

Summer 2023

# Bell Gardens Summary and Recommendations Report

## Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Training



Berkeley SafeTREC

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# Acknowledgements

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Thank you to the Planning Committee for inviting us into their community and partnering with us to make Bell Gardens a safer place to walk and bike.

Our work took place on the ethnohistoric territory of the Chumash and Tongva (Gabrieleno) peoples. We recognize that every community member in Bell Gardens has, and continues to benefit from, the use of Chumash and Tongva (Gabrieleno) land.

## Planning Committee

The Planning Committee plays a key role in the CPBST planning process by advising the CPBST Project Team on how to best adapt workshop curriculum to fit community wide safety concerns. The Planning Committee also planned, attended, and invited their local community to the Bell Gardens CPBST workshop.

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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.

# Introduction

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The Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program (CPBST) is a statewide project of UC Berkeley Safe Transportation Research and Education Center (SafeTREC) and California Walks (Cal Walks). The program uses the Safe System Approach to engage residents and safety advocates to develop a community-driven action plan to improve walking and biking safety in their communities and to strengthen collaboration with local officials and agency staff. Cal Walks and SafeTREC (Project Team) worked with the Planning Committee to develop workshop goals and tailor the curriculum to address the community's safety needs and priorities.

The City of Bell Gardens requested a CPBST to:

1. Engage community residents in meaningful ways to increase equity, openness, transparency in public participation.
2. Increase community investment and use of active transportation facilities and public space.
3. Improve biking and pedestrian access that will further connect residents to the rest of the Los Angeles region through intercity connections, such as expanded rail access and trails.

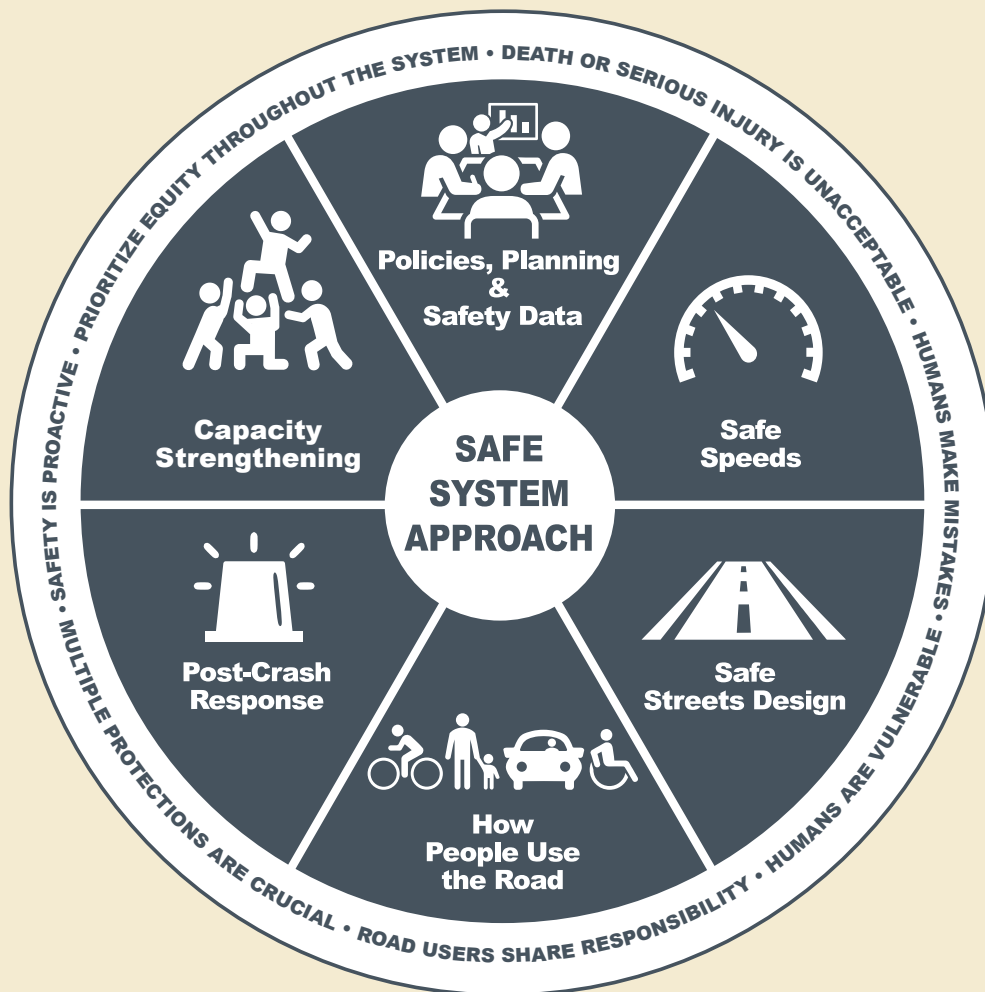
The Bell Gardens CPBST workshop convened the larger local community on July 11, 2023 at the Ross Auditorium at Veteran's Park in Bell Gardens. The immediate neighborhood surrounding the park, or the workshop focus area, consists of residential, commercial, and light industrial uses. Eleven persons participated in the workshop, including Bell Gardens residents, representatives from the Bell Gardens Public Works Department, East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice (EYCEJ), Unión de Vecinos, Active SELA, and the Bell Gardens Traffic and Safety Commission.

The following report summarizes the outcomes of the workshop and provides community and Project Team recommendations for continued guidance in project and program implementation.

## Safe System Approach

The Project Team adapted the Federal Highway Administration's Safe System framework to make them more impactful for grassroots community engagement. The Safe System approach aims to eliminate all fatal and serious injuries. We emphasize equity as a central component and acknowledge the critical need to strengthen partnerships between transportation professionals and the communities they serve in order to create safe streets for everyone.

For more information about the Safe System Approach, please review our [policy brief](#). To learn more about Safe System strategies, please review our [toolkit](#).





