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Berkeley SafeTREC  
SAFE TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER



# Comunidades Activas y Seguras (Safe and Active Communities), Stevenson Middle School Executive Summary & Recommendations Report



**Comunidades Activas y Seguras**  
*Creating streets that are easy to walk and bike on*

**Funded by a grant from**  
the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety  
Administration



**Stevenson Middle School in Los Angeles, CA**

## Acknowledgments

Thank you to the Planning Committee for inviting us into their community and partnering with us to make the Stevenson Middle School community a safer place to walk and bike. In particular, their contributions prompted meaningfully informed discussions and strengthened the workshop's outcomes. We thank Valerie Hernandez for providing simultaneous interpretation from Spanish to English during the workshop. We also want to acknowledge the Tongva, Kizh, and Chumash peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Boyle Heights in East Los Angeles.

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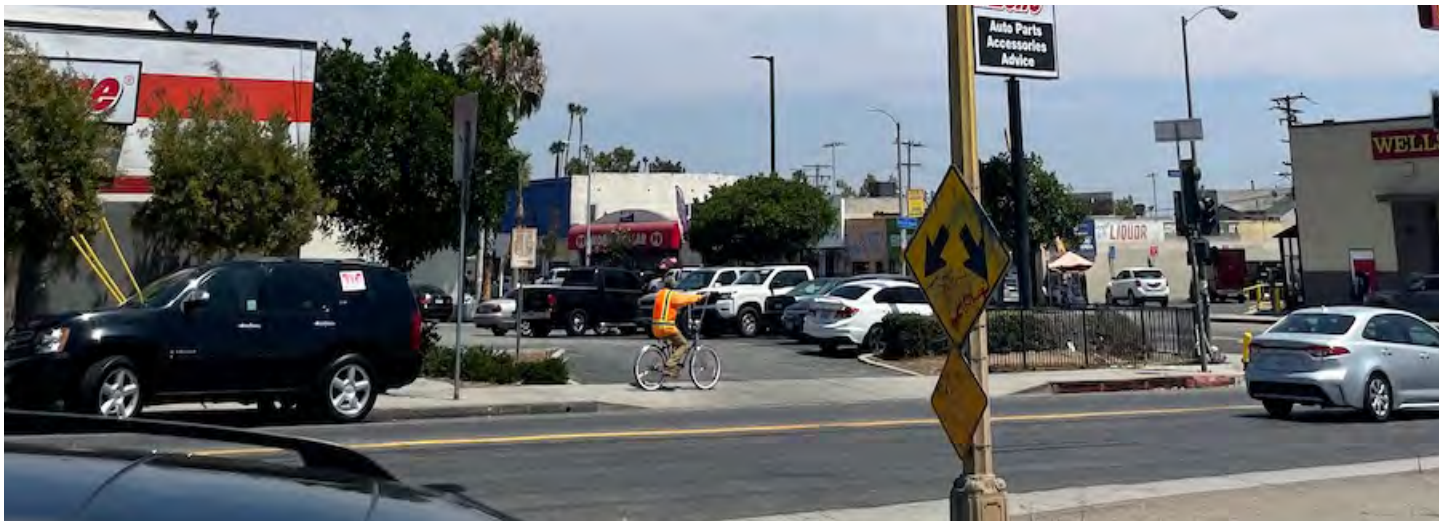
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This report was prepared in cooperation with the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS). The opinions, findings and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of OTS.

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*A bicyclist rides on the sidewalk near the South Indiana Street/Whittier Boulevard intersection.*

## Introduction

Comunidades Activas y Seguras (Active and Safe Communities) is a statewide program of California Walks (Cal Walks) and the University of California at Berkeley's Safe Transportation Research and Education Center (SafeTREC). This program caters to the needs of monolingual Spanish speakers by providing a culturally sensitive and relevant curriculum that aims to improve walking and biking safety in communities in California.

The training for the Stevenson Middle School Community in East Los Angeles was collaboratively planned and facilitated by Partnership for Los Angeles Schools, the Planning Committee, Cal Walks, and SafeTREC to:

1. Create safe routes for students walking and biking to and from Stevenson Middle School;
2. Identify traffic calming strategies that reduce driver speeds and reduce conflict among all road users in the area surrounding Stevenson Middle School; and
3. Advocate for infrastructure improvements to increase safety when crossing in the areas surrounding Stevenson Middle School.

The virtual training was held on July 12, 2022 and convened 25 participants, including Promesa Boyle Heights Collective led by Proyecto Pastoral, Stevenson Middle School administrators, and residents. The training consisted of a:

- Visioning activity where participants imagine an ideal street in their community by drawing or building it using small household items;
- Virtual walking and biking assessment of the community to identify pedestrian and bicycle safety concerns and road user behavior patterns; and
- Radionovela activity where participants use the power of storytelling to create a mini podcast episode that can be used for continued walking and biking safety advocacy.



## Background and Pedestrian and Bicycle Crash Data

The Office of Traffic Safety Crash Rankings show that, in 2019, Los Angeles ranked 4 out of 15 cities of similar population size for people killed or injured in a traffic crash (with a ranking of “1” indicating the worst). It ranked “4” for pedestrian crashes and “6” for bicycle crashes.

Within the focus area of the Stevenson Middle School community in East Los Angeles, 30 percent of households include at least one resident with one or more disabilities and 29 percent of households do not own a vehicle. The majority of the community, 62 percent, is between the ages of 18 and 65, and 29 percent of the community live below the poverty level. Many residents rely on public transit, walking, or carpooling to get around the neighborhood even though they feel unsafe because of speeding drivers, narrow sidewalks, and proximity to highways. Nearly one-fifth, 19.1 percent, of the community walks or takes public transit to work.

The following data is based on police-reported pedestrian and bicycle crashes resulting in injuries to pedestrians and bicyclists in the Stevenson Middle School neighborhood. Data reported in this section are from the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records Systems (SWITRS) for the years 2010 to 2019. Crash data for 2019 is provisional as of December 2020.

