

# RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IN THE CITY OF PASADENA



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BY JAIME FEARER, TONY DANG, WENDY ALFSEN, CALIFORNIA WALKS;  
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## INTRODUCTION

The City of Pasadena was identified as a focus community for a Community Pedestrian Safety Training, in collaboration with the Pasadena Complete Streets Coalition, Downtown Pasadena Neighborhood Association, and Stop4Aidan, based on resident interest in pedestrian safety and walkability, as well as recent and planned active transportation improvements in and around the downtown core.

Following additional conversations with the Pasadena Department of Transportation and the Pasadena Police Department, the community invited the University of California at Berkeley's Safe Transportation Research Center (SafeTREC) and California Walks (Cal Walks) to Pasadena to facilitate a community-driven pedestrian safety action-planning workshop. Cal Walks facilitated the workshop on May 9, 2015, which consisted of: 1) an overview of multidisciplinary approaches to improve pedestrian safety; 2) six walkability assessments through downtown Pasadena; and 3) small group action planning discussions to facilitate the development of recommendations for the City's ongoing active transportation efforts. This report summarizes the workshop proceedings, as well as ideas identified during the process and recommendations for pedestrian safety projects, policies, and programs.

## BACKGROUND

### Community Pedestrian Safety Training Program

The Community Pedestrian Safety Training (CPST) program is a joint project of UC Berkeley SafeTREC and California 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 (NHTSA). 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 to address and improve pedestrian safety conditions and concerns (the 6 E's: Evaluation, Engineering, Enforcement, Education, Encouragement, Empowerment). 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/2015/05/CPST\\_Follow-Up\\_2009-14.pdf](http://www.californiawalks.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/CPST_Follow-Up_2009-14.pdf)

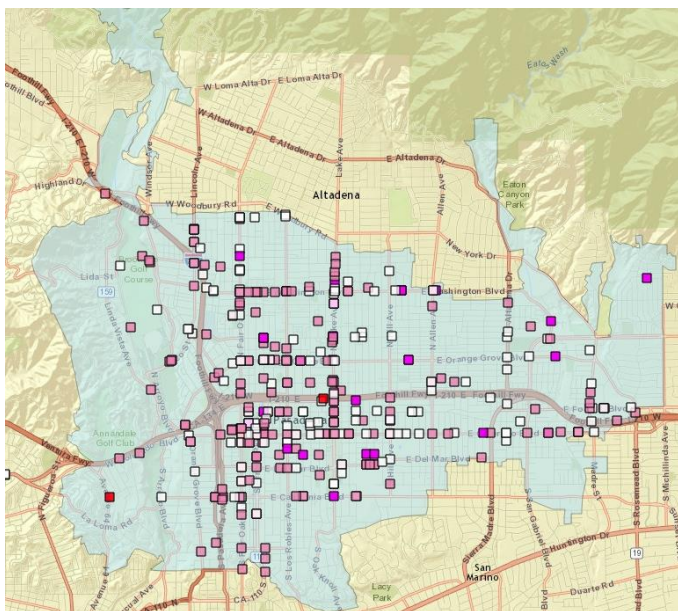
## Selected Pedestrian Safety Conditions in Downtown Pasadena

### High Speeds & High Traffic Volumes along Colorado Boulevard

Colorado Boulevard is historic Route 66 and is today a 4-lane, 25 MPH arterial that runs east/west through downtown Pasadena. Parking lanes are on both sides, and a fifth, middle lane alternates for left turns at intersections with north/south streets. Crossing times at intersections along Colorado appear to prioritize through-traffic, with several observations of pedestrians unable to complete north/south crossings in the time provided. Although the City has made a number of improvements along Colorado, including “pedestrian scrambles,” or diagonal, crossings at the intersection of Raymond Avenue and Colorado Boulevard and the intersection of De Lacey Avenue and Colorado Boulevard, the corridor—along with Washington Boulevard and Orange Grove Boulevard—continues to incur pedestrian collisions. Many destinations, including retail, restaurants, the Playhouse District, and Pasadena City College are along the corridor in downtown. Museums, churches, City Hall, and other City offices are just north of the Colorado on East Union Street, which is currently a 3-lane, one-way street.