# Background

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The City of Bell Gardens is located in Los Angeles County. Per the [California Office of Traffic Safety's Crash Rankings](#), in 2020, Bell Gardens ranked 17th out of 91 cities of similar population size for people killed or injured in a traffic crash (with a ranking of “one” indicating the worst crash rate). Most notably, Bell Gardens ranked 11th out of 91 cities for older adults pedestrians killed and injured and 13th out of 91 for victims killed or injured in alcohol-involved crashes.

The boundaries for this workshop were the city limits of Bell Gardens, with an extension to the west across the Los Angeles River to include crashes on the Gage Avenue, Florence Avenue, and Clara Street bridges over the Los Angeles River.

Per 2022 Esri Community Analyst data for the workshop focus area<sup>1</sup>, an estimated 24.6% of households are below the poverty level and 22.5% of households have one or more persons with a disability. Over ten percent (12.0%) of all households in the area do not own a personal vehicle while about 7.6% of the population is 65 or older.

In the workshop focus area, the largest commute pattern outside of solo drives to work was carpooling at about 11.8%. About 3.6% commute via public transportation, while about 2.5% walk to work and an estimated 0.8% bike to work. The full demographic report from 2023 Esri Community Analyst data can be found in the appendix.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau 2017-2021 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year Estimates, 2022 ESRI estimates.

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## Local Policies and Plans

The [Bell Gardens Circulation Element to the General Plan](#), which was updated and adopted in 2022, aims to reduce risk of collision for both pedestrians and cyclists, increase accessibility for people with various mobility needs, and improve safety via capital improvement projects. As a long-term goal, the City of Bell Gardens identifies the need for safe conditions for the existing pedestrian bridges/pathways over the Interstate 710 (I-710) freeway and the Los Angeles River, at Clara Street, Florence Avenue, and Gage Avenue.

The [2020 Bell Gardens Complete Streets Plan](#) assesses the existing conditions in terms of the city's transit, bike, and pedestrian facilities. The Complete Street Plan provides an overview of critical bike and pedestrian crash hotspots across the city and summarizes community priorities identified via a public survey.

The [Long Beach-East LA Corridor Mobility Investment Plan \(LB-ELA Corridor Plan\)](#), approved in the Fall of 2021, was set in motion in response to community stakeholders who voiced a vision for mobility that advances equity and sustainability and explores existing opportunities to explore multimodal options for moving people and goods that will foster clean air (zero emissions), healthy and sustainable communities, and economic empowerment for all residents, communities, and users in the I-710 corridor. At the regional level, the LB-ELA Corridor Plan calls for citywide pedestrian, bike, and traffic calming improvements to create a complete streets environment through the construction of crosswalks, traffic circles, high-intensity activated crosswalk (HAWK) pedestrian signals, curb extensions, Class III bike routes, ramps in compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA), and striping improvements at various target intersections within the City of Bell Gardens. The LB-ELA Corridor Plan also recommends reconfiguring the I-710 / Florence Interchange to improve operations safety, and sight distance for traffic entering and exiting the freeway. Lastly, the LB-ELA Corridor Plan will improve traffic controls to address safety concerns of bicyclists and pedestrians at ramp termini and will provide upgrades to existing bridge structures to allow space for bicycle/pedestrian connections across I-710 and Los Angeles River Channel.

## Local Policies and Plans, continued

The [West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor \(WSAB\)](#) project, set to reach completion by 2035, establishes a new light rail transit option that connects Southeast Los Angeles communities to Downtown Los Angeles. While the transit line will not intersect the City of Bell Gardens, the project provides alternatives to driving for Bell Gardens residents and deploys capital improvements projects that provide enhanced connectivity into surrounding cities from Bell Gardens.

The [Gateway Cities Council of Governments \(GCCOG\) Strategic Transportation Plan \(STP\)](#) provides a comprehensive analysis of the entire Gateway Cities freeway network, including the I-710 and the Interstate 5 (I-5), which are major transportation arterials that cross the city of Bell Gardens. The analysis includes current trends in the region: goods movement, technology, transit, active transportation, and funding.

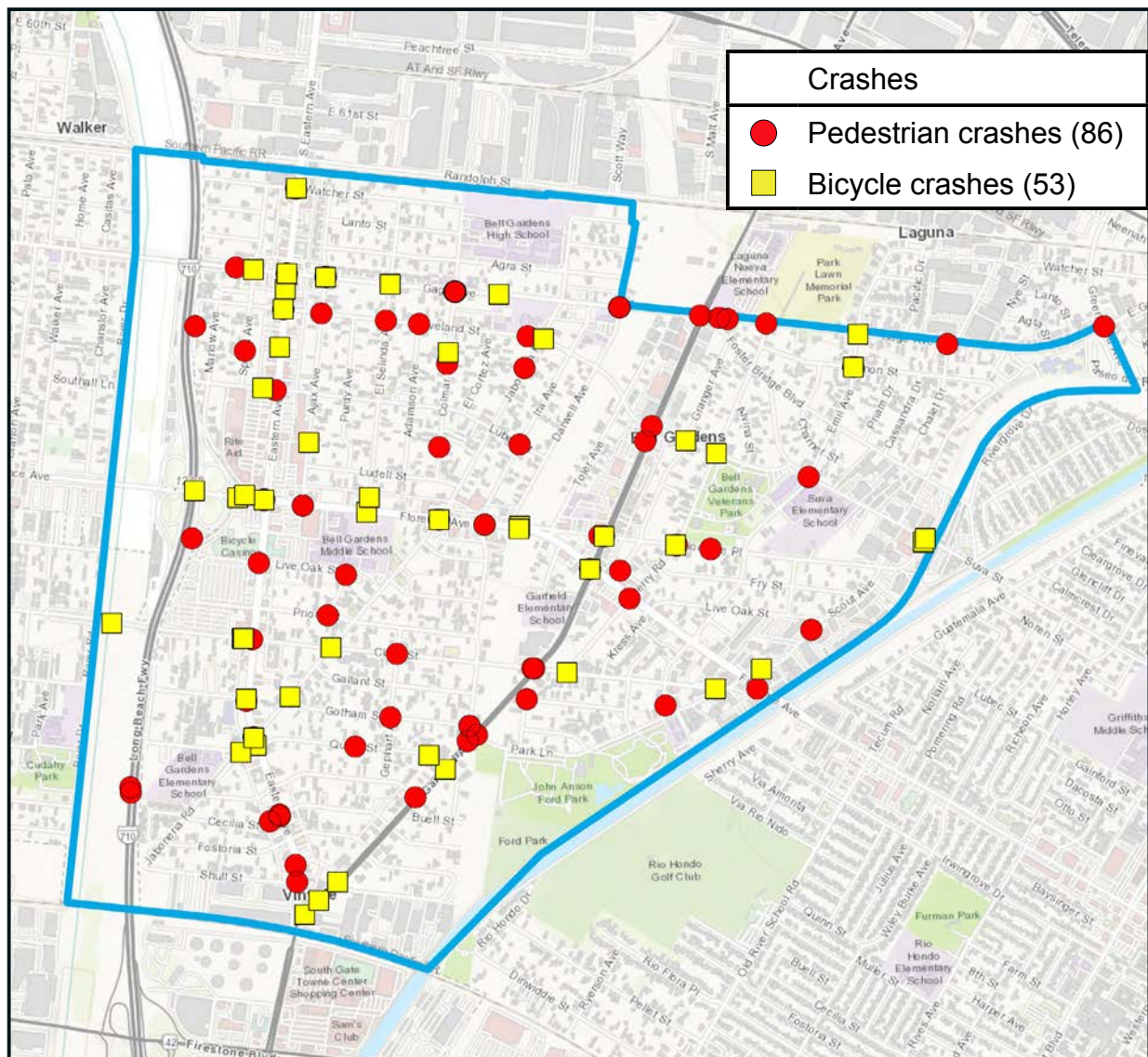
The [Southern California Association of Governments \(SCAG\) 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/ Sustainable Communities Strategy](#) establishes a unified transportation plan for cities within the counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura, providing programming and implementation guidance to six county-based transportation commissions. The City of Bell Gardens is named as a community heavily impacted by heavy truck traffic.