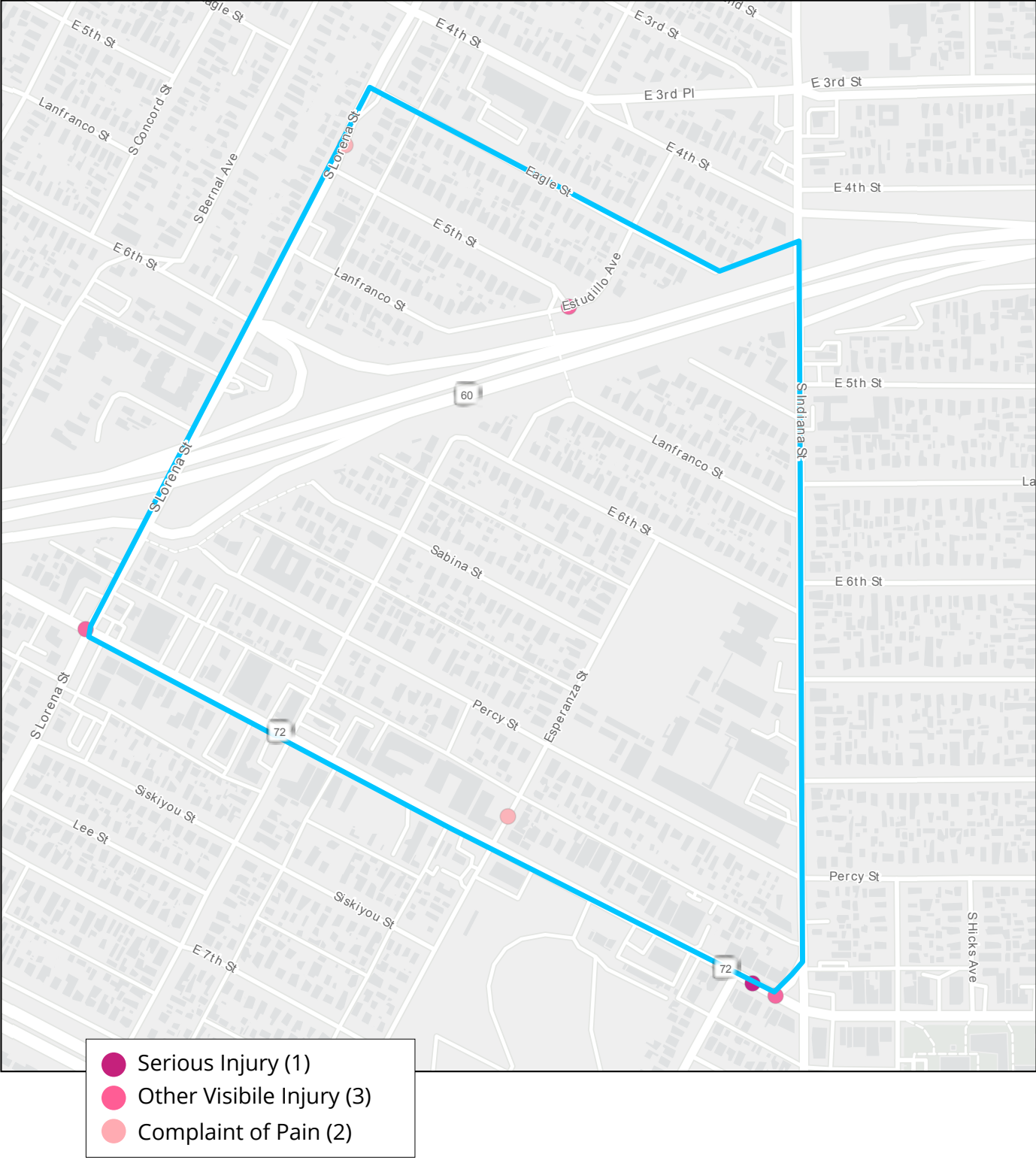
In the years 2016 to 2020, there were 25 pedestrian crashes resulting in injuries to 27 pedestrians. Pedestrian crashes peaked in 2019, and then significantly dropped in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly one-half of the victims, 48.1 percent, were adults 60 and older or children and young adults 19 or younger. Pedestrian crashes concentrated on South Lorena Street, near State Route 60, and on Whittier Boulevard.

Similarly, from 2016 to 2020, there were six bicycle crashes resulting in injuries to six male bicyclists. While none of these crashes resulted in a death, five victims had severe or other visible injuries. At least two bicycle crashes occurred at the South Indiana Street/Whittier Boulevard intersection, which was the same location as some pedestrian crashes.

Figure 1: Pedestrian Injury Crashes



Figure 2: Bicycle Injury Crashes





 **Walking & Biking Assessment**

During the workshop, participants took part in a virtual walking and biking safety assessment along a major corridor frequented by students and other community residents. Participants were asked to identify community assets, assess infrastructure conditions, and share how road users engage with the built environment.

**Route**

The focus for the community walking and biking assessment was the major corridor surrounding Stevenson Middle School: South Indiana Street between State Route 60 and Whittier Boulevard.

**South Indiana Street Assets**



1. The Plaza Community Services Center at the South Indiana Street/Princeton Street intersection provides families and community members with access to low-cost child care services. Access to affordable childcare services can alleviate financial hardship for residents in the area who may fall under the poverty line.

2. The Metro bus line 665 is available to students who rely on public transportation to travel to and from school at the South Indiana Street/Hubbard Street intersection. The bus line travels from South Indiana Street/East Olympic Boulevard to California State University, Los Angeles transit center.

