

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IN THE CITY OF PARLIER



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INTRODUCTION

In collaboration with the Latino Coalition for a Healthy California and the Central California Obesity Prevention Program (CCROPP), the City of Parlier was identified as a focus community for a Community Pedestrian Safety Training based on community resident interest in pedestrian safety and walkability at the June 7, 2014 Parlier Healthy Community Forum. At the forum, community residents identified the need for more facilities for the community, including children, to walk, run, and play safely. Key priorities included Safe Routes to School programs, additional marked crosswalks, and speed enforcement—as key priorities.

Following additional conversations, the City invited the University of California at Berkeley’s Safe Transportation Research Center (SafeTREC) and California Walks (Cal Walks) to Parlier to facilitate a pedestrian safety action-planning workshop with an immediate focus on strengthening the City’s grant application for the Fresno Council of Government’s (FCOG) Regional Active Transportation Program (ATP) through a community-driven process. Cal Walks facilitated the workshop on August 13, 2014 and provided an overview of multidisciplinary approaches to improve pedestrian safety, a walkability assessment of city streets, and small group discussions to facilitate the development of recommendations for the City’s ongoing active transportation efforts, as well as to inform the City’s regional ATP application. This report summarizes the workshop proceedings, as well as ideas identified during the process and recommendations for safety projects.

BACKGROUND

Community Pedestrian Safety Training Program

The Community Pedestrian Safety Training (CPST) program is a joint project of UC Berkeley SafeTREC and Cal Walks. Funding for this program is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The purpose of the CPST is to train local neighborhood residents and safety advocates in pedestrian safety and to educate them about collaborating with local officials and agency staff to make communities safer and more pleasant to walk. The half-day training is designed to provide participants with pedestrian safety best practices and a range of proven strategies (the 6 E’s: Evaluation, Engineering, Enforcement, Education, Encouragement, Empowerment) to address and improve pedestrian safety conditions and concerns.

Participants are then guided on a walkability assessment of nearby streets before setting pedestrian safety priorities and actionable next steps for their community.

For a summary of outcomes from past CPST workshops, please visit:

www.californiawalks.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/CPST_Outcomes_2009-11.pdf

Selected Pedestrian Safety Conditions in the City of Parlier

Traffic Volumes & Speed Along Manning Avenue

Manning Avenue is a 4-5 lane, high speed (45 MPH) street that experiences relatively high traffic volumes, as well as heavy freight traffic. While Manning Ave. serves as a regional arterial, many community residents utilize Manning Ave. as a primary transportation corridor on foot as it is the only street that runs the full length of the City.

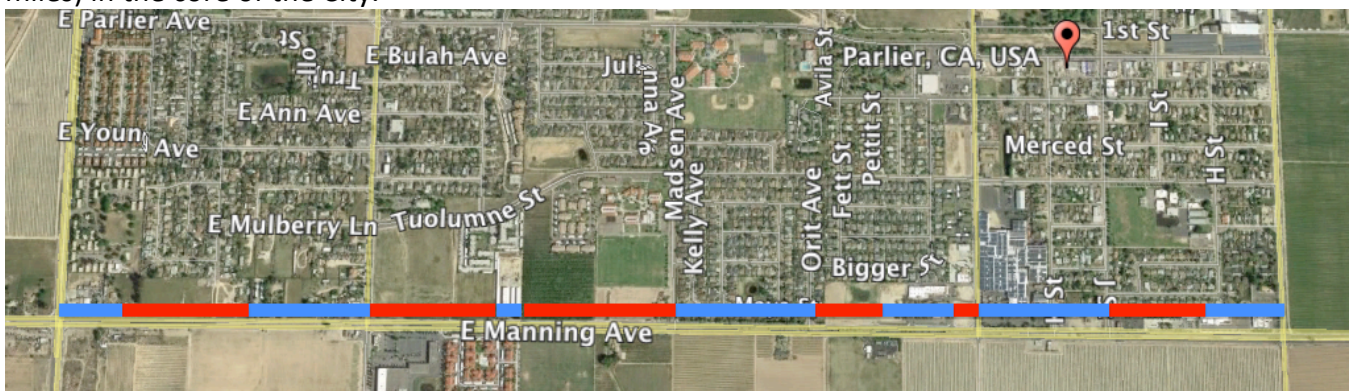


MANNING AVENUE WEST BOUND AT ZEDIKER AVENUE

Sidewalk Gaps Along Manning Avenue

Despite being a primary transportation corridor for many residents, there are currently many existing sidewalk gaps on the north side of Manning Ave. The south side is within the County’s right-of-way and generally lacks sidewalks. Many community residents on the west side of the City travel along Manning Ave. to use vital services on the east side of town, including the United Health Center at Manning and Zediker—the only health care provider in the immediate vicinity. The lack of sidewalks along Manning is a significant barrier to actual and perceived safety for people walking, given the high traffic volumes and speeds, including frequent freight traffic.