# Pedestrian and Bicycle Crash History

The following data is based on police-reported pedestrian and bicycle crashes resulting in injuries to pedestrians<sup>2</sup> and bicyclists in Bell Gardens. Data reported in this section are from the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records Systems (SWITRS) for the years 2012 to 2021. Crash data for 2021 are provisional as of May 2023. A full discussion of the pedestrian and bicycle crash data can be found in the appendix.

The map shows all of the crashes within the workshop boundaries in which a person was injured and that involved a pedestrian or bicyclist from 2017 to 2021.



Crash Map for Bell Gardens

Data Source SWITRS 2017-2021. 2021 data is provisional as of May 2023.

2 A pedestrian is defined as any person who is afoot or using a non-motorized personal conveyance other than a bicycle. This includes skateboards, strollers, wheelchairs, and any electric assistive mobility device

## Pedestrian Crashes

Over the 10-year period between 2012 and 2021, pedestrian crashes fluctuated around an average of about 17 per year. The highest year, 2019, had 24 pedestrian crashes while the lowest year, 2020, had 11 pedestrian crashes. In the most recent five years of data available, 2017 to 2021, there were 96 pedestrian crashes, including five fatal pedestrian crashes and 10 serious injury pedestrian crashes. The corridors with the most pedestrian crashes were Gage Avenue (17 crashes), Florence Avenue (14 crashes), and Eastern Avenue (13 crashes). Gage Avenue, Jaboneria Road, and Garfield Avenue were notable for their concentrations of fatal or serious injury crashes. The peak time for pedestrian crashes was between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m., with 22 crashes. Almost three-quarters (74.4 percent) of pedestrian crashes occurred on a weekday, with a peak on Mondays. The primary crash factor for most of these pedestrian crashes was a driver not yielding the right-of-way to a pedestrian at a marked or unmarked crosswalk, which was associated with 34 crashes, or 39.5 percent of the total.

Among the 90 victims of these 86 pedestrian crashes, there were five fatalities and 10 serious injuries. The most common age of victims was in the 15-24 range, with 23 victims. Of the 23 victims, 70 percent (16 victims) were male. Children aged 16 or younger and older adults aged 65 and older made up a large number of victims in pedestrian crashes, with 19 victims and 12 victims, respectively. A slight majority, 51.1%, of victims were male.

### Free SafeTREC Data Resources

The Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS) is a web-based tool that allows users to analyze and map California crash data from the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS). TIMS provides quick, easy, and free access to geocoded crash data. Visit: <https://tims.berkeley.edu>

Street Story is a web-based community engagement tool that allows residents and community organizations to gather information that is important to transportation safety, including crashes, near-misses, general hazards and safe locations to travel. To promote access to the tool, SafeTREC offers technical assistance to communities and organizations interested in using Street Story. The platform and the information collected is free to use and publically available in English and Spanish. Visit: <https://streetstory.berkeley.edu>

## Bicycle Crashes

Over the 10-year period between 2012 and 2021, bicycle crashes appeared to increase to a peak of 25 in 2016, then decline to six in 2021. In the most recent five years of data available, 2017 to 2021, there were 54 bicycle crashes in the focus area, including one fatal and four serious injury bike crashes. The roads with the most bicycle crashes were Eastern Avenue (11 crashes) and Florence Avenue (eight crashes), while both Garfield Avenue and Clara Street had six crashes. The peak time for bicycle crashes was from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., with 13 crashes. There was a strong commute pattern among bicycle crashes, with over 85 percent occurring on a weekday. The most common primary crash factor for most of these bicycle crashes was failure to drive or ride on the right half of the roadway, which was associated with 10 crashes.

Among the 53 bicyclist victims of these crashes, there was one fatality and three serious injuries. In one bicycle crash, a pedestrian was injured, and the bicyclist was uninjured. The age group with the most bicyclist victims were aged 15-24, with 15 victims, including five 15- or 16-year-old children. Another three injured bicyclists were 65 or older. A little under three-quarters (71.7 percent) of victims were male.