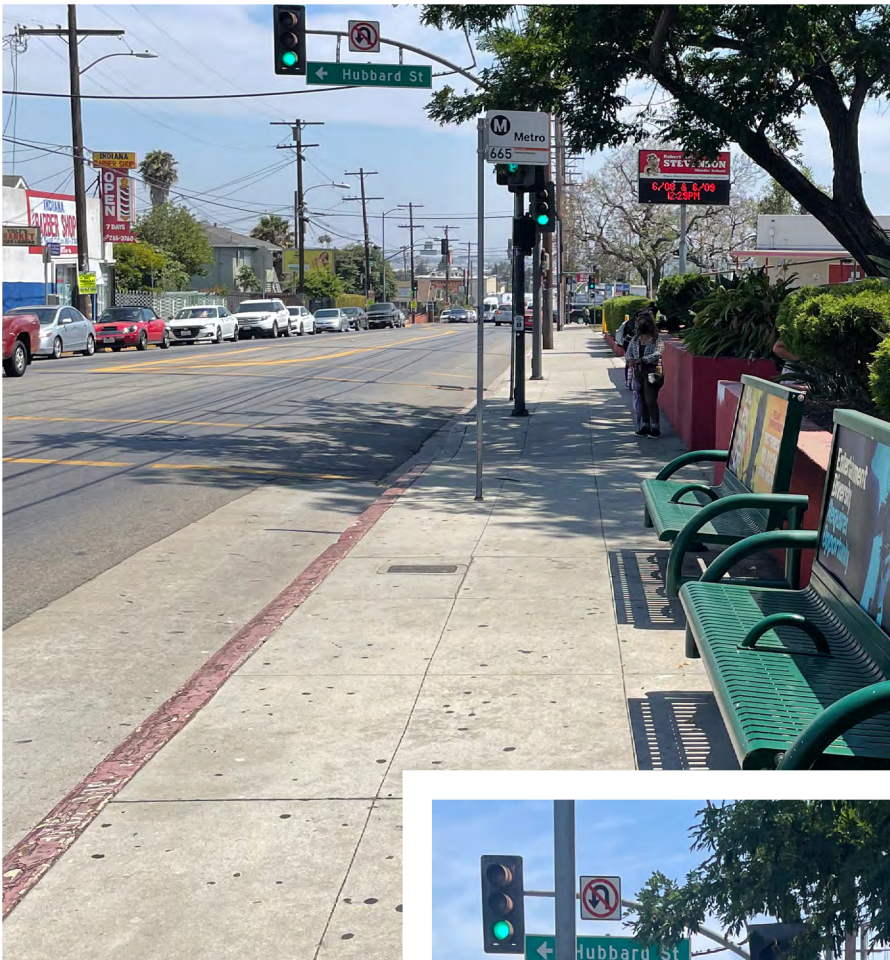
3. The high-visibility crosswalks at the signalized intersection of South Indiana Street/Percy Street have improved pedestrian visibility in front of the school. This crossing improvement was accomplished through three years of advocacy by Stevenson Middle School parents, who garnered support from Los Angeles County Public Works and the Los Angeles Department of Transportation.

4. The Indiana Dairy Market convenience store at the South Indiana Street/Percy Street intersection provides students with access to healthy food and snacks.



*Top: Students crossing at the high-visibility crosswalk on the South Indiana Street/ Percy Street intersection during school dismissal. Bottom: The Indiana Dairy Market at the southwest corner of the South Indiana Street/Percy Street intersection, directly across from Stevenson Middle School provides access to healthy food and snacks.*

## Walking and Biking Assessment: Assets



*Top & Bottom: The bus route near the South Indiana Street/Hubbard Street intersection is used by community members and students who rely on public transportation to travel in their communities.*

## South Indiana Street Concerns



### Challenges Along South Indiana Street

1. Semi-trailer trucks use South Indiana Street to access State Route 60. Parents and community members shared that drivers enter and exit the highway at speeds higher than the posted speed limit which makes it feel unsafe for people crossing the streets.

2. Sidewalks on South Indiana Street are too narrow for people using strollers and mobility assistance devices to travel safely. Utility poles and electricity boxes further narrow the space available for pedestrians.

3. South Indiana Street does not have designated bike lanes. Bicyclists sharing the road with drivers along South Indiana Street often have to watch for unsafe driver behaviors, such as speeding. Bicyclists risk injury from people opening car doors (“dooring”) when they are parked along both sides of the road.

4. There is no posted school signage traveling southbound on South Indiana Street. Drivers traveling in this direction are not alerted to the school zone and youth traveling in the area. This may exacerbate unsafe driver behavior, such as speeding, which increases traffic risk to pedestrians and bicyclists and makes them feel unsafe.

## South Indiana Street Concerns (continued)



### Near-Miss Experiences at Hubbard Street

5. Drivers turning left onto South Indiana Street from Hubbard Street encroach on the crosswalk as they speed up to make the light. Students crossing the street often hurry to cross the street or are forced to walk in between cars blocking the crosswalk, which creates near-misses for pedestrians.

### Limitations Related to the School Entrance on Percy Street

6. There is only one entrance to Stevenson Middle School along Percy Street during arrival and dismissal times. Limited school entrances, a lack of a designated drop-off/pick-up location, and double parked drivers increases traffic congestion on Percy Street, which impacts traffic flow on South Indiana Street. Students may be dropped off and picked up by vehicles stopped in the middle of the road, which blocks visibility and creates the potential for near misses between all road users. Traffic congestion resulting from these behaviors and patterns on Percy Street lead to backed up traffic blocking crosswalks at the Percy Street/South Indiana Street intersection, which forces pedestrians to walk between cars and creates the potential for near misses between all road users.
7. Students cross mid-block at the South Indiana Street/Princeton Street intersection to access the school entrance near the parent center during arrival times. Drivers may not expect to see pedestrians here which creates injury risk and the potential for near misses between road users. The only designated entrance is on Percy Street, which is further away for students living north of the school. Limited designated school entrances mean students cross at this intersection to avoid being tardy. Drivers double-park along Princeton Street to wait for students during dismissal, restricting vehicle flow on the travel lanes and increasing traffic congestion.

