable Community

Issues and
Recommendations from the
Community



Prepared for the Injury and Violence Prevention
Program, Los Angeles County Department of
Health Services and the
Community of Boyle Heights

Funded by the California Center for Physical
Activity, California Department of Health Services

Prepared by
Safe &
Healthy Communities Consulting

June 2004

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Safe & Healthy Communities Consulting is dedicated to creating healthy community environments and re-introducing health as a priority in land use and transportation planning. Tina Zenzola, Director
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A special thanks to Isabelle Sternfeld of IVPP for assistance with data analysis and GIS mapping.

The recommendations provided in this report represent the concerns and priorities of Boyle Heights' residents and the conclusions of Safe & Healthy Communities Consulting. Implementation of any location-specific recommendations should be undertaken only after due consideration by the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation and Public Works following an engineering study and in collaboration with the affected residents, landowners and businesses of Boyle Heights.

June 2004

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	ii
Introduction.....	1
Health, Walkability and Seniors.....	1
Walkability in Boyle Heights.....	2
The Project.....	3
Methodology.....	4
Project Process.....	4
Task Force.....	4
Community Mapping.....	5
Health, Traffic & Population Data Analysis.....	5
Walk Audits, Mini-Charettes and Pedestrian Roadshow.....	6
Issues and Recommendations.....	8
“Top Five” Priority Locations.....	8
1. Lorena Street.....	8
2. Evergreen Avenue.....	10
3. Cesar Chavez Avenue.....	11
4. Evergreen Jogging/Walking Path.....	14
5. Boyle Avenue.....	15
“Needed All Over” Improvements.....	17
Next Steps and Funding.....	18
Appendices	
A. Community Mapping Data	
B. Process and Rationale for Selecting Project Areas	

Executive Summary

The health of communities is linked to the design of communities. Neighborhoods that are safe, pleasant and accessible for walking can promote health and help reduce obesity and several other public health problems. They can also improve the health, mobility and quality of life of our burgeoning senior population, thereby bringing significant economic and social benefits to the community. However, in Boyle Heights -- like many older urban communities -- auto-oriented land use and transportation planning practices have created neighborhoods where it is difficult, and excessively dangerous, to be a pedestrian. Seniors and children are typically the most vulnerable in an unsafe and inaccessible pedestrian environment.

The Walkable Neighborhoods for Seniors (WN4S) project seeks to improve the health and safety of Boyle Heights' seniors and their families by increasing walking as a mode of transportation and as a form of safe and active living. WN4S is a project of the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, Injury and Violence Prevention Program with funding from the California Center for Physical Activity and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The project used a multi-step process -- including community mapping, analysis of several types of data and holding walk audits and mini-charrettes -- to help community members identify their priority pedestrian "hot spots" and develop recommendations for improving safety and walkability. To date, the project has outreached to and/or involved over 200 residents and representatives of neighborhood groups, local service organizations, elected officials offices and City and County agencies.

Residents of Boyle Heights identified the following "**Top Five**" priority locations and key recommendations:

#1 Lorena Street: 7th Street to 8th Street

- Convert to a designated school zone.
- Use bulbouts and center median islands to shorten crossing distances and slow turning cars at 7th, Atlantic, Opal and Beswick.
- Develop a traffic management plan to contain and calm industrial truck traffic and better reflect the mixed uses of the neighborhood.

#2 Evergreen Avenue: Cesar Chavez to Wabash

- Make crossings at Winter, Malabar and Fairmount safer by slowing cars with traffic calming and creating more prominent crossings.
- Create a chicane effect by replacing parallel parking with diagonal parking on alternating sides of the street.

#3 Cesar Chavez Avenue: Soto Street to Indiana

- Improving walkability can increase the economic vitality of the commercial district.
- Install corner and mid-block bulbouts and pedestrian activated signals (or pavement lighting) at t-intersections. Paint and maintain crosswalk markings at all intersections.
- Adjust signal timing to accommodate slower pedestrians.
- East of Evergreen -- prevailing speeds require a combination of traffic calming measures and/or a signal at Fresno. Simpler solutions could actually increase the risk to pedestrians.

Executive Summary

#4 Evergreen Jogging/Walking Path

- Develop and implement a long-term maintenance plan that addresses path materials and expansion, obstacles in the pathway (tree roots, utilities), trash & litter, benches, lighting and bicycles on the path.

#5 Boyle Avenue: 1st Street to Hollenbeck Park

- Improve pedestrian safety and access to three important locations: Puente Learning Center, Hollenbeck Park and the Lightrail station at 1st/Boyle.
- Install mid-block bulb-outs and a pedestrian refuge island (or a pedestrian-activated crossing signal) near the Learning Center. Improve personal safety for seniors and residents accessing the southeast entrance of Hollenbeck Park.
- Reduce lane widths along Boyle by staggering diagonal and parallel parking on opposite sides of the street. Fix broken sidewalks and replace problematic trees.

Residents also identified a number of long-standing and pervasive maintenance and safety needs in the community including: broken sidewalks, problematic trees, trash and lack of parkway maintenance, signal timing and unmarked/unmaintained crosswalk markings. These issues could be addressed gradually and at minimal additional cost to the City as part of redevelopment projects and as routine road improvements occur.

In addition, Safe and Healthy Communities Consulting provides several suggestions as next steps for moving recommendations to implementation, including:

- ❑ The community and elected representatives, working with the LA County Department of Health Services and other key organizations, should present this report to the City DOT, Public Works, Planning and Redevelopment and other relevant agencies.
- ❑ The City should immediately address the most dangerous pedestrian safety locations identified by the project (i.e., Lorena Street and Evergreen Street).
- ❑ The community and elected representatives, in conjunction with the City, MTA and others, should choose one or two of the “Top Five” locations for comprehensive redesign and to serve as demonstration projects.
- ❑ The City, working with the community and other stakeholders, should identify internal revenues and outside funding opportunities to pay for recommended improvements, maintenance and the demonstration projects.

There are a number of state and national grant programs that could fund the pedestrian and neighborhood improvements outlined in this report. Also, whenever possible, the City and community should link resident’s recommendations to existing or upcoming projects in Boyle Heights including, the Eastside Lightrail line and the Adelante Redevelopment project. Having gone through this process, the community is better positioned to compete for and leverage funding and resources. As such, this report can serve as a tool for residents and community representatives to advocate for a safer and more walkable Boyle Heights.