# Walking and Biking Assessments

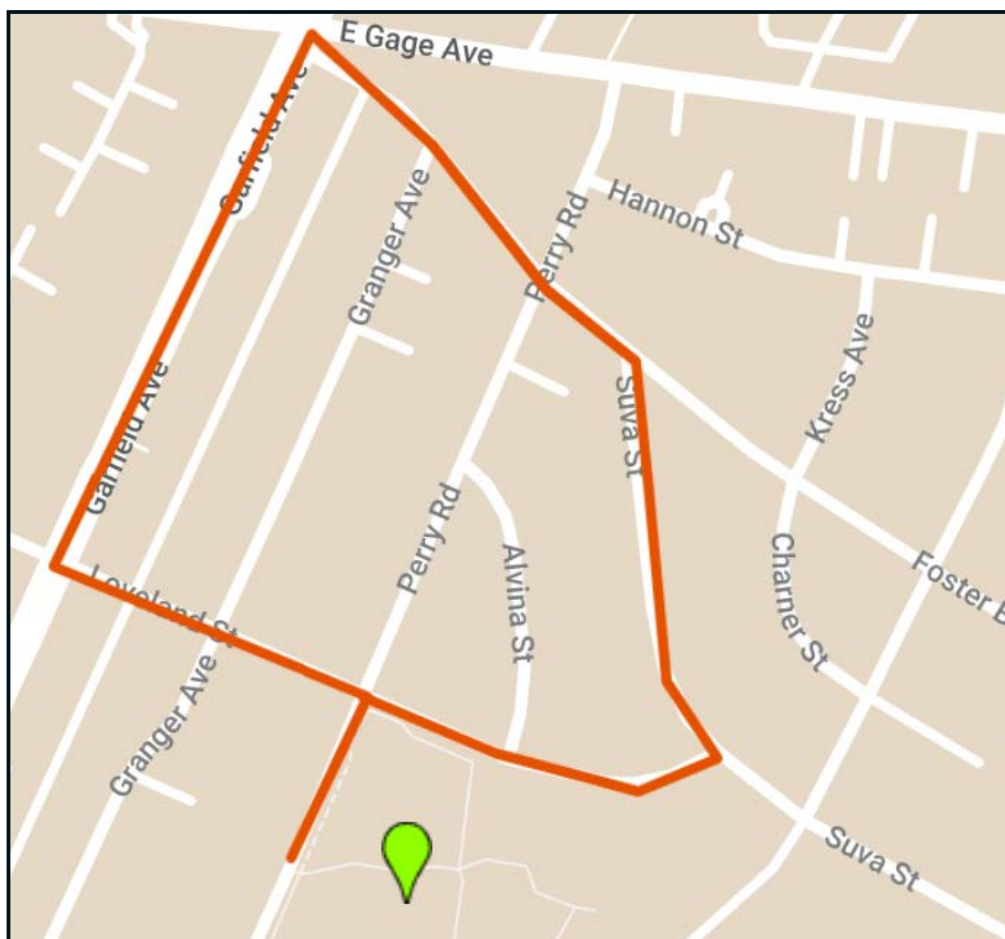
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During the workshop, the Project Team and participants participated in walking and biking safety assessments along two routes frequently traveled by community residents. Participants were asked to identify community assets, assess infrastructure conditions, and share how road users engage with the built environment. The following is a summary of the walking and biking assessment.

## Route 1: North of Veterans Park: Loveland Street, Suva Street, Foster Bridge Boulevard, and Garfield Avenue

### Focus:

This route assessed the residential areas north of Veterans Park, as well as the commercial corridor of Garfield Avenue. The route included Loveland Street, Suva Street, Foster Bridge Boulevard, and Garfield Avenue.