## Walking and Biking Assessment: Concerns



*Top: Trailer trucks often speed as they exit State Route 60, located northbound on South Indiana Street. Speeding drivers make the area feel unsafe for people walking and biking. Left: Students walk northbound on South Indiana Street, towards the South Indiana Street/Princeton Street intersection. Right: The only school zone sign on northbound South Indiana Street has faded. Signs like this should be high-visibility and easy for drivers to see.*

## Walking and Biking Assessment: Concerns



*Top Left:* Drivers line up on Percy Street as early as thirty minutes before school dismissal times. This often leads to double and triple parking as more drivers arrive closer to the time school lets out. *Top Right:* A student hurries to cross the street at the South Indiana Street/Hubbard Street intersection. *Bottom:* Drivers block the crosswalk at the South Indiana Street/Percy Street intersection forcing students to cross the street between cars.



## Project Team Recommendations

The Project Team offers the community the following recommendations based on the community's walking and biking safety concerns and Safe System strategy priorities.



### Develop a Safe Routes to School Program

The Project Team recommends the Planning Committee partner with Stevenson Middle School and Partnership Los Angeles to develop a [Safe Routes to School](#) (SRTS) program to identify the best routes to and from Stevenson Middle School and to engage students and parents while encouraging safe mobility within school communities. The SRTS program can kick-off with a [Walk to School Day event](#) in October, which may be supported by resources provided by the [Los Angeles Department of Transportation Safe Routes to School](#) program. Typically Walk to School Day events feature a [Walking School Bus](#) organized and planned with the support of school administrators, parents, students, and volunteers. The Walking School Bus Guide provides detailed information for organizers to plan a Walk to School Day route in their community.



### Launch a School Safety Valet Program

The Project Team recommends the Planning Committee partner with Stevenson Middle School and Partnership Los Angeles to launch a school safety valet program to help enhance the safety of students traveling to school. A school safety valet program creates a drop-off and/or pick-up zone for students traveling by car and can help address the safety challenges on Percy Street and Indiana Street—e.g. traffic congestion, student mid-block crossing, and double-parked vehicles. [Launching a School Safety Valet Program](#) in a Los Angeles Unified School District school could be supported by the [Office of Environmental Health and Safety](#) (OEHS). The OEHS office reviews the implementation process and coordinates a site visit to confirm valet drop-off locations in preparation for a successful safety valet program.

The following are additional resources that can facilitate the implementation of a safety valet program.

- The [Safety Valet General Information](#) provides more information about the safety valet program.
- The [School Safety Valet Program Kit](#) provides a detailed list of materials needed for implementation and OEHS contact information.





### Safety Messaging Campaign

The Project Team recommends the Planning Committee work with Stevenson Middle School to develop a community-led walking and biking safety messaging campaign where safety messages for all road users can be placed in the surrounding areas of the school, including utility boxes, bus shelters, and key conflict intersections. The messaging campaign would target key areas where unsafe driver behavior tends to occur, especially around school arrival and dismissal time. Residents have identified South Indiana Street as the area to target for safety messaging because of the amount of foot traffic from students and continuous unsafe driver behavior. Community residents and students can participate in the campaign by modeling safe walking and biking to encourage active modes of transportation. The campaign may include messaging for drivers to stay alert to other road users. Southern California Association of Government’s [Go Human Safety Campaign](#) can serve as a model and a funding source for this campaign.



### Request a Bus Shelter at the South Indiana Street/Hubbard Street Bus Stops

The Project Team recommends that the Planning Committee reconvenes with staff from the Los Angeles County Public Works (LACPW) engineering division to continue discussions about infrastructure improvements, such as installing a bus shelter at the bus stops on both sides of the South Indiana Street/Hubbard Street intersection. LACPW leads [Transit Capital Projects](#) that include bus stop improvements and amenities projects.



### Crossing Guard Program

The Project Team recommends the Planning Committee work with Stevenson Middle School and LAUSD to begin a crossing guard program for the South Indiana Street/Percy Street intersection to provide a safe crossing area for students during arrival and dismissal times. The Planning Committee can use [Elements of an Adult School Crossing Guard Program](#) to guide the development of a program and use [LADOT Crossing Guard](#) to apply for LADOT to fund crossing guards.



### Crosswalk Improvements at South Indiana Street/Whittier Boulevard & South Indiana Street/Princeton Street Intersections

The Project Team recommends that the Planning Committee partner with Partnership Los Angeles to seek funding to install decorative crosswalks at two key intersections: South Indiana Street/Princeton Street intersection and South Indiana Street/Whittier Boulevard intersection. Both intersections are top community priorities because they are used by students, parents, and other community members. The South Indiana Street/Whittier Boulevard intersection remains a top priority due to the two

## Recommendations

pedestrian and one bicycle crashes that occurred in the last five years, 2016 to 2020. [GoHuman's Kit of Parts](#) could provide the community with a temporary demonstration of an artistic crosswalk to help increase visibility at the South Indiana Street/Princeton Street intersection. This temporary demonstration is an opportunity for the community to experience potential new infrastructure. The kit includes a survey that can be adapted and used to gather community feedback about this proposed improvement.

- The Kit of Parts is part of the [GoHuman: Resilient Streets Toolkit](#) which promotes a community-driven approach to identifying and implementing strategies that promote pedestrian and biking safety.
- The [Kit of Parts Info Sheet](#) gives an overview of the different treatments available.
- The [Kit of Parts Evaluation Survey](#) is available in English and Spanish and serves as a template for evaluating the installation of temporary treatments.

Following the decorative crosswalk demonstration, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has a number of opportunities for community organizations to receive funding that could support temporary solutions like decorative crosswalks. While this is a quick build or short-term solution, the Project Team also recommends that the Planning Committee work with Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) to find a long-term solution to make crosswalk safety enhancements at these intersections.