Introduction

Health, Walkability and Seniors

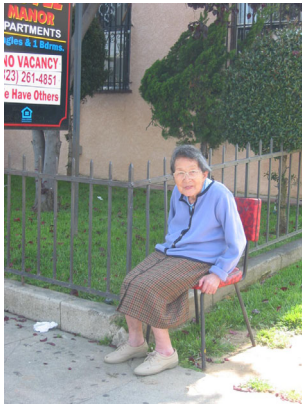
The health of communities is linked to the design of communities. Neighborhoods that are safe, pleasant and accessible to walk for recreation or as a part of daily life can promote health and help reduce several major public health problems including obesity, physical inactivity, traffic-related injury and death, asthma, diabetes and health disparities^[1].

Pedestrian-oriented communities can also improve the health and quality of life of our burgeoning senior population. Seniors that are physically active have greater flexibility, muscle strength, balance, and bone density -- all of which help them fall less often, recover more rapidly from illness and injuries and live longer, healthier lives. In addition, being able to walk for their daily needs gives non-driving seniors

greater mobility, maintains their social support networks and keeps them living independently for more years, thus bringing significant economic and social benefits to the larger community^[2].



Boyle Avenue's wide sidewalks accommodate seniors and youth



Senior pedestrians to feel safe from crime and places to stop and rest.

Despite the many health and quality of life benefits of walking, many of our communities have become places where it is unsafe and difficult - if not impossible - to be a pedestrian. Shops, schools and homes are built too far apart to walk; streets are designed primarily for the fast and efficient flow of cars making them hazardous and unfriendly to pedestrians; and neighborhoods lack adequate pedestrian facilities.

Seniors often have special needs from a walkable environment. With decreasing vision and other physical impairments, seniors need sidewalks that are well lit, unbroken and even, wide enough for wheelchairs and with appropriately placed curb ramps. Seniors are more likely to be hit in intersections so longer crossing times and "no right turn

on red" laws provide them greater safety^[3]. Seniors and children are said to be the "indicator species" of a livable and walkable community. They are the community members that are most vulnerable when the pedestrian environment is unsafe and inaccessible. But, when a community is safe and accessible for senior and child pedestrians, it is safe and accessible for everyone.



Disabled senior navigating a sloped sidewalk on Cesar Chavez

^[1] Jackson & Kotchititsky. Creating a Healthy Environment. Monograph. Sprawlwatch. 2002

^[2] Robertwood Johnson Foundation. Active for Life, Physical Activity Fact Sheet.

^[3] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Pedestrian Injury Prevention Fact Sheet.

Introduction

Walkability in Boyle Heights

Boyle Heights was one of Los Angeles' first residential suburbs. Originally designed as a pedestrian-oriented community, Boyle Heights has sidewalks, a grid pattern of streets and short blocks -- all of the basic building blocks of a walkable community. However, explosive population growth and development to the east coupled with auto-dominated land use and transportation planning have changed the physical character of Boyle Heights.

Today, four freeways run through its' residential core, making up 9.6 miles of continuous freeway and occupying 10% of Boyle Heights' land area. Numerous freeway on-off ramps lie next to homes, schools and parks and thousands of commuters make their way through the community to reach downtown. Like many older urban neighborhoods, these changes and practices have had a disproportionate impact on the community of Boyle Heights, including the health and safety of residents [4].

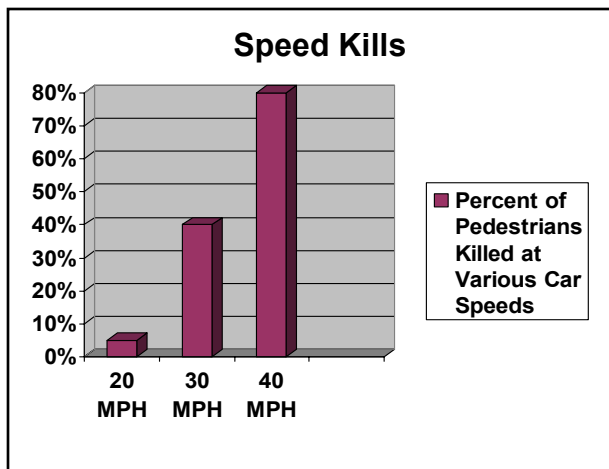


Photo: James Rojas

Walking is a necessity in Boyle Heights



Transit users need safe walking routes to the bus or rail



Greater speeds mean greater risk of death to pedestrians, especially seniors

Walking in Boyle Heights has become one of the most dangerous ways to travel. Driving is the predominant mode of travel, yet over 50% of all traffic-related deaths are pedestrian fatalities. This is much higher than the state figure of 19%. In one year alone in Boyle Heights, 9 pedestrians were killed, 137 were injured and 49 were hospitalized. Hospital charges for all traffic-related hospitalizations totaled more than \$3 million.

The poor pedestrian environment affects health in other ways too. While many people walk in this community, Boyle Heights' has a significant problem with physical inactivity and overweight/obesity. Over 50% of residents in East Los Angeles are sedentary, 19% are inconsistently physically active and 53% are overweight. These are known risk factors for death and a variety of illnesses.

[4] Boyle Heights Community Plan, www.lacity.org/PLN.

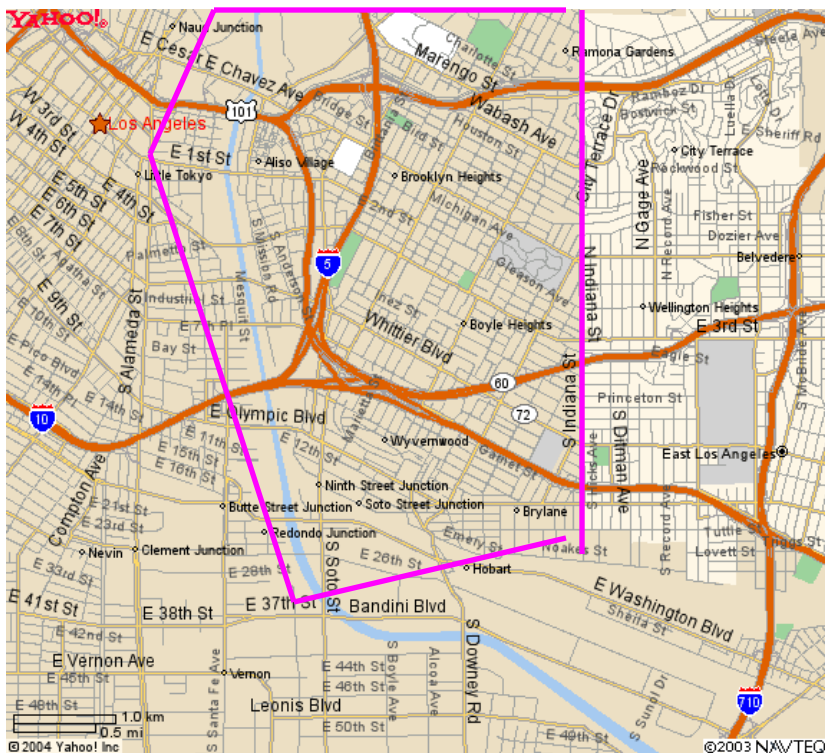
Introduction

The Project

In Spring 2003, the Boyle Heights Walkable Neighborhoods for Seniors (WN4S) [5] project was launched. WN4S seeks to improve the health and safety of seniors and their families by increasing walking as a mode of transportation and as a form of safe and active living. Two approaches were used:

- Built Environment Approach – eliminate the physical barriers to walking by promoting design and engineering improvements on local roads and neighborhoods.
- Encouragement Approach – promote and encourage walking by providing opportunities for seniors and other residents to walk and be physically active in their community (e.g., walking events and clubs).