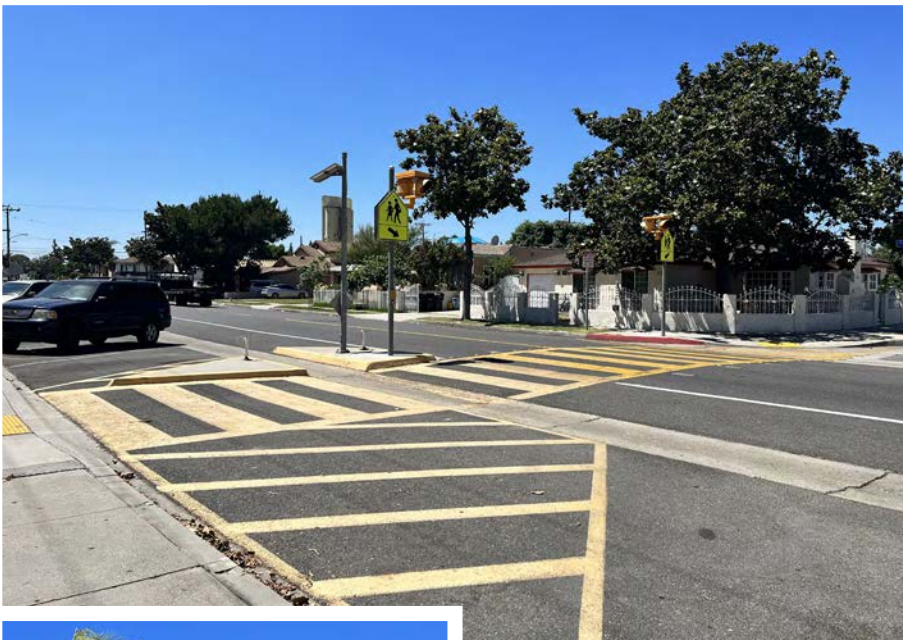


Walking Assessment, Route One

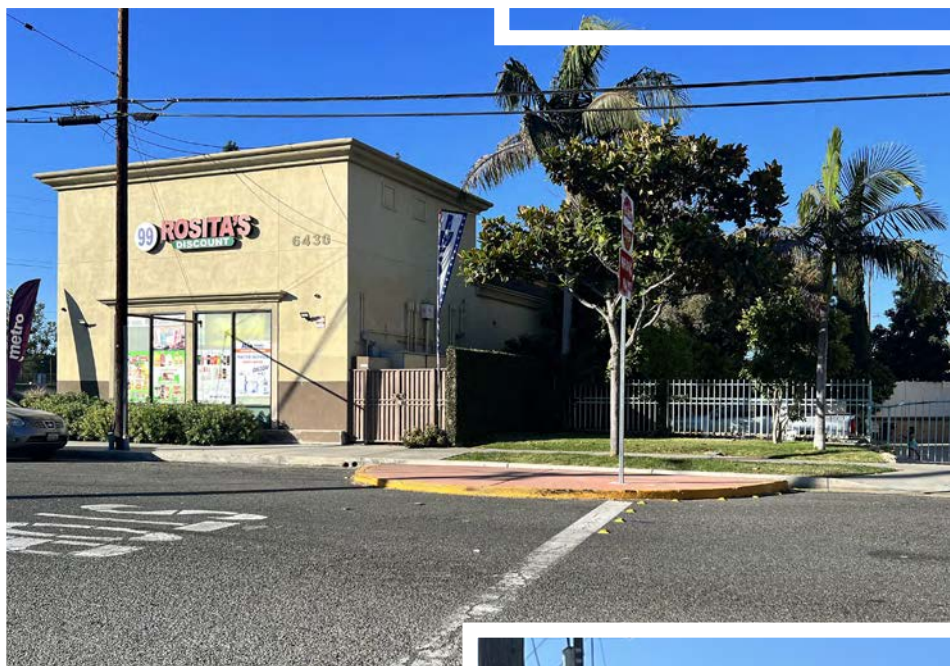


## Strengths:

1. The first portion of this route (along Loveland Avenue, Suva Street, and Foster Bridge Road) consists of a high-density residential zone in close proximity to schools, markets, social services, and parks. With further improvements that ensure walking and biking safety for people of diverse levels of mobility, this neighborhood could benefit from a reduction in use of cars for everyday activities.
2. Loveland Street at Veterans Park has a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) that provides a visible and safe crossing option between the park and local residential zone.
3. Various intersections in Bell Gardens identified as collision hotspots recently saw improvements through the [Caltrans Local Highway Safety Improvement Program \(HSIP\)](#), including protected left turn signals at the Loveland Avenue / Garfield Avenue intersection, within the workshop focus area.
4. Road upgrades were recently administered along Foster Bridge Boulevard at the Granger Avenue intersection and the Suva Street intersection in 2021. Treatments along Foster Bridge Boulevard (between Garfield Avenue and Granger Avenue) consist of a road diet from a two-lane road to a one-way lane eastward and a sidewalk bulb out. The Foster Bridge Boulevard / Suva Street intersection received a concrete median, an additional stop sign, improved crosswalk markings, and a double arrow “end of street” sign. A road diet is a road re-configuration where lanes are reduced from a roadway in order to calm traffic.



*RIGHT: Rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) on Loveland Street, across from Veterans Park*



*LEFT: Sidewalk bulbout at the Foster Bridge Boulevard / Granger Avenue intersection.*



*RIGHT: One-way lane eastward and the "Do Not Enter" signage at the Foster Bridge Boulevard / Granger Avenue intersection*



## Concerns:

1. Unsafe behaviors by drivers such as high speeds, the refusal to come to a complete stop at stop signs and sideshows<sup>3</sup> are major issues that were discussed by workshop participants throughout this route. For example, the posted speed limit along Garfield Avenue, a major thoroughfare of Bell Gardens, is 35 mph, but many vehicles, including semi-trailers, appeared to be traveling at speeds above 50 mph during the walking and biking assessment. When walking through the residential portion of the route, particularly along Suva Avenue, participants took note of the number of cars that did not stop at non-signalized, four-way stop intersections. Lastly, circular tire marks could be seen at the Suva Street / Loveland Avenue intersection, indicative of reckless driving patterns in close proximity to Suva Intermediate School, Suva Elementary School, and residences.
2. There is a lack of clear and highly-visible striping for cyclists and pedestrian crossings within the residential area of this route along Foster Bridge Road. The road significantly narrows and bicyclists are expected to merge and share the road with drivers, as instructed by “Bike Lane” signage along the sidewalks of the road. However, there are no clear markings on the road to ensure separation between the two road user types. Furthermore, striping for crossings along most of the route were faded, including the major intersection of Garfield Avenue / Gage Avenue / Foster Bridge Boulevard.
3. The Foster Bridge Boulevard / Perry Road intersection is configured diagonally, or otherwise misaligned, limiting visibility for drivers and creating longer crossings for pedestrians.
4. The route had limited shade from tree canopy, creating potentially dire conditions from heat for the community’s most vulnerable populations.

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<sup>3</sup> According to the California Legislature, sideshows are defined as any motor vehicle speed contest on a roadway, reckless driving on a roadway, reckless driving in an off-street parking facility, or an exhibition of speed on a roadway.



*ABOVE: Foster Bridge Boulevard (westbound), a shared bike route*



*ABOVE: Workshop participants assessing the configuration and width of the Foster Bridge Boulevard / Perry Road intersection.*