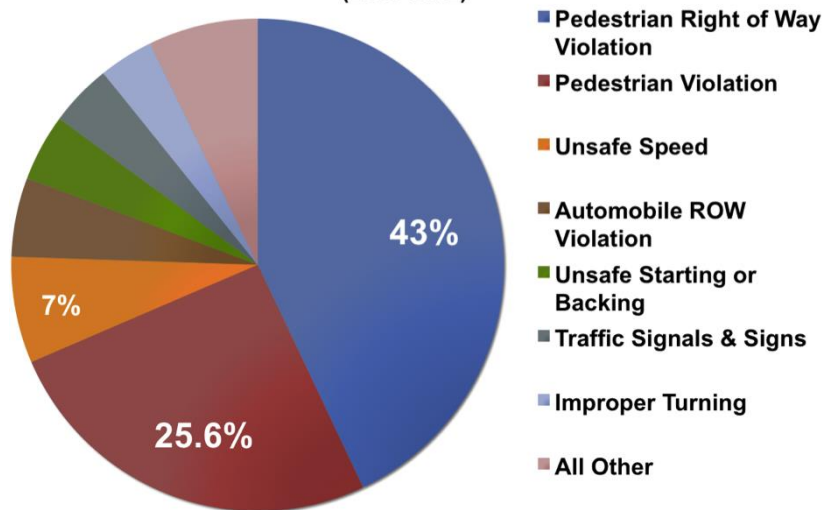
### Pasadena’s Pedestrian Collision History

Between 2008-2012, there were 386 pedestrian collisions in Pasadena, including 2 fatalities and numerous severe injuries. Pedestrian collisions during this time period occurred throughout the City, and clusters of collisions are significant along Colorado Boulevard, Washington Boulevard, and Orange Grove Boulevard. Across the City, the top two Primary Collision Factors for these pedestrian collisions were: Pedestrian Right-of-Way Violations (43%) and Pedestrian Violations (25.6%). Pedestrian Right-of-Way Violations are defined as instances where a driver fails to yield to a pedestrian in a marked or unmarked crosswalk when the pedestrian has the right of way (e.g., when the pedestrian has a “Walk” signal at a signalized intersection). Pedestrian Violations constitute a wide array of pedestrian behaviors, including, but not limited to, failure to yield to motorists when crossing outside of a crosswalk (marked or unmarked); crossing against a pedestrian signal displaying the upraised hand or “don’t walk;” and entering the roadway in a sudden manner into the path of a vehicle which is so close as to constitute an immediate hazard.



PEDESTRIAN COLLISIONS IN PASADENA FROM 2008-2012; RED: FATAL; DARK PINK: SEVERE; LIGHT PINK: OTHER VISIBLE INJURY; WHITE: COMPLAINT OF PAIN

Primary Collision Factor, Pasadena Pedestrian Collisions (2008-2012)



## MAY 9 WORKSHOP

The City of Pasadena requested a workshop to 1) 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; 2) foster an open and collaborative relationship between community groups, residents, and Pasadena City agencies; and 3) develop consensus pedestrian safety priorities and actionable next steps in Pasadena.



BLAIR MILLER, MEMBER OF THE PASADENA TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION AND THE PASADENA COMPLETE STREETS COALITION, WELCOMING RESIDENTS TO WORKSHOP



DEBBIE AND BEVERLY SHARING AIDAN AND ZACHARY'S STORIES

The workshop was hosted from 9:30 AM-1:30 PM with coffee and lunch provided to encourage community resident participation. Debbie Hsiung and Beverly Shelton opened the workshop with a dedication to Aidan Tam and Zachary Cruz—Debbie's son and Beverly's grandson—who lost their lives crossing the street in Pasadena and Berkeley, respectively. Kara Sergile—a member of the Glendale Pedestrian Safety Task Force—also shared her experiences with pedestrian safety action planning, including her participation in and outcomes of the 2014 Glendale CPST workshop.

The workshop was attended by 52 individuals representing a wide range of organizations and disciplines, as well as the community-at-large, including:

- Pasadena Mayor Terry Tornek
- Pasadena City Council Member Margaret McAustin
- Pasadena City Council Member Victor Gordo's Office
- Pasadena Department of Transportation
- Pasadena Police Department
- Pasadena Planning & Community Development Department
- Pasadena Transportation Advisory Commission
- Pasadena Unified School District
- Pasadena Public Health Department
- Pasadena Complete Streets Coalition
- Downtown Pasadena Neighborhood Association
- Stop4Aidan
- Day One
- Zachary Michael Cruz Foundation
- Pasadena Playhouse District Association
- Walking Pasadena
- Bike San Gabriel Valley
- Glendale Pedestrian Safety Task Force
- Community Residents