The WN4S project evolved out of a community coalition that identified pedestrian safety as one of the most important traffic safety issues in Boyle Heights. It is a project of the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, Injury and Violence Prevention Program (IVPP) with funding from the California Center for Physical Activity and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. IVPP engaged Tina Zenzola of Safe and Healthy Communities Consulting to implement the built environment approach. This report describes activities and findings from that approach, including the community's priorities and recommendations for improving pedestrian safety and walkability among seniors and residents. The Walkable Neighborhoods for Seniors report is intended as a tool for the community and stakeholders to mobilize around solutions and leverage the resources and political support necessary to implement recommendations.



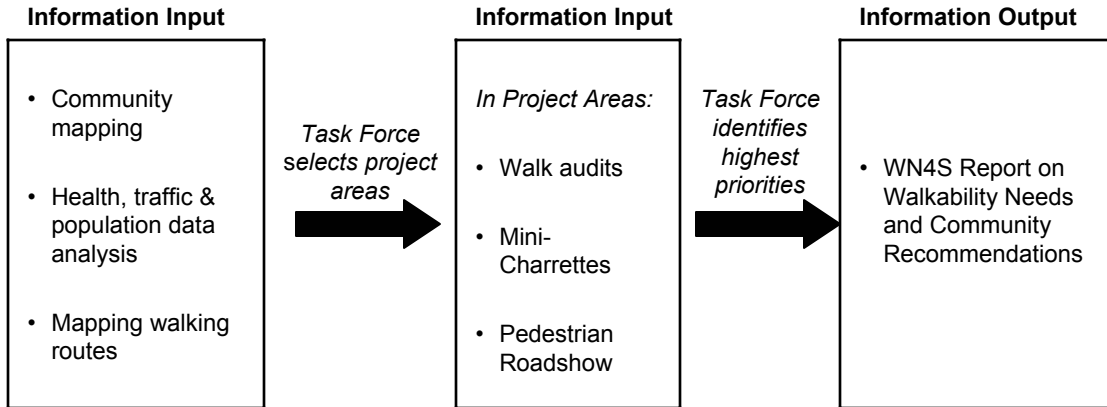
— Approximate boundaries of Boyle Heights (community extends beyond LA City limits)

[5] "Seniors" in this project is defined as persons ages 55 years and older.

Methodology

Project Process

Given the size of Boyle Heights (six square miles) and the pervasiveness of pedestrian safety and access problems, the project used a multi-step process to identify the most significant pedestrian hazards and barriers and to narrow the focus to a few specific streets and geographic areas. Below is a diagram of the decision-making logic and process:



Narrow down to the "Top Five Priority Locations" in Boyle Heights



Task Force

A WN4S Task Force was formed to guide and participate in project activities and help link the project to existing community efforts and opportunities for implementing recommendations. The Task Force consisted of local seniors and residents, senior and neighborhood organizations, city and county agencies and elected officials and other stakeholders. The Task Force outreached to 130 individuals including residents, local leaders and representatives from more than 75 organizations.



Task Force of residents, agencies and community groups



Walkability training for Task Force members



Over 70 individuals mapped

Community Mapping

The project conducted “community mapping” exercises with more than 70 residents and individuals from 11 neighborhood organizations and community agencies (e.g., Neighborhood Council, Resurrection Church Seniors Group, Homeowners Association, Neighborhood Association and Abuelitos de Boyle Heights). Seniors represented the majority (83%) of participants. The process entailed placing enlarged street maps of all areas in Boyle Heights around the room and having participants draw their walking routes and key community destinations and problems they encounter along the way, be it an unsafe crossing, broken sidewalk, trash, gangs or cars not yielding to pedestrians. Appendix A lists the issues identified through community mapping.

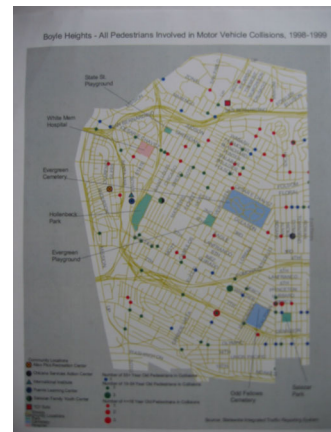
Health, Traffic & Population Data Analysis

Several types of health, transportation and demographic data were analyzed to identify pedestrian injury “hot-spots”; the prevalence of physical inactivity and obesity; areas with high densities of senior residents; and potential engineering countermeasures. Data sources included:

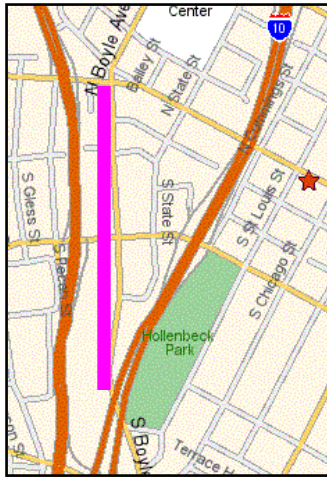
- Pedestrian collision reports for 1998-1999 recorded by police in the Statewide Integrated Traffic Safety Records System (SWITRS)
- Pedestrian injury hospitalizations and deaths for 1998-1999 from the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development Hospital Discharge Data
- Senior densities from the 2000 US Census: www.census.gov
- Obesity and physical activity data from the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services
- Walk audit data recorded by senior and resident walkers on the WN4S Walk Audit Tool (available from IVPP and SHCC)
- Average Daily Traffic (ADT) counts from the City of Los Angeles, Department of Transportation (data was not available for several “hot spots”)