### Speed Feedback Radar Sign on South Indiana Street

The Project Team recommends Partnership Los Angeles and the Planning Committee requests a speed feedback radar sign on South Indiana Street from the Los Angeles County Public Works (LACPW). LACPW can conduct traffic studies at the request of residents, community groups, and school organizations and prepare a report with recommendations. LACPW connects the requester with a Traffic Investigator who will discuss their concerns and communicate their findings after study is completed.

[Los Angeles County Public Works, Request a Traffic Study](#)

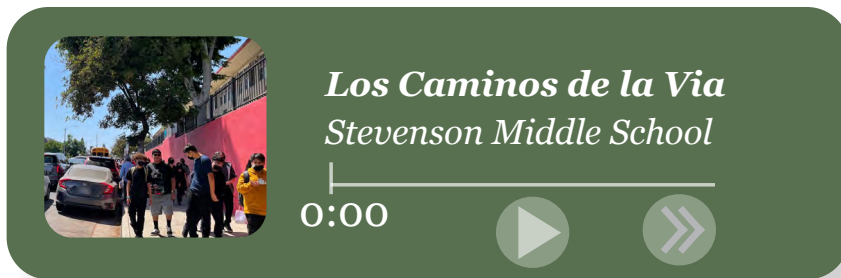
[Request Form: Speed Limit](#)

The Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) [Engineering Offices](#) can also serve as a point of contact for public inquiries about traffic safety concerns.

## Los Caminos de la Vía Radionovela

During the training, participants created a Radionovela, a podcast that highlights community concerns and proposes solutions through the power of storytelling. This audio-visual project is intended to be used as a tool for advocacy to create their local community visions for a healthy walkable and bikeable community. This episode and all past Caminos de las Vía podcasts can be found on Soundcloud using the link <https://bit.ly/los-caminos-de-la-via>. A transcript of the Radionovela can be found in the appendix of this report.

This episode highlights the experience of community members and students walking to and from Stevenson Middle School, challenges with local jurisdictions, and the need for collaboration to push forward proposed solutions. Participants shared the need for infrastructure improvements, including installing high-visibility crosswalks to increase pedestrian visibility, traffic calming measures that target speeding drivers, and general safety awareness that involves residents, the school community, and city agencies to move safety plans forward. To read a transcript of the audio, see Appendix A.



Visit <https://bit.ly/los-caminos-de-la-via> or scan the QR Code to listen to the Stevenson Middle School community Radionovela!

## Appendix

### A. Los Caminos de la Vía Radionovela

Stevenson Middle School community answered the following questions to build their Los Caminos de la Vía Radionovela:

- **What would make your community feel safer to walk or bike? What changes do you want to see in your community?**
- **Do you have a story or experience that shows why these changes are necessary?**
- **Who should be supporting and listening to these experiences?**
- **What would it take for others in your community to support this work?**



### *Transcript Translated From Spanish Audio*

**Community Member:** That there were things around the school, things that our children need. Like a library, a park, a place where they can play safely. More trees, flowers, as the lady said, more or less my interpretation of a safe place for it to be around our children's schools.

### **Introduction**

**Host:** Hello everyone! Welcome to our new episode of the Caminos de la Vía. Los Caminos de la Vía is a project of California Walks and UC Berkeley SafeTREC and focuses on helping Spanish-speaking communities create audio content that can be used as a tool for advocacy and education to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety. This mini podcast highlights community concerns through storytelling, helps raise awareness of pedestrian and cyclist safety, and proposes community-led solutions.

**In our segment today we speak with the community around Stevenson Middle School.**

**Community Member:** The school is on a street that has a lot of traffic. There have been many times where students have been close to being hit by a car.

**Host:** The Stevenson Middle School community is located in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of East Los Angeles. Many residents rely on public transportation, walk, or share vehicles to travel around the neighborhood, as 29% of homes do not own a vehicle.

### **Visit**

*<https://bit.ly/los-caminos-de-la-via> or scan the QR code to listen to the Stevenson Middle School community Radionovela!*



**Community Member:** Many pedestrians, seniors, children, and mothers cross there. It needs a traffic light for the good of pedestrians and also for traffic to flow the way it should flow.

**Host:** Safety concerns such as speeding drivers, narrow sidewalks, and proximity to highways prevent parents and residents from feeling safe walking in the area.

**Community Member:** You know, they [drivers] do not respect us either. They [drivers] almost hit us. Pedestrians barely cross and cars are right behind us. They really have no respect, especially on Percy & Indiana. Although there is a pedestrian crossing, they just do not respect it. Imagine, sometimes there are mothers with the stroller and two or three little

ones walking behind them. And the driver is so anxiously waiting right behind them. They cannot wait to get by. There is no respect. Percy and Indiana is dangerous because the lines are already worn out or very short, which does not create sufficient visibility. That crosswalk needs lines to indicate to drivers to slow down and at the same time to give pedestrians crossing true access [to the crosswalk].

**Host:** From 2016 to 2020, there were 25 crashes involving pedestrians and 6 bicycle crashes. The lack of infrastructure improvements and driver behavior makes the area around Stevenson School feel dangerous, especially for students and families traveling to and from school.

**Community Member:** For us, it is something very important because we have seen many crashes. When we mentioned it, they said that it was not true because there were no reported crashes. However, something to remember is that Indiana Street is a division of city and county land, therefore, sometimes crashes are

not reported to either jurisdiction. And they get confused and do not have a clear idea of how many crashes are going on, on that street.

**Host:** Parents and residents around Stevenson Middle School want to reconnect with decision-makers.

**Community Member:** And something very important that we have to go back to is creating a political map. Who are the ones who make decisions so that things can happen? Who can we count on? Who are the ones who support us? On this occasion...parents are our number one supporters. The parents and the school principal support us a lot. From there, we move forward so that we can make the needed improvements. And also prioritize what are the

*“Percy and Indiana is dangerous because the lines are already worn out or very short, which does not create sufficient visibility.*

*[...] Many pedestrians, seniors, children, and mothers cross there. It needs a traffic light for the good of pedestrians and also for traffic to flow the way it should flow.*

*To us it is something very important because we have seen many accidents. ”*

things that we are going to focus on to be able to work and start that work. Or continue something that was left pending. Our councilmen, our local governments, the school district, and all those entities that have the responsibility and obligation to keep us safe. And our response should be to help however we can. We want them [elected officials] to know that our stories are real. That we are not just fighting for a hollow cause.