## Reflections from Walkability Assessment

Walkability assessments were conducted along major streets including Colorado Blvd., Lake Ave., Del Mar Blvd., Arroyo Parkway—as well as minor streets, such as Cordova St., El Molino Ave., Maple St., Oakland Ave., Marengo Ave., and Union St. Participants were asked to 1) observe infrastructure conditions and the behavior of all road users and 2) note strategies and solutions that could help overcome infrastructure deficiencies and unsafe driver, pedestrian, and bicyclist behavior. Following the walkability assessment, participants shared the following reflections:



PARTICIPANTS DISCUSS OBSERVATIONS DURING WALKABILITY ASSESSMENTS

- **Pleasant East-West Sidewalks but Difficult**

**North-South Crossings:** Participants noted that sidewalks in the downtown core were generally wide, level, pleasant, and accommodating to use; however, it was challenging to cross the major east-west streets. Most intersections required pedestrians to push a button to actuate the pedestrian signal to cross, and pedestrian actuated requests, at times, did not synchronize well with the traffic phases—forcing pedestrians to wait through a traffic cycle before receiving a walk signal. Additionally, in observing pedestrians crossing Colorado Blvd., participants noted what they believed to be insufficient crossing time when compared to observations of pedestrians crossing other streets during the walkability assessment. The “skewed” or non-square intersections along Union Street made crossing uncomfortable since drivers are not always able to see crossing pedestrians.

- **Accessibility Challenges:** While the sidewalks in the walkability assessment routes were generally level and free from obstructions, driveways on the assessment routes generally were not ADA-compliant, with cross slopes too steep for wheelchair users and other persons with disabilities.

Participants also noted the older-style corner apex ramps as a challenge, as well as poor placement of pedestrian push buttons, oftentimes placed too far away from the corners.

- **Few Speed Limit Signs:** During the walkability assessment along Colorado Blvd., participants often could not find speed limit signs, and most assumed the speed limit to be 35 MPH even though it is marked further down the street for 25 MPH.

- **Drivers Failing to Yield:** Several groups witnessed and even experienced drivers failing to yield to pedestrians crossing at signalized intersections. Drivers were observed either engaged in distracted driving behavior (e.g., on a cell phone) or did



DRIVER FAILING TO YIELD TO PEDESTRIANS IN CROSSWALK WITH WALK SIGNAL

not fully stop before proceeding with a right-turn-on-red.

- **Building upon Local Successes:** Participants noted several existing features that are successful in facilitating a safer and more pleasant walking experience, including: corners where parking was restricted so that the intersection was “daylighted” for more visibility; pedestrian signals on automatic recall rather than requiring a button to actuate the signal; “scramble” or diagonal crossings; and crosswalks enhanced with art designs, stamped-brick patterns, or ladder striping.



PEDESTRIAN SCRAMBLE OR DIAGONAL CROSSING (LEFT) AND DECORATIVE CROSSWALK MARKINGS (RIGHT)

## Community Resident Recommendations



PASADENA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SHARES RECENT PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS COMPLETED CITYWIDE

Following a presentation by Rich Dilluvio and Joaquin Siques of the Pasadena Department of Transportation on the City’s recent and in-progress Complete Streets improvements, Cal Walks facilitated small-group action planning discussions. Workshop participants were tasked with developing concrete recommendations to improve pedestrian safety in Pasadena observed during the workshop. Workshop participants provided the following recommendations for overall pedestrian safety improvements in Pasadena based on the 6 E’s of pedestrian safety and the walkability assessment:

- 1) **Equitable Citywide Outreach & Community Engagement:** Participants noted that downtown Pasadena has received the lion’s share of attention and focus for pedestrian safety and streetscape improvements. In order to better reach different populations who were unable to attend the May 9 workshop, participants suggested that this type of workshop be replicated citywide, particularly in Northwest and East Pasadena to reach a broader community beyond

downtown. In addition to the educational workshops and walkability assessments, participants also wanted to see more Safe Routes to School educational and encouragement activities (e.g., bike rodeos, traffic safety assemblies, and parent and student driver education) reach different parts of the City. Concerted outreach could be accomplished in partnership with the Pasadena Complete Streets Coalition and the Pasadena Public Health Department by working with the different neighborhood associations and gathering feedback through a short survey/response cards. Participants noted that this expanded approach would help to ensure that equity is a guiding principle for the City’s pedestrian safety and complete streets efforts.