Residents point out hazards & barriers to walking



Data helped identify problem areas



Boyle Avenue Pedestrian Roadshow

- Council member Antonio Villaraigosa hosted the Roadshow in October 2003. Co-sponsors included Abuelitos de Boyle Heights, Metropolitan Transportation Authority, City of Los Angeles Department on Aging, Los Angeles Walks, and Latino Urban Forum
- 30+ residents and representatives from city, county and community agencies participated

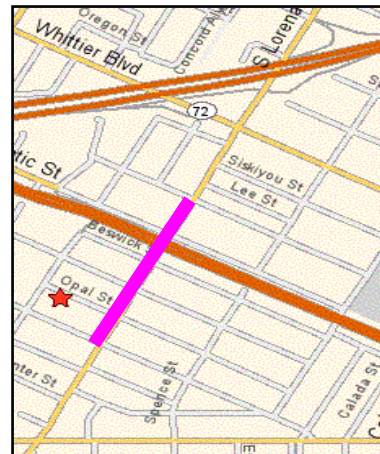


- Participants took a walking tour of the project area and developed consensus on key pedestrian safety and access problems
- Solution and funding ideas were developed including the idea to link recommendations to improvements spurred by the new Eastside Lightrail

The Roadshow was led by Charles Gandy, a nationally recognized expert in walkable communities

Lorena Street Walk Audit and Mini-Charrette

- 16 residents (including members of Resurrection Church and School) attended the walk audit and mini-charrette in January 2004
- Participants received training on traffic calming and making a community more walkable



- Using the audit tool, participants walked the project area and recorded pedestrian safety and access problems along the route
- Participants developed ideas and consensus on improvements needed in a particularly dangerous section of Lorena Street

Issues & Recommendations

“Top Five” Priority Locations

Based on audits, community mapping and collision data, five specific locations emerged as the highest priority for improving safety and making Boyle Heights a more walkable community. The locations were selected because of their pedestrian injury history (especially involving seniors and children), conduciveness to engineering countermeasures, and/or potential to generate significantly more walking among seniors and other residents.

1. Lorena Street: 7th Street to 8th Street

Traffic Characteristics

Cross Street	ADT	Year Counted	Travel Lanes
@ Atlantic	8,665 (NB) 9,954 (SB)	2002	4

Speed Limit = 35 mph

2-Year Pedestrian Crash History = 5

- 2 fatalities at Beswick (including a child)
- 1 senior fatality and 1 child injured at Opal

Issues

This five-block stretch of Lorena jumped out as one of the most dangerous areas to walk in Boyle Heights, particularly for seniors and children. It is a vibrant street, with three elementary schools, two churches, a neighborhood gym and many small businesses. However, heavy industrial truck traffic, speeding motorists, unsafe crossings and lack of yielding to pedestrians create hazardous conditions. Pedestrians are at great risk of “double jeopardy” (being hit in an unsignalized intersection when one lane of cars stop but the other lane of drivers don’t, continuing through the crosswalk).

Observations during the walk audit revealed that drivers routinely speed between signals and trucks speed to make all green signals, often reaching speeds over 40 mph. A few years ago, prompted by a pedestrian death and community activism, the City installed a “smart crosswalk” (overhead flashing beacon) and improved signage at Opal Street. Auditors found that drivers were somewhat more willing to stop for pedestrians at this crossing.



Memorial to a senior hit by a car at Lorena & Opal



Trucks “mix” with school kids at the 7th Street School

Issues & Recommendations



"Smart Crosswalk" at Lorena and Opal



Speeding and lack of yielding to pedestrians along Lorena

Examples from other cities:



Bulbouts make pedestrians more visible to turning motorists

Recommendations

Given the number of schools and community centers, residents recommend that Lorena from Siskiyou to Opal be designated as a school zone. With this, the street would receive all of the treatments required by law including a 25 mph speed limit and improved signage and markings. However, given the street's existing design and driver behaviors, additional measures are needed to slow traffic and improve safety.

To shorten crossing distances and slow turning cars, bulbouts could be added at 7th Street, Atlantic, Opal, and Beswick. Most of these locations have red curbs, making them good candidates for this type of treatment. Alternatively, center median islands could be installed at these intersections (assuming there is adequate space or lanes are narrowed). The effective roadway width appears to increase north of Opal Street, contributing in part to the speeding problem. Narrowing the road and/or lanes could address this problem. Crosswalk markings should be improved, using more effective patterns. At key school crossings, pedestrian-activated pavement lighting or smart crosswalks could be installed. Typically, one traffic calming measure used in isolation is not sufficient to slow traffic, especially where there are high speeds. Improving pedestrian safety and access along Lorena may require several traffic calming measures used in combination.



Medians provide a refuge when crossing the street

Issues & Recommendations



Residents want a cleaner Lorena. They recommend enforcing dumping laws and adding street trees and trash containers.

A particularly difficult challenge in this area is balancing regional industrial uses with commercial and residential uses. Residents repeatedly stated that trucks cut-through and park overnight on residential streets, creating noise, air pollution and pedestrian safety problems. With such a high number of children and seniors in the area, there is a significant risk for pedestrian-truck conflicts, especially at locations where sightlines are blocked (e.g., Atlantic and Lorena). This requires a thorough study and traffic management plan that would contain and calm truck traffic and better reflect the area's mixed uses. However, key pedestrian safety improvements should not necessarily be delayed while a full study is being conducted.

2. Evergreen Avenue: Cesar Chavez to Wabash

Traffic Characteristics

Cross Street	ADT	Year Counted	Travel Lanes
@ Winter	5,395 (NB) 4,842 (SB)	2003	2
@ Cesar Chavez	4,123 (NB) 6,578 (SB)	2002	2+

Speed Limit = 25 mph (prima facia)

2-Year Pedestrian Crash History = 5

- Children hit at Boulder, Cesar Chavez & Fairmount
- Senior hit at Fairmount
- Adult hit at Malabar



Hard to see pedestrians waiting to cross Evergreen

Issues

Evergreen links the northern areas of Boyle Heights to commercial districts along Cesar Chavez and 1st Street and to the Evergreen Jogging Path. An elementary school, businesses, church and famous El Tepeyac restaurant front the street and residential streets surround it, making Evergreen a busy pedestrian environment at various times of the day and week. In a two-year span, five pedestrians, including three children and one senior, were hit and injured along this stretch. The walk audit and community mapping revealed that while the road or lanes are not

Issues & Recommendations



Narrow and broken sidewalks make walking a challenge

overly wide, cars gain excessive speed when traveling downhill, southbound on Evergreen. This along with low pedestrian visibility, lack of yielding to pedestrians, and poorly marked crossings make it dangerous and difficult to cross at all unsignalized intersections. When drivers do stop, they often stop in the crosswalk, blocking the pedestrian pathway.