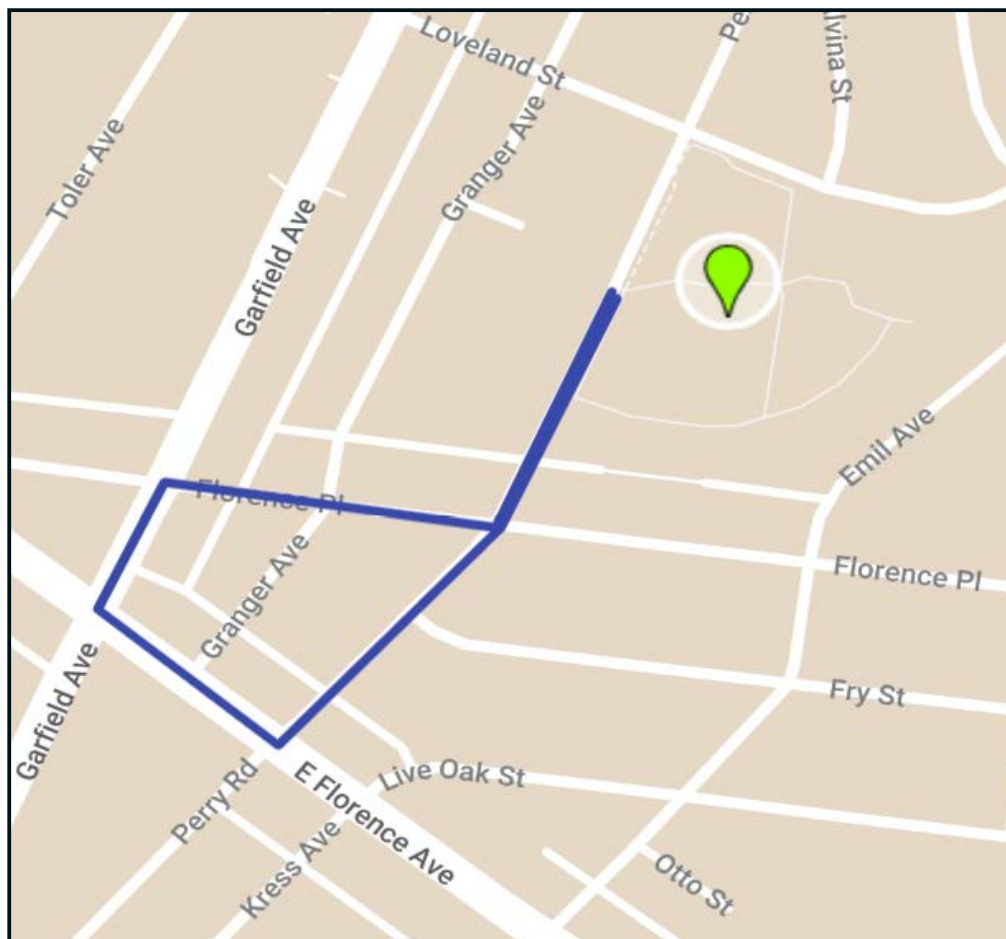
## Route 2: Southwest of Veterans Park: Florence Avenue, Florence Place, and Perry Road

### Focus:

This route looked at the busy civic and commercial area southwest of Veterans Park, in a rough square formed by Florence Place, Garfield Avenue, Florence Avenue, and Perry Road.

### Strengths:

1. This area has many community destinations including a library, the city hall, Veterans Park, and a skatepark. The area also includes police and fire departments a little north on Garfield Avenue. There are many commercial destinations on Florence Avenue, including Garfield Elementary School on Garfield Avenue south of Florence Avenue. This leads to a mix of many different road users throughout this area.

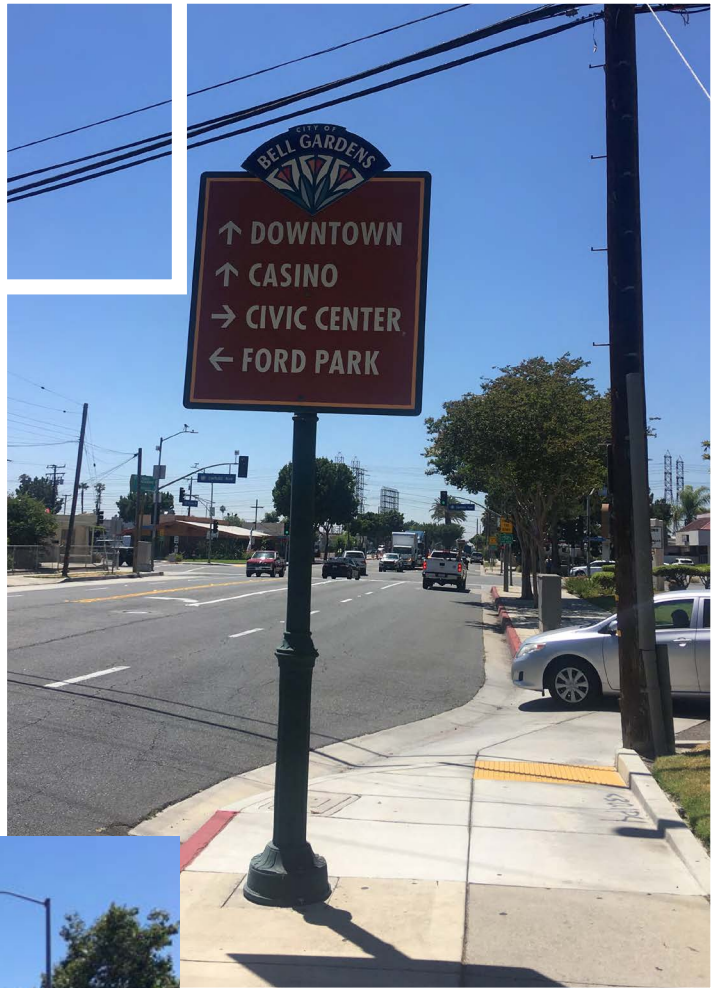


Walking Assessment, RouteTwo





ABOVE: Bell Gardens Library.



ABOVE: Wayfinding signage within this walking and biking assessment route.



ABOVE: The crossing at the Florence Avenue / Garfield Avenue intersection.

2. The area has some pedestrian improvements, including well-maintained sidewalks throughout most of this area and curb ramps with tactile warning pads at many intersections. Participants shared that street lighting wasn't a problem in most of this area.
3. There are improved crosswalks along Florence Avenue including a decorative crosswalk at the Garfield Avenue intersection and high-visibility crosswalks at the Granger Avenue and Perry Road intersections.

## Concerns

1. On Perry Avenue near Veterans Park, participants were concerned about speeding and double-parked drivers, which increased the risk of injuries for people accessing the park. The street lacks school signage and road markings are faded. The park itself has sufficient lighting but nearby streets lack pedestrian-scale lighting.
2. The Florence Place / Perry Road intersection feels more difficult to cross than other residential intersections because it has longer crossing distances, partially due to the angle at which the streets intersect. High-visibility crosswalks are needed at this intersection to ensure that pedestrians are able to safely navigate this angled crosswalk crossing. The intersection is large enough that cars do doughnuts in the center, as participants noted from the markings on the road.
3. Driver speed is a problem on Florence Place, potentially because it serves as a shortcut between I-710 and Downey/I-5. Some drivers don't yield when turning, as the workshop participants experienced first-hand while trying to cross Granger Avenue. Obstructed sightlines between drivers and pedestrians due to parked cars and the absence of any marked crosswalks at Florence Place / Granger Avenue also contribute to this failure to yield.
4. The Florence Place / Garfield Avenue intersection is very busy, with many truck drivers making left turns and a high volume of through traffic. Participants reported that speed and u-turns are issues here. The crosswalks are not high visibility.