**Host:** The community around Stevenson School is filled with residents and parents who are ready to continue advocating for safer routes to school. The parent group and Partnership for LA Schools will continue to work together to raise awareness of safer streets and engage more parents and residents to support their efforts. Thank you for joining us, and be sure to listen to the rest of the episodes of the Caminos de la Vía. We invite you to read Stevenson’s executive summary at the link in the description. For more information on Active and Safe Communities, visit the California Walks and UC Berkeley SafeTREC website. See you later!

## B. Pedestrian and Bicycle Crash Data

# Review of Crash Data in the Community of Stevenson Middle School in Los Angeles

Comunidades Activas y Seguras (Safe and Active  
Communities)

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## ¿What is a pedestrian crash?



- A crash between a pedestrian and a motor-vehicle. It includes a person on foot, skateboard, stroller, in wheelchair, electric assisted mobility device
- A crash can result in multiple injuries

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# What is a cyclist crash?



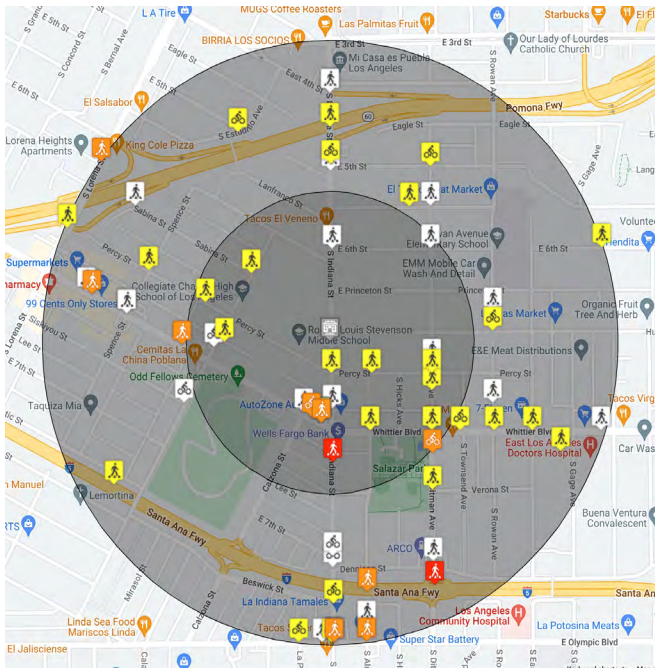
- A crash between a bicyclist and a motor-vehicle
- Bicycles are considered vehicles and therefore the violations committed by a "driver" could have been committed by a motor vehicle driver or by a cyclist.



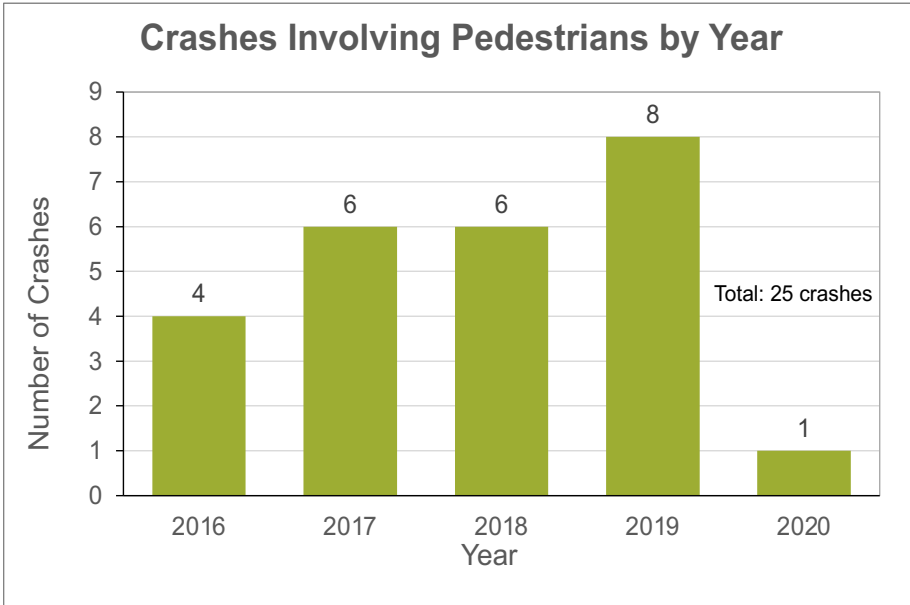
# Stevenson Middle School

¼ mile and ½ mile radius pedestrian and bicycle crashes

- 22 pedestrian crashes and 5 bicycle crashes occurred within <¼ mile radius
- A total of 57 pedestrian crashes and 17 bicycle crashes occurred within ½ mile radius from Stevenson Middle School



# Pedestrian Crashes (2016-2020) per year



## Pedestrian Crashes 2016-2020

The clashes were concentrated along:

- Whittier Boulevard (7 Crashes)
- South Indiana Street (6 Crashes)