Examples from other cities



Photo: www.pedbikeimages.org / Michael King

Bollards are a less expensive way to build a bulbout

Recommendations

Like many of the streets studied in this project, the most important safety improvement needed on Evergreen is making it safer and easier to cross the street by slowing

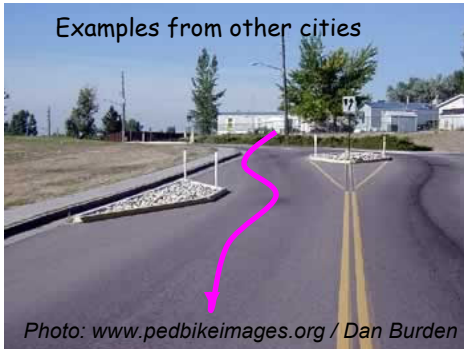


Photo: www.pedbikeimages.org / Dan Burden

Chicanes force drivers to slow down in order to maneuver

cars with traffic calming and creating more prominent crossings. The lower traffic volumes and speed limit along Evergreen allow for the use of bulbouts at particularly busy intersections (Winter, Malabar and Fairmount). Also, on alternating sides of the street, parallel parking could be replaced by head-in (diagonal) parking. This creates a chicane effect and slows cars.

3. Cesar Chavez Avenue: Soto Street to Indiana

Traffic Characteristics

Cross Street	ADT	Year Counted	Travel Lanes
@ Soto	9,585 (EB) 10,114 (WB)	2002	4
@ Evergreen	10,845 (EB) 11,009 (WB)	2002	4+
@ Fresno	9,330 (EB) 10,095 (WB)	2003	4

Issues & Recommendations

Speed Limit = 30 mph

2-Year Pedestrian Crash History = 5

- 1 child severely injured at Fickett
- 1 adult severely injured at Fickett

Issues

This stretch of road encompasses two important but distinctly different uses in the community. Cesar Chavez (West of Evergreen) is the main commercial corridor with the heart of the district at the Soto Street intersection. Cesar Chavez (from Evergreen to Lorena) parallels the Evergreen Jogging/Walking Path, a place of community pride and a much needed resource for recreation and physical activity.

The commercial area of Cesar Chavez serves a high volume of cars and pedestrians. Improving walkability and the amount of “foot traffic” is important for the district’s vitality and commercial success. Walk audits revealed several pedestrian safety and access problems including: lack of safe, designated places to cross Cesar Chavez and pedestrian crossing signals that don’t give seniors and disabled pedestrians enough time to cross; drivers not yielding to pedestrians and stopping in the crosswalk area; sidewalks too narrow to accommodate the volume of pedestrians and public transit facilities; broken and dirty sidewalks; and litter. Routinely, auditors observed young children and families forced to make dangerous maneuvers to cross at the unsignalized t-intersections along Cesar Chavez (Fickett, Matthews, Saratoga, etc.). Pedestrians wait long periods for a safe gap in traffic, inch their way

out into car lanes to get drivers’ attention, and then dash across the street. Most of these intersections lack marked crosswalks and existing signage does not sufficiently influence driver behavior.



The commercial heart of Boyle Heights



Sloped sidewalks are awkward and dangerous for older or disabled walkers

“Wait-Inch-Then-Dash” to cross Cesar Chavez



Issues & Recommendations



Speeds are too high to cross safely at Fresno Street

East of Evergreen, lane widths widen and car speeds increase to 40 mph and more (speed limit is 30 mph). At these speeds, drivers have less time to see and stop for pedestrians. A large number of pedestrians cross to get to the jogging path, but there are too few crossings. In the half-mile between Evergreen and Lorena, Fresno is the only marked (but unsignalized) crossing. Pedestrians must do the same “wait-inch-then-dash” maneuver to cross. Also, the corners at Fresno, Concord and Bernal lack curb ramps, forcing disabled pedestrians into traffic in order to cross the street. (The jogging path is an important resource for improving health and quality of life in Boyle Heights. But, it is equally important that residents be able to walk to the path safely and easily. See Priority #5 for walkability issues and solutions specific to the path.)

Recommendations

Two important changes would greatly improve walkability and vitality in the Cesar Chavez commercial district: creating prominent and safer places to cross and cleaning up and beautifying the area. Several of the t-intersections should receive a dual treatment of corner and mid-block bulbouts and pedestrian activated signals or pavement lighting. A pedestrian “head start” signal could be installed at the Soto and Evergreen intersections (giving pedestrians a few minutes “head start” of cars to cross the street). Also, signal timing at these locations should be adjusted to give slower pedestrians more time to cross in the north-south direction. Crosswalks should be painted and maintained at all intersections. Elected officials and city agencies should work with business owners and community groups on a project to power-wash and maintain clean sidewalks and install more trash receptacles. This should include an educational campaign on littering. The tree planters recently installed on Cesar Chavez by the Boyle Heights Neighborhood Association is an example of how the community is working to beautify and create a greater sense of place.



Example of a pedestrian-activated crossing signal in Highland Park

East of Evergreen, short of increasing the number of safe crossings, the one at Fresno should be improved. Because of prevailing speeds, the solution requires a combination of traffic calming measures along Cesar Chavez and/or installation of a signal at Fresno. Improving crosswalk markings without slowing speeds would only serve to increase the risk to pedestrians. Lane widths could be reduced by re-converting the road’s southern “shoulder” back into a parking lane or by widening the sidewalk to include the parking lane. The distance pedestrians have to cross could be shortened with mid-block and corner bulbouts. A landscaped median along Cesar Chavez would add safety and a gateway into Boyle Heights. Additional

Issues & Recommendations



Examples from other cities:

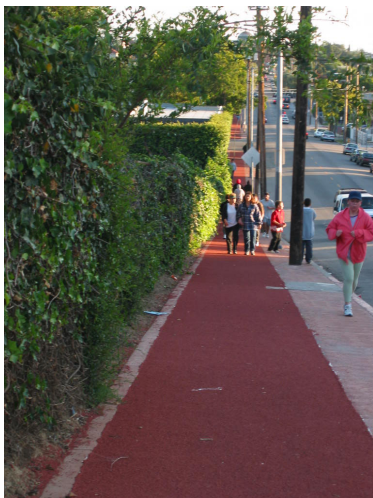
Bulbouts and trees create a walkable business district

street trees would provide shade and aesthetic appeal. Also, parkways on the north side of Cesar Chavez should be maintained or laid over with decorative concrete. The large volume of cars and pedestrians at Evergreen/Cesar Chavez calls for left-turn signals in all directions.