5. At the Florence Avenue / Garfield Avenue intersection, very heavy vehicle traffic, including trucks, made it almost impossible to have a conversation due to the noise. Participants reported that the road is easier to use later in the evening when the volume of traffic is lower. During the school year, however, traffic during arrival and dismissal times at Garfield Elementary School makes this intersection even more hectic. Older adults cross this intersection to access the bus stop but the pedestrian signal, unlike at other intersections, does not emit an audible chirp. The road markings are faded and, though it is marked as a bike route, participants said that heavy traffic makes riding a bike here unsafe.
6. The Florence Avenue / Granger Avenue intersection has a high-visibility crosswalk at Granger Avenue but participants were still concerned about drivers not yielding when turning from Florence Avenue. The pavement on Florence Avenue immediately in front of Granger Avenue is dilapidated due to heavy truck traffic and has many potholes that are dangerous for bicyclists.
7. There is a full set of high-visibility crosswalks at the Florence Avenue / Perry Road intersection. During the workshop, participants witnessed a bicyclist traveling eastbound on Florence Avenue in the middle of the evening commute and commented on their bravery. In this area, and throughout Florence Avenue, cars may park for two hours at a time in the right-most lane (typically the third lane) at some segments, which leads to traffic dodging around the parked cars. Since this lane is supposed to be shared with bicyclists, this practice poses risks to drivers and bicyclists.



ABOVE: Traffic at the Florence Avenue / Garfield Avenue intersection.



# Recommendations

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The recommendations in this report are based on observed pedestrian and bicycle safety concerns, Safe System strategies, and workshop participants' priorities. The suggested timelines and resources needed for implementation are estimated based on general pedestrian and bicycle safety best practices and may need to be further tailored by the community.

## Community Recommendations

Participants offered the following programmatic and infrastructure recommendations to create a safer environment for walking and biking. General priorities included:

- Improve safety for pedestrians crossing by prohibiting right-turns-on-red at major intersections and changing signal timing to add leading pedestrian intervals. Participants cited the Florence Avenue / Garfield Avenue intersection as one that needs these improvements. Also consider adding dedicated left-turn phases to intersections without them where left turns are common. Not all large intersections have them, which forces some drivers to take risky, fast left turns where they are concentrated on oncoming traffic rather than on potential pedestrians crossing in the far crosswalk. The city should also consider adding Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) to alert drivers to watch for and yield to pedestrians.
- Install a Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacon at Florence Place / Perry Road intersection, on the east crosswalk crossing Florence Place, to help pedestrians access Veterans Park. This area would also benefit from a crossing guard during the times when students are walking to and from school.
- Consider daylighting, the removal of visual barriers on the street to make everyone on the street easier to see at intersections, at the Florence Place / Granger Avenue intersection, especially on the north side.
- Participants recognized that high traffic volumes, on Garfield Avenue and Florence Avenue, for example, make it hard to remove lanes, so other measures need to be used to calm traffic. Bulb outs could support this need by leading drivers to make turns more slowly.

- Add “bikes may use full lane” signage on bike routes and repaint sharrow markings, such as Florence Avenue. More significant bike infrastructure such as marked bike lanes and bike boxes are needed along this corridor if it is intended to be a bike route. The city should also coordinate bike infrastructure improvements and bike routes with neighboring cities and Metro to ensure that bicyclists are better connected to businesses, amenities, and other activities across the Southeast Los Angeles region, including Bell Gardens.
- Identify ways to direct traffic to major roads and away from residential areas. Participants expressed that residential streets are often used as shortcuts by speeding drivers. Traffic circles may be considered for these kinds of streets.
- Participants suggested that Florence Place near Veterans Park would be a good place to have Open Streets events, including a community bike ride.
- The community should gather more data on pedestrian and bicyclist volumes and routes in the city. Either city staff or community groups can perform these types of counts and observations. Once collected, the community should share this data with city staff, schools, and city commissions, including the [Education](#) and [Traffic and Safety](#) Commissions.
- Participants emphasized the need for local officials to research how the \$750 million reallocated funds from [the recently abandoned I-710 expansion project](#) can be utilized for capital improvements within the city. Such funds were declared for Southeast Los Angeles communities along the freeway, however it is not clear what projects will be prioritized.
- Participants recommended that critical signage like the “Do Not Enter” sign found at the Foster Bridge Road / Granger Avenue intersection be translated to Spanish, to ensure that all in the community understand what it means.
- Participants saw the value of reflective street signage, especially stop signs, powered by solar panels and agreed that more are needed especially within residential areas.

# Bell Gardens Coalition for Active Transportation

## Project Goals:

1. Establish an active transportation-focused coalition in Bell Gardens by regularly convening community advocates, residents, researchers, and local officials to improve active transportation safety by exploring transportation projects, advocacy opportunities, and ordinances.
2. Bridge the important issues of active transportation, environmental justice and housing through unified messaging, projects and policies along with active transportation Safe System Strategies.
3. Provide community educational opportunities on active transportation to increase community input and leadership capacity in Bell Gardens.

**Project Description:** Workshop participants agreed that there is great momentum for environmental justice, pollution, and projects that could potentially displace communities in cities adjacent to the I-710. Local community-based groups such as [East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice](#) and the [Coalition for Environmental Health and Justice \(CEHAJ\)](#) have engaged residents by increasing knowledge on the decision-making processes that directly impact their health and quality of life. This grassroots movement can be further expanded with a focus on active transportation, as alternative forms of transportation beyond the car can address some of the issues that intersect with environmental justice. Furthermore, with Caltrans' and Los Angeles Metro's 2022 decision to drop the I-710 expansion and new plans to reallocate \$750 million in funds meant for "quality of life improvements" projects across the Southeast Los Angeles region, CPBST participants expressed interest in exploring how these funds can be utilized to improve road safety for pedestrians and bicyclists in Bell Gardens.