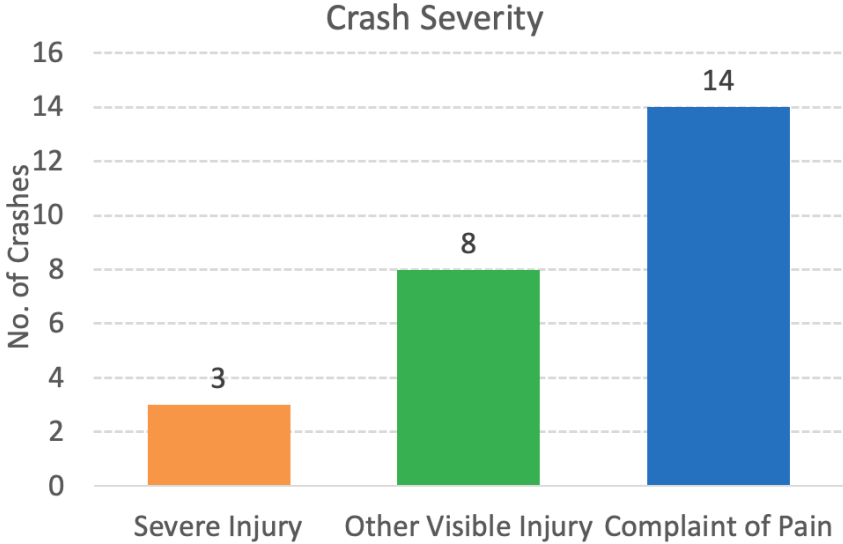
Severe pedestrian crashes occurred on the following streets:

- South Indiana Street (1 crash)
- Whittier Boulevard (2 crashes)





# Pedestrian Crashes (2016-2020) by Severity of Injury



# Pedestrian crashes (2016-2020) most frequently cited violations

- 14** crashes **21950.a** The driver does not yield the right of way to pedestrians in a marked or unmarked crosswalk
- 3** crashes **21954.** Pedestrians do not yield the right of way to vehicles when crossing outside a marked or unmarked crosswalk
- 3** Crashes **21955.** Between adjacent intersections controlled by traffic control signal devices or by police officers, pedestrians shall not cross the roadway at any place except in a crosswalk.

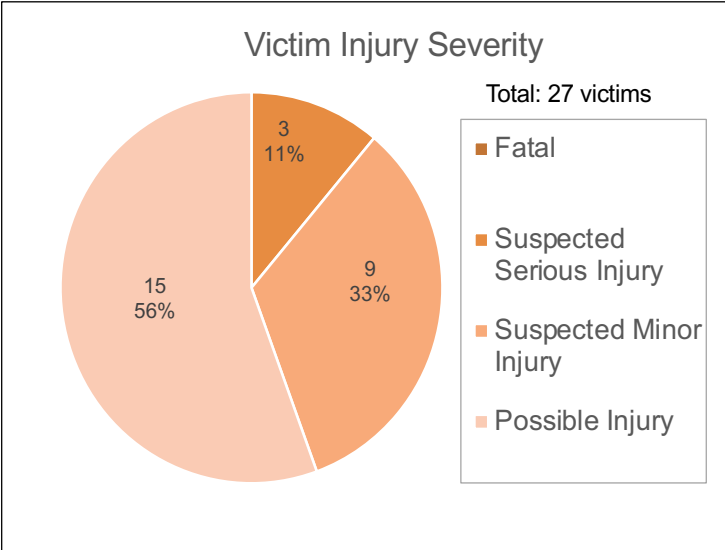


# Pedestrian Crash Victims

by severity of injury

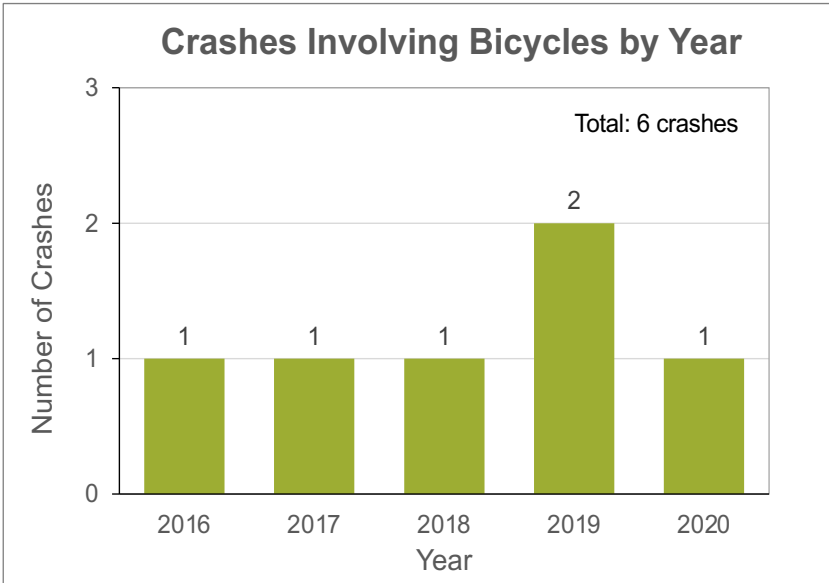
27 victims were injured in 25 pedestrian crashes

- There were 3 serious injury victims.
- 59% of victims were male
- 37% of the victims were between the ages of 60-84