Crosswalks with Latino flare in Highland Park

3. Evergreen Jogging/Walking Path



Issues

Established in 2001, the Evergreen Jogging/Walking Path encircles Evergreen Cemetery. It was built through a combined effort of the community and local elected officials and represents a point of significant community pride as well as a greatly needed recreational resource. Residents of all ages use the path and anecdotal evidence indicates that it has helped raise levels of physical activity. Despite its' increasing popularity, there are several problems with the path. Sidewalks are too narrow to accommodate the growth in use, particularly in key places such as the intersection of Cesar Chavez and Evergreen. In several spots, sidewalks are blocked by utility poles or broken up by tree roots. Bicyclists frequently use the path, making it unsafe and unpleasant for pedestrians (particularly children and seniors). Grass and landscaping on greenways is poorly maintained and the path is often littered with trash. In addition, the path lacks adequate lighting and benches, thereby diminishing safety and accessibility.

Recommendations

Several of the Task Force members and walk auditors were instrumental in the original effort to build the path. They, along with other residents, recommend that the City -- in conjunction with residents -- develop and implement a long-term maintenance plan for the Evergreen Jogging/Walking Path. Such a plan could outline several solutions including: expanding and repairing sidewalks/path; relocating utility poles and other obstacles that block the pedestrian pathway; replacing greenway

Issues & Recommendations

grass with path material or concrete; replacing problematic trees with varieties that don't uproot sidewalks; and adding trash cans and benches. Riding a bicycle on sidewalks is legal in the City of Los Angeles. Hence, the plan could recommend adopting an ordinance that bans this activity in addition to suggesting engineering and educational approaches to reducing bike/pedestrian conflicts on the path.

5. Boyle Avenue: 1st Street to 4th Street

Traffic Characteristics

Cross Street	ADT	Year Counted	Travel Lanes
@ 1 st Street	4,507 (NB) 4,906 (SB)	2002	4

Speed Limit: 35 mph

2-Year Pedestrian Crash History

- None reported



Residents want safe pedestrian access to Hollenbeck Park

Issues

Hundreds of seniors live in residential homes on Boyle Avenue and many more come to the area daily for meal programs and community services. These senior facilities, along with Hollenbeck Park and Puente Learning Center, make Boyle an important location for the community and residents of all ages. It is essential that they are able to walk safely and easily to the park, community centers, and public transit. Boyle Avenue benefits from several basic features of walkability including: wide sidewalks, a mature canopy of street trees and a low volume of car traffic. Yet, the road is excessively wide - encouraging speeding. Also, there are no safe places to cross except at the busy



Site of new Lightrail station at 1st/Boyle

intersections at 1st and 4th. These crossings are too far away to be practical for pedestrians, particularly seniors. So, while no pedestrians were injured between 1998-1999, there are several safety and access barriers to walking on Boyle Avenue.



Boyle Avenue's wide streets pose a danger to pedestrians. Street design standards in other cities allow for narrower lanes on roads with 45 mph or lower speed limit.

Issues & Recommendations

Recommendations

Walkability along Boyle Avenue could be greatly improved by adding mid-block or corner bulb-outs and a pedestrian refuge island at Puente Learning Center. Alternatively, pedestrian-activated signals could be added similar to the one at Hollenbeck Retirement Home. Crosswalk markings should all be improved and maintained. With such low traffic volumes, lane widths could be reduced and/or lanes eliminated (narrowing can be done effectively and relatively inexpensively using painted lines). Diagonal parking could be introduced, adding more parking spaces and narrowing travel lanes. To further calm traffic, diagonal parking could be staggered with parallel parking, creating a chicane effect. Because of the high density of senior residents, broken and uneven sidewalks should be fixed and problematic trees should be replaced by varieties that provide generous shade but don't pose the same root problems.



Pedestrians must walk far to reach a safe crossing on Boyle Avenue

Hollenbeck Park is a greatly underutilized community asset, particularly among seniors and residents living on the southwest side of the park. The entrance at Boyle Avenue actually discourages park use. It is hidden under a freeway, gets covered with mud during rains, and often has loiterers. To begin addressing these issues, the City Department of Parks and Recreation should work with residents and other stakeholders to develop and implement doable solutions.



Cars and other obstacles block the path of pedestrians on Boyle Heights' sidewalks

This stretch of Boyle Avenue is within the half-mile catchment area of the new Eastside Lightrail station at 1st and Boyle. Seniors living in the area need access to public transit and most will travel by foot to the transit station. So, making this a "safe walk to transit" route will improve the Lightrail's success and improve the mobility, health and quality of life of residents. Recommendations provided in this report should be linked to efforts by the City or Metropolitan Transportation Agency (MTA) to improve walkability in areas around Lightrail stations.



Wide, straight, uninterrupted roads with long vistas encourage speeding

“Needed All Over” Improvements

Incorporate into Routine Maintenance and Capital Improvement Plans

In addition to the “Top Five” priority locations, the project identified a number of long-standing maintenance and safety needs that were found in every area of the community. Residents repeatedly identified gang activity and fears for personal safety as a major barrier, keeping them from walking where they would like to go or feeling unsafe in the process. For seniors, personal safety is one of the most significant factors that prevent them from walking in their community. While City budgets are constrained, improvements for many of the pervasive street and hardscape issues could be done gradually and at minimal additional cost as part of redevelopment projects and as routine road improvements occur (see next section for other funding ideas).

Wherever possible, the City should:

- ✓ Repair broken sidewalks
- ✓ Replace street trees that buckle sidewalks
- ✓ Remove trash, clean sidewalks, add more trash containers
- ✓ Increase length of pedestrian cross-signals along east-west running roads (for the north-south crossing)
- ✓ Enforce stray dog ordinances
- ✓ Address vendors that block sidewalks and leave them dirty
- ✓ Reduce lane widths (or perceived width) and remove excessive lanes
- ✓ Add bulbouts to shorten crossing distance, slow cars, improve visibility
- ✓ Install pedestrian lighting, especially in areas with lots of seniors
- ✓ Use diagonal parking
- ✓ Improve/maintain crosswalk markings
- ✓ Conduct education campaign for drivers and pedestrians
- ✓ Use mid-block pedestrian signals
- ✓ Enforce dumping laws
- ✓ Plant street trees and re-landscape parkways
- ✓ Add landscaped medians
- ✓ Enforce sidewalk laws, remove utility or other obstacles on sidewalk
- ✓ Implement walking and bicycling promotion programs