Sidewalk construction to address gaps between Zediker Ave. and Madsen Ave. is fully funded through the FCOG Regional Transportation Plan and should be constructed within 12 months—with the sidewalk gap between Madsen Ave. and Mendocino Ave. as the largest remaining gap (roughly 0.5 miles) in the core of the City.



SIDEWALK GAPS ALONG MANNING AVENUE MARKED IN RED

Parlier’s Pedestrian Collision History

Over a nine-year period (2003-2011), there have been a total of 20 pedestrian collisions and 12 bicyclist collisions in the City of Parlier, of which 3 have resulted in severe injuries. In analyzing the collision data, the following trends were established:

- Pedestrian collisions comprised 30% of all severe injury traffic collisions in Parlier;

- 2 of the 3 severe injury pedestrian collisions involved children 15 or younger;
- The top two primary collision factors identified in police traffic records for all pedestrian collisions during this time period were pedestrian violations (45%) and pedestrian right-of-way violations (20%); and
- Of the severe pedestrian collisions, both pedestrian and driver behavior accounted for an equal number of collisions.

AUGUST 13 WORKSHOP

The City of Parlier requested a workshop to address two goals: 1) to inform the development of the City’s Regional ATP grant application in alignment with community residents’ identified and prioritized needs, and 2) to provide City staff, community organizations, and residents with a toolkit for promoting pedestrian safety and walkability to inform future



comprehensive active transportation planning and improvement efforts. The workshop was hosted from 5-8 PM with simultaneous Spanish translation and childcare provided to encourage community resident participation. The workshop was attended by 25 individuals representing a wide range of organizations and disciplines, as well as the community-at-large, including:

- City of Parlier
 - Mayor
 - City Council
 - City Manager
 - Chief of Police Department
 - Community Development Department
 - City Engineer
- Local Business Owner
- Parlier Unified School District
- United Health Centers of San Joaquin Valley
- Fresno County Office of Education
- Fresno County Department of Public Health
- Champions for Change: Network for a Healthy California, Central Valley Region
- California Health Collaborative
- Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program (CCROPP)
- Latino Coalition for a Healthy California



Walkability Assessment

Walkability assessments were conducted along portions of Manning Avenue, the major arterial road in the City, as well as on smaller side streets (Zediker Ave., Stanislaus St.). Participants formed into two groups and were asked to 1) observe infrastructure conditions and the behavior of all road users and 2) apply strategies

learned from the 6 E's presentation that could work in Parlier.

Community Resident Recommendations

Following the walkability assessment, workshop participants were divided into three groups, with two groups focused on developing concrete recommendations and priorities applying the 6 E's for the City's future active transportation planning and project implementation and one group focused on strengthening the City's regional ATP application. The groups identified 3 priority actions for the City to take in the next 3-6 months:

- 1) Identify citywide infrastructure safety needs for low-cost, easy-to-implement solutions;
- 2) Prioritize safety improvements within school zones and safety education programs toward students and children; and
- 3) Submit application to August 2014 Regional ATP program to secure funding to close sidewalk gap along Manning Ave. and install rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) at Mendocino and Tuolumne to improve safety for students walking and biking to school.