# Bicycle Crashes (2016-2020)

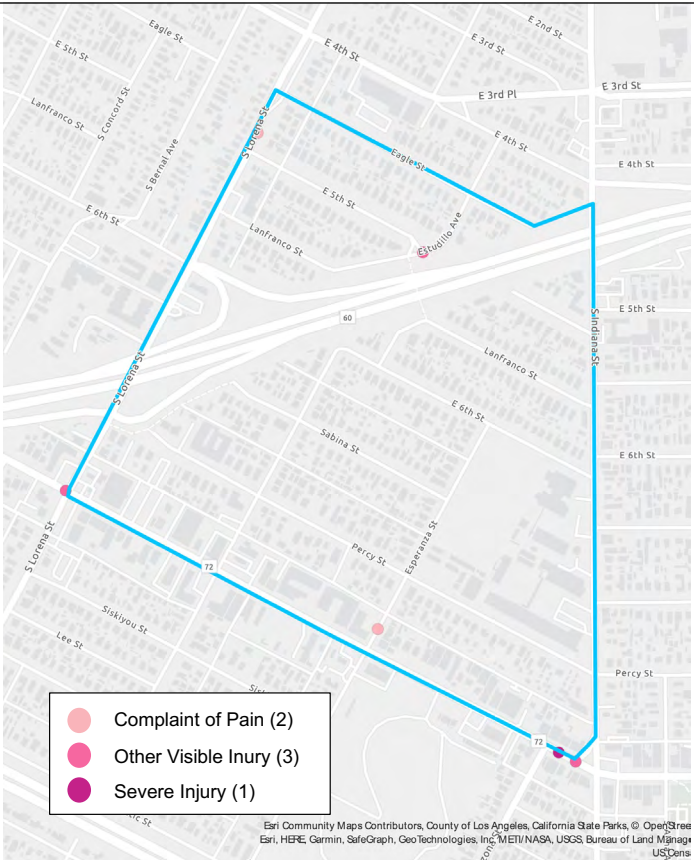
per year



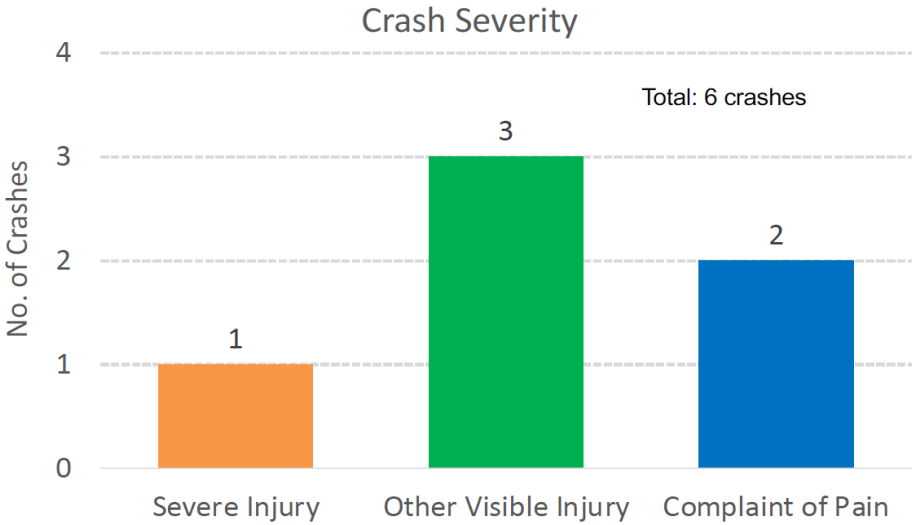
# Bicycle Crashes 2016-2020

The crashes were concentrated along:

- South Lorena Street (2)
- Whittier Boulevard (3)
- The bicycle crash resulting in severe injuries occurred at the Whittier Boulevard/South Indiana Street intersection.



# Bicycle Crashes (2016-2020) by severity of injury

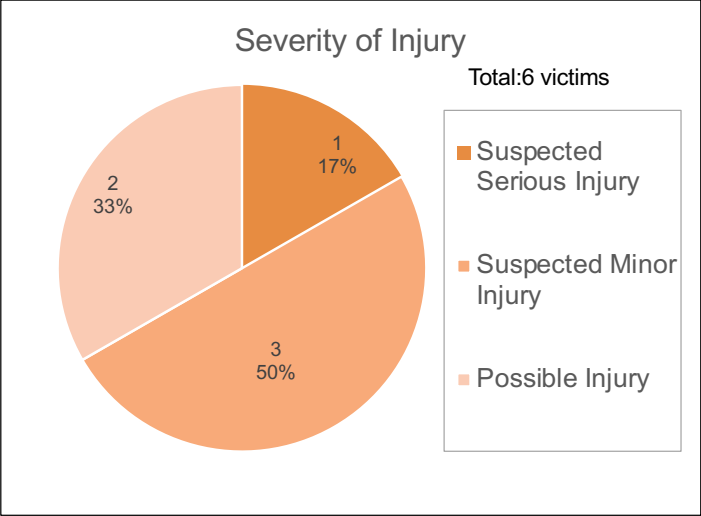


# Bicycle Crash Victims (2016-2020)

## by severity of injury

6 victims were injured in 6 bicycle crashes

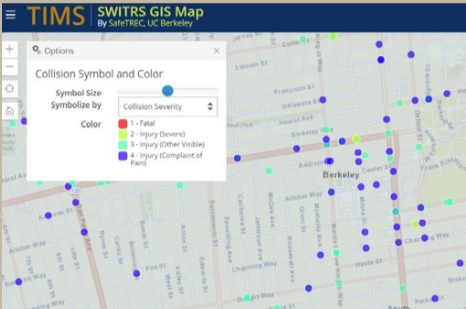
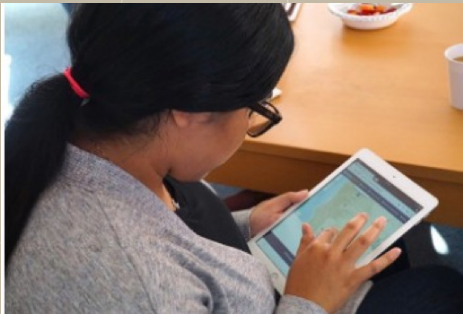
- There was 1 victim with suspected serious injuries.
- All victims were male



## Street Story

Street Story is a tool for gathering community feedback on transportation safety issues. Share stories in Street Story of where you've been in a crash or near-miss, or where you feel safe or unsafe traveling.

<https://streetstory.berkeley.edu>



## Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS)

TIMS is a web-based tool that allows users to analyze and map data from the California Integrated System of State Traffic Records (SWITRS). To further explore collision data, sign up for a free account to access TIMS tools and resources.

<https://tims.berkeley.edu>





*To learn more about the Community Pedestrian and Bicycle  
Safety Program visit UC Berkeley SafeTREC's site  
<https://safetrec.berkeley.edu> or California Walks' site  
<https://www.calwalks.org/comunidades-activas-y-seguras>.*