Auditors find broken sidewalks all over the community



Blocked sidewalk and dead landscaping near Cinco Puntos

Next Steps & Funding

Next Steps

The Walkable Neighborhoods for Seniors project provided the residents of Boyle Heights with an opportunity to come together to identify needs and priorities for making their community safer and more walkable -- for seniors and for everyone. It helped seniors, neighborhood groups and residents begin developing a vision for how they would like their community to look. It also introduced these issues and design concepts to local elected officials and City agencies. However, this project is only a beginning. Ensuring that recommendations are implemented will require consistent advocacy from the community, commitment from City agencies, and leadership and assistance from elected officials and local and county organizations. Towards that end, Safe and Healthy Communities Consulting provides the following as suggested next steps:

- ❑ LA County Department of Health Services should formally present and give this report to the Task Force and residents and elected representatives from Boyle Heights. The Department should continue to serve a facilitative and technical assistance role in the community.
- ❑ LA County Department of Health Services should develop and provide the community with a simple list of city and county agency and department contacts so residents know who to call to solve routine maintenance problems
- ❑ The community and elected representatives, working with the LA County Department of Health Services and other key organizations, should formally present this report to the City Departments of Transportation, Public Works, Planning and Redevelopment and other agencies that can implement recommendations
- ❑ The community and elected representatives should use this report as a tool to increase awareness of pedestrian safety and access issues in Boyle Heights and leverage funding and resources for implementing recommendations
- ❑ The City should immediately address the most dangerous pedestrian safety locations identified by the project (i.e., Lorena Street and Evergreen Street)
- ❑ The community and elected representatives, in conjunction with the City, MTA and other stakeholders, should choose one or two of the “Top Five” locations for comprehensive redesign and to serve as demonstration projects. A consultant with expertise in pedestrian-oriented design should be hired to lead the community visioning process, conduct engineering studies and develop designs for the selected locations
- ❑ The City, working with the community and other stakeholders, should identify internal revenues and outside funding opportunities to pay for recommended improvements, maintenance and the demonstration projects
- ❑ The City should revise its street design standards to reflect current understanding and technologies for pedestrian-oriented design and existing state policies regarding pedestrian and bicycle accommodation

Next Steps & Funding

Funding

Funding is often the main stumbling block for communities to get needed pedestrian improvements. The community and City should examine and identify local revenues that can be shifted towards Boyle Heights. In addition, described below are several other funding sources to consider for the planning, engineering or construction of recommended improvements. Most importantly, having gone through this process of identifying problems and developing consensus on priorities, the Boyle Heights community is now better positioned to leverage both local and outside funding.

Link to existing projects

There are a few major redevelopment and transportation projects in the works in Boyle Heights and each provides an opportunity to integrate and fund the WN4S recommendations. The new Eastside Lightrail line provides an important vehicle for implementing recommendations. As funding comes available for street and pedestrian improvements near the 1st/Boyle and 1st/Soto stations, the WN4S recommendations could be integrated into grant proposals and design projects.

The Adelante Redevelopment project has the potential to bring major improvements to buildings and commercial areas on all major east-west roads in Boyle Heights. WN4S recommendations for Cesar Chavez Boulevard could be linked to the Adelante Project. In addition, any existing or future redevelopment and capital improvement projects in Boyle Heights should build in the “Do Everywhere” improvements.

Bring in outside grants

Several state and federal grant programs provide funding opportunities:

- Safe Routes to School Grants – the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) offers grants to local communities to improve children’s pedestrian access and safety along school routes. Two of the “Top Five” priority locations (Lorena and Evergreen) have nearby schools, lots of grandparents walking children to school and high numbers of pedestrian injuries among children and seniors, all of which make a strong case for a multi-generational safe routes to school project.
- Transportation and Environmental Justice Grants – Caltrans and federal transportation agencies have also both offered grants to communities to reduce the social and environmental inequities that result from transportation policies and practice. A strong proposal for Boyle Heights could address the safety and quality of life disparities and impacts related to Lorena’s industrial truck traffic.
- Caltrans Community Grants – local Caltrans offices provide grant support to communities to conduct outreach and planning around pedestrian safety. This type of grant could be used to further the community visioning and planning process in at least one of the priority locations.

Appendix A: Community Mapping Data

ZIPCODE 90033	
Location	Problems
Boyle Ave.	No crosswalk for kids, seniors, others using Puente Learning Center and International Institute
Boyle Ave. btw. 1 st and 4 th	No crosswalks or safe places to cross between these two streets; cars going too fast; seniors living at Kato Retirement Home and other
Bridge @ 4 th	Homes are getting stopped by police for j-walking Bridge has benches but no lights
4 th under Santa Ana Fwy	Dark and homeless under bridge
4 th & Boyle	Lots of trucks; senior was hit and killed by truck here
4 th & Boyle	Reversible lanes create lots of accidents
4 th under Santa Ana Fwy	Dark and homeless under bridge
LA river north of 1st	No walking route along the river
I-5 crossing near Cesar Chavez	No safe crossing near the freeway on-off ramps
Library @ Wabash	Have to drive to go to library
Mott btw. Cesar Chavez & Boulder	Lots of homeless; uncomfortable for pedestrians
Judson/Soto/Bird/St. Louis	Crime and gangs
Judson/Soto/Bird/St. Louis	Graffiti; threat to children/families/walkers
Fickett btw. 1 st and Cesar Chavez	Security; fear for personal safety
Fickett btw. 1 st and Cesar Chavez	Security; fear for personal safety
Breed/Fickett/ Cincinnati/Boulder	High crime area
Park off of Bridge	Nice place to rest
1500 Bridge street	Tree problem in front of San Antonio de Padua
Cesar Chavez/ Echandia/Pleasant	Not safe; no one walks in this area
Cesar Chavez & Pleasant	Gangs; movie industry
N. St. Louis btw. Cesar Chavez & Sheridan	Dirty restaurants & apartments; trash bins overloaded
Fickett/Winter/Mott/ Wabash	High crime area
Cesar Chavez/Soto	Need great improvements to be more attractive to customers
1 st & Matthews	Needs better lighting
Breed/Michigan	High crime area
Marengo/State/USC	Needs better lighting; maintenance; plants
1 st btw. Mott & Savannah	Sidewalks broken from trees in front of Tenryko Church
Alley behind Matthews btw. 1 st and 6 th	Alley behind Matthews needs "Not a Through Street" sign
Matthews btw. 1 st and 2nd	Broken sidewalk
Matthews btw. 6 th and 3 rd	Dogs
Matthews btw. 6 th and 3 rd	Lose dogs
Evergreen btw. 1 st & Cesar Chavez	Trash; too many strollers on pathway; unleashed dogs; dog mess
Cesar Chavez near Evergreen	Dogs
2800 Forest street	Sidewalk
Soto & Michigan	Dogs
Mission btw. 1 st & Freeways	No trees; very dirty
State & Cesar Chavez	Clean-up; beautify
Fickett & Fairmount	Drug dealers
Fickett & Fairmount	Unleashed dogs