Summary of All Community Resident Recommendations

Problem / Issue	Location	Empowerment	Evaluation	Engineering	Education	Enforcement	Encouragement
Faded or Missing Marked Crosswalks	Citywide; Zediker Avenue	X Consult residents on placement; Prioritize school zones	X Develop inventory of facilities	X Bundle projects together to lower costs			
High School & Junior High Student Walking Behavior	West Parlier Avenue; Parlier & Newmark		X		X Teach students to wait turn	X Crossing Guards or Police Department	
Broken, Unlevel or Obstructed Sidewalks	Citywide; Mendocino between 6 th & 9 th	X	X Develop inventory of facilities	X Repair sidewalks & remove obstructions			
Speeding Traffic	Milton between Parlier & Ann	X Involve residents in identifying locations & types of traffic calming		X Traffic calming measures		X Increased police enforcement	
Flooding	Newmark & 3 rd			X			

No Pedestrian Signals	Saladini Apartments		X	X	X	X	
Signage Obscured by Vegetation	Citywide					X City notify property owners to trim back	
Faded or Poor Traffic Lane Markings	Citywide			X Restripe traffic lane markings			
Insufficient Crossing Time	Manning & Mendocino		X Review current settings	X Increase crossing time; Install countdown timer			
Turning Conflicts between Pedestrians & Drivers	Manning & Mendocino		X Review current settings	X Install Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI)			

Recommendations for Regional Active Transportation Program (ATP) Application

Workshop participants broadly supported the City’s proposal to pursue a regional ATP grant to improve walking conditions for students traveling from the west side of town to access S. San Benavidez Elementary School as well as Parlier Junior High School. The City’s proposal includes a partial sidewalk gap closure between Mendocino Ave. and Madsen Ave., as well as installation of a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) at Mendocino Ave. and Tuolumne St.

While the City would prefer for the application to cover the entirety of the Mendocino-to-Madsen gap, the costs for the project are projected to be too high to be competitive for the available regional funds. Participants agreed that it is critical for the scope of the project to be pared down to ensure competitiveness. Accordingly, the proposal will focus on the first sidewalk gap closest to the Manning/Mendocino intersection due the impending change in land use (incoming Rite-Aid drug store) at this corner lot that is expected to increase pedestrian traffic. This proposal will build upon the soon-to-be-constructed sidewalks between Madsen and Zediker—moving the City one step closer toward a completed Manning Avenue that fully connects the community from west to east and supports Parlier’s strong walking and biking culture. Moreover, the elimination of sidewalk gaps along Manning Avenue is a longstanding community and city priority. The City also aims to leverage its own local funds to provide a significantly higher match than required to improve regional competitiveness for this project.



MENDOCINO AVENUE LOOKING SOUTHBOUND AT RECENTLY INSTALLED CROSSWALK AND SIGNAGE AT TUOLUMNE STREET/MULBERRY LANE

Mendocino Avenue is a 2-lane street with occasional turn pockets and restricted parking. However, due to street width and infrequent parking, drivers may mistakenly interpret the travel lane to be much wider than intended (combined travel plus parking lane total roughly 20 feet).

Consequently, drivers frequently drive faster than the posted speed limit and do not always yield to pedestrians at marked crossings. Mendocino Ave. and Tuolumne St. is an uncontrolled intersection that experiences high volumes of students crossing on their way to and from school, including several hearing-impaired children who reside on Mulberry Lane (the western terminus of Tuolumne St.). The City has recently marked a crosswalk on the south side of the intersection and installed pedestrian crossing signage to alert drivers. Even with these improvements, drivers still generally do not yielding to students. The installation of a RRFB should increase driver yield rates.

California Walks/SafeTREC Recommendations

California Walks and SafeTREC also submit the following recommendations for consideration by the City:

- **Secure Funding for Comprehensive Pedestrian & Bicycle Planning:** While the August 13 workshop began to document residents active transportation concerns and needs, we strongly recommend that the City pursue funding for a comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle master planning process. Developing a community-driven active transportation master plan will help the City to develop citywide priorities balanced with existing and projected finances, as well as to increase the competitiveness of future grant applications.

Potential funding sources include the state Department of Transportation (Caltrans) new Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant program (see www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/grants.html)—which has consolidated the Environmental Justice and Community-Based Transportation Planning Grant programs. A call for proposals is expected to be released September 2, 2014 with applications due October 31, 2014. Another potential funding source is Cycle 2 of the statewide and regional Active Transportation Program, expected in 2015.

- **Evaluate Installation of Edge Lines on Mendocino Avenue & Other Locations:** Installation of edge lines clearly demarcates travel lanes from parking lanes and should affect driver speeds by, in effect, narrowing the perceived travel lane. We recommend that the City evaluate the effect of

installing edge lines along Mendocino Avenue and other streets in close proximity to schools or known walking/biking routes used by students, especially when bundled with other maintenance and rehabilitation projects.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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