PARTICIPANTS ENGAGED IN ACTION PLANNING DISCUSSIONS

- 2) **Creating Safer Intersections:** Participants identified several low-cost priority strategies to improve safety for people walking and crossing at intersections, including: creating restrictions on right-turns-on-red and corner parking; building curb extensions to reduce crossing distances and slow turning vehicles; and improving pedestrian signal timing with automatic pedestrian recall adjustments. Participants also expressed a preference for enhanced art crosswalks, as well as those with a stamped-brick pattern over those with standard striping.
- 3) **Pair Enforcement with a Human Face:** Understanding that enforcement is more than simply issuing a ticket, participants highlighted the need to pair these interactions with a pamphlet or other material that tells the story of a local victim of traffic violence. Participants gravitated toward one of the best practices highlighted in the workshop—Zachary Michael Cruz Pedestrian Safety Month in Berkeley, CA—and would like to explore the idea of proclaiming something similar in Pasadena.
- 4) **Community Encouragement to Foster Vibrant Walking Environment:** Participants came up with a range of encouragement ideas to foster a culture of walking in Pasadena, including: creating public outreach campaigns on bus shelters/buses and banners; incorporating times to destinations in wayfinding materials; lighting up key intersections and neighborhood gateways with strings of lights above crossings; allowing for public art funds to go toward art crosswalks like those in the Playhouse District; and celebrating walking through “Walktober” programming during the month of October. Participants noted that public education campaigns should be

developed with both positive and negative messaging and images in order to reach the broadest audience.

- 5) **Pedestrian Master Plan Update:** The City’s Pedestrian Master Plan was adopted in 2006, and since then the City has created a Complete Streets program within the Department of Transportation and made a number of improvements that impact pedestrian safety. Participants raised the idea that now would be a good time to revisit and update the Plan, particularly in light of the availability of Active Transportation Program funds. A Plan update may also be a good way to support pilot programs that are relatively low-cost and provide evaluation opportunities.
- 6) **Integrating Pedestrian Safety Into Repaving & Street Maintenance Projects:** Participants would like to see the City establish a policy that automatically initiates a community input process for repaving and street maintenance projects. Such a policy would align with the City’s Complete Streets Program and could help inform improved street configuration and striping for pedestrian safety as part of the routine street maintenance processes. The community input process could be spearheaded in partnership with the Pasadena Complete Streets Coalition and the neighborhood associations.

### California Walks/SafeTREC Recommendations

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

- **Embed Community Engagement & Equity into Potential Pedestrian Master Plan Update:** As participants noted, a lot has changed in terms of policies and street design standards since the City adopted its Pedestrian Master Plan in 2006. We support participants’ recommendation to pursue an update to the Pedestrian Master Plan and recommend incorporating the workshop participants’ clear priority for equitable community engagement and outreach as a guiding principle in a Pedestrian Master Plan Update process. This effort could achieve participants’ top priority of replicating the Community Pedestrian Safety Training educational workshops and walkability assessments citywide and engage a broader community beyond downtown.
- **Use Existing Funding Mechanisms for Pedestrian Improvements:** Currently, the City is able to use development impact fees to mitigate traffic congestion; however, the guidance in the City’s General Plan does not allow the impact fees to be used toward pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements. The City is currently working to update the General Plan and Mobility Element to allow for the use of development impact fees on walking and biking improvements. In the interim, the Pasadena Complete Streets Coalition and other groups can provide guidance about the potential of Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) for funding walking and biking improvements.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the City of Pasadena for inviting us and hosting the Community Pedestrian Safety Training. Thank you to Debbie Hsiung of Stop4Aidan, Wesley Reutimann of Day One and the Pasadena Complete Streets Coalition, Blair Miller and Greg Gunther of the Pasadena Transportation



Advisory Committee, and Marsha Rood of the Downtown Pasadena Neighborhood Association for their full commitment to and leadership of community-driven transportation planning and meaningful engagement with community residents. Thank you also to Mark Yamarone, Rich Dilluvio, and Joaquin Siques with the Pasadena Department of Transportation for providing leadership and organizational support in planning the workshop. We would also like to acknowledge Pasadena Mayor Terry Tornek; City Council Member Margaret McAustin; Vannia DeLaCuba, Field Representative for Council Member Victor Gordo; Lt. Pete Hetteema of the Pasadena Police Department; Deborah Murphy of Deborah Murphy Urban Design + Planning and Los Angeles Walks; Kara Sergile from the Glendale Pedestrian Safety Task Force; Beverly Shelton of the Zachary Michael Cruz Foundation; and community members whose dedication to pedestrian safety meaningfully informed and strengthened the workshop's outcomes.

We would also like to thank Whole Foods Market Pasadena (Hastings Ranch and Arroyo Parkway) for generously donating lunch, Debbie Hsiung/Stop4Aidan for donating coffee, and the Pasadena Presbyterian Church for donating the meeting space for the workshop.

Funding for the Community Pedestrian Safety Training program was provided by a grant to University of California at Berkeley Safe Transportation Research & Education Center from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.