Appendix A: Community Mapping Data

ZIPCODE 90063

4 th street btw. Lorena & Indiana	Traffic is too fast; traffic doesn't stop at crosswalks
2 nd street btw. Lorena & Indiana	Cracked sidewalks from tree roots; kids throw firecrackers at walkers
Velasco at 3 rd Place	Cracked sidewalks from tree roots
Lanfranco & Estudillo Street	Too much trash; too much graffiti
Lorena south of 1 st	Heavy truck traffic
Lorena near Evergreen cemetery	Speeding traffic
Lorena near Evergreen cemetery	Parking
Cesar Chavez btw Lorena & Evergreen	Speeding traffic
Lanfranco btw Ditman & Rowan	Bad sidewalks
Cesar Chavez near Rowan	Broken sidewalks
Hazard & Snow	Uneven sidewalks
Hazard & Snow	Need a stop light
Hazard near Snow/City Terrace	Speeding traffic
Euclid	Heavy traffic
Euclid	Broken sidewalks
Eastern btw. Blanchard & City Terrace	Speeding traffic
Area btw. Whitside and Ellison	Lose and dangerous dogs
Area btw. Whitside and Ellison	Lose and dangerous dogs
Dunn & Ellison	Dogs; hills
Dunn and Whiteside	Dogs
Fresno street & Cesar Chavez	Signal needed to cross to Evergreen cemetery

ZIPCODE 90023

Indiana btw. Whittier & Olympic	Heavy truck traffic and trucks parking overnight
Lorena btw. Whittier & Olympic	Heavy truck traffic and trucks parking overnight; near several schools
Lorena btw. Whittier & Olympic	Improve sidewalks
Euclid btw. Whittier & Olympic	Improve sidewalks
Whittier @ Odd Fellows Cemetery	Broken sidewalks

8 th /Mirasol	Intersection needs improved signage
8 th	Bike route has no bike lane
8 th & Euclid	Heavy truck traffic and trucks parking overnight; poor air quality from idling trucks
Olympic btw. Mirasol & Del La Torre	No handicap ramps
6 th & Lorena	No crosswalk or light at school crossing
Walking path at Lorena/60 Fwy/Percy	Unkempt and dangerous dogs
Soto & Whittier	Heavy truck traffic
Olympic & Soto	Heavy truck traffic and MTA
Whittier/Spence/Sabina/Esperanza	Gangs
Whittier/Spence/Sabina/Esperanza	Gangs
Indiana & Percy	Need a crosswalk

Appendix A: Community Mapping Data

ZIPCODE 90023	
Indiana & Percy	Dangerous for school kids crossing at unsafe crossing/no markings or stops
Soto/Guirado/Mott/ Whittier	Heavy car volume; cars don't stop at crossings
Opal & Esperanza	Uneven sidewalks
Whittier btw. Spence & Lorena	Sidewalk needs repair
Lorena & 8 th	Sidewalks need repair
8 th btw. Lorena & Soto	Several trucks selling food
Lorena & Olympic	Clean streets
Lorena & Whittier	Sidewalks are greasy, slippery from food vendors
Lorena & Whittier	Uneven sidewalks
Opal and Lorena	Cars do not stop for pedestrians crossing intersection; one known fatality
Olympic btw. Calada & Soto	Vendors in the street
Esperanza & Percy	Trash
Estrada & Lorena	Need benches
Esperanza near Whittier	Illegal car shops
Whittier before Euclid	Truck with food
E. 11 th btw. Dacotah and Ome	Gangs
Olympic/Grande Vista/Lorena area	Gangs
Lorena & 8 th	Trash dumped
Spence & Estrada	Cars parked on sidewalks & driveways; open gates; wrong trees planted on sidewalks; broken sidewalks
Opal & Lorena	Change smart light to a regular signal
Lorena (south of 8 th)	Sidewalk cracked from tree roots
7 th & Lorena	Crossing signal too short; too many 18-wheeler trucks
Olympic & Mirasol	Crossing Signal too short
Lorena & Siskiyou	Trash in alley behind the McDonalds
Duclid/Garnet/Fresno/8 th	More trees to protect seniors
Garnet & S. Evergreen	A stoplight to cross the street
Whittier & Soto	Roots from trees repaired but still unsafe
8 th & Rosalind	Needs a stoplight
Matthews & Whittier	Church but not crosswalk; seniors cross mid-block
ZIPCODE 90022	
Cesar Chavez near McDonnel	Need more quality of life improvements

Appendix B: Process and Rationale for Selecting Project Areas

Information collected from data analyses and community mapping was combined onto a series of maps and presented to the Task Force to use in selecting geographic areas for the built environment component of the project. The maps showed the walking routes of residents; density of seniors; locations of pedestrian hazards or barriers; sites of pedestrian collisions and severity of injury; and important community locations (e.g., schools, parks, and neighborhood service centers). Based on this information, the Task Force decided to focus on the parts of Boyle Heights that lie within LA City limits. They selected three areas where issues and problems overlapped and which met several of the following criteria:

- A concentration of pedestrian collisions (especially among seniors and children)
- Identified by residents as a pedestrian problem area
- A popular or common place where seniors and residents walk
- High concentration of seniors living in the area
- Has potential to be a pedestrian magnet/generator
- Already has or can generate community support and leverage funding

The selected project areas included:

Evergreen Project Area

- Moderate to high density of seniors live in the area (7% -20%)
- An important community destination and point of community pride
- High pedestrian usage by all age groups and potential to grow as a pedestrian magnet
- Identified by residents as a pedestrian problem area, especially car speeds and not enough safe crossings
- A resource for recreation and physical activity
- Potential to get improvement funds from City or other sources, especially if linked to pedestrian improvements planned for the 1st/Soto Eastside Lightrail station

Boyle Avenue Project Area

- Multiple senior residential homes and high density of seniors (15% -20%)
- Identified by residents as a pedestrian problem area, especially lack of safe places to cross
- Near a location for recreational physical activity (Hollenbeck Park)
- Potential to get improvement funds from City or other sources, especially if linked to pedestrian improvements planned for the 1st/Boyle Eastside Lightrail station

Lorena Street Project Area

- One of the highest numbers of pedestrian collisions (including fatalities to children and seniors)
- Identified by residents as a major pedestrian problem area, especially car speeds, truck traffic and unsafe crossings
- Several key community locations including two churches, three elementary schools and a gymnasium
- High pedestrian usage by all age groups and one of the most underserved areas of Boyle Heights