Workshop participants agreed that the centralization of community-based projects to the City of Bell Gardens would be ideal, as many community-based groups are focused on the broader Southeast Los Angeles region as a whole. Participants identified organizations that serve as experts in the community who they would like to see come together and form a community coalition focused on active transportation safety. A community coalition consists of community advocates, residents, researchers, and local officials working together in partnership to improve the conditions of a specific issue in the city. Coalition work can include campaigns on the topics of affordable housing and active transportation, land use solutions, and public transportation investments.

*Continued on the next page*

# Bell Gardens Coalition for Active Transportation, continued

The CPBST Workshop Planning Committee and participants consist of individuals with diverse experiences and expertise. Additionally, coalition membership can emerge from existing networks amongst community based organizations and advocacy groups. For example, during the Bell Gardens CPBST Workshop, community members identified East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice, Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), and members of the Bell Gardens City Council as experts of the community who may be able to serve on the coalition and advise.

Coalition meetings can begin as soon as community advocates are identified and continue indefinitely.

## Action Steps:

- 1) Identify key stakeholders to convene to the coalition, including representatives of different backgrounds, expertises, and skill sets, such as researchers, policymakers, organizers, social media strategists, and others from existing community networks.
- 2) Develop a collective vision, goals, and identity for the coalition by convening a core group of stakeholders.
- 3) Identify past successful advocacy efforts surrounding local policies and projects that have been approved within the city for discussion and assessment by coalition members.
  - a) As a community impacted by major freight corridors and other systems that create hazardous living conditions, there are already networks in place advocating for change, such as the Coalition for Environmental Health and Justice (CEHAJ). What can be learned from this coalition in terms of opportunities, challenges and wins?

## Safe System Strategies:

Community Engagement/  
Partnerships, Data,  
Encouragement and  
Education, Infrastructure,  
Safe Routes to School  
(SRTS), Speed Management,  
Vulnerable Populations

## Bell Gardens Coalition for Active Transportation, continued

- 4) Conceptualize key projects, campaigns, and policies that could benefit the city in terms of walking and biking safety.
- 5) Orient coalition members on the following topics that are key to active transportation issues: the role of public service, who makes relevant decisions and policies, and provide community context on active transportation issues.
  - a) These conversations can be adapted to become formalized workshops for the general community once the coalition has the capacity to do so.
- 6) Develop an engagement plan with messaging on key topics that will be addressed by the coalition.
  - a) Based on the goals and vision identified by the coalition, who should the coalition engage with? What are the needs (language, age-appropriate) to get the point across? Which communication channels should be utilized?

# Community Engagement Campaign for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety

## Project Goals:

1. Increase the number of people who use active transportation in Bell Gardens;
2. Improve safety by building awareness of people walking or biking among all road users; and
3. Identify and work with the city to improve safe routes to schools and parks.

**Project Description:** Throughout Bell Gardens, with a focus on safe routes to schools and parks, there are many people who walk, bike, or use other modes of active transportation in Bell Gardens but there are relatively few Bell Gardens-specific groups or activities that bring these folks together. This project seeks to change that by engaging the community in several different ways to create a stronger culture of safe walking and bicycling.

The workshop Planning Committee discussed taking the lead on many of the ideas for community engagement below, with the support of the City of Bell Gardens Planning and Public Works in planning temporary demonstrations and permanent infrastructure improvements. For Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) work, the Planning Committee will want to find allies among students, parents, school staff, and school district staff. The school district likely has insights into crossing guard programs and what role crossing guards could have in an Safe Routes to School (SRTS) campaign.

Community members expressed excitement in planning for community engagement immediately. Most of these ideas can be started in the short term, with the start of the academic school year in the Montebello School District, and continue indefinitely. Developing a SRTS campaign at Suva Elementary and Suva Intermediate Schools that parallel community-wide activities to attain input from parents, students, and faculty related to bike and pedestrian safety and leverage school events to share the campaign messaging would be ideal.

## Safe System Strategies:

Bike Rodeo, Bike Train, Community Walk or Bike Ride, Designated Safe Route, Earn-a-Bike Program, Helmet/Light Distribution, Open Streets, Participatory Campaign, Safe Passages Program, Safety Messaging Campaign, SRTS Community Program, School or Community Crossing Guard Program, Street Story, Temporary Demonstration Project, Walking School Bus



# Community Engagement Campaign for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety, continued

## Action Steps:

- 1) The Planning Committee can start by designing the engagement campaign. Many ideas emerged during the discussion at the workshop, including:
  - a) An SRTS Campaign can engage students and parents via a walking school bus or group bike rides. Workshop participants suggested that [Cudahy provides an example of a similar community that has SRTS](#).
  - b) Open Streets-type events or bike rodeos can be fun ways to engage a wide variety of community members. Workshop participants cited [CicLAvia](#) as an example. Such an event in Bell Gardens could use a park-to-park route. To involve the community, public art and music should be incorporated and organizers should reach out to local bike shops, street vendors, and other businesses for support. To enhance the safety element of such an event and broaden the community involvement, emergency preparedness training such as CERT training could be included. Bicycle-specific elements could include a bike valet and the involvement of LCIs (League Certified Instructors) to lead bike safety events.
  - c) Temporary Demonstrations can demonstrate ideas to make roads safer while involving the community and building awareness. The Planning Committee should work with city staff to identify feasible temporary demonstration ideas and locations. SCAG's Go Human program offers the [Kit of Parts](#) with materials for temporary demonstrations.

## Community Engagement Campaign for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety, continued

- 2) Conduct outreach. Participants noted the importance of social media for outreach, with Instagram cited as a common venue for sharing information about community events and bicycling in the area. The Planning Committee should also make use of existing online Bell Gardens community groups. One example of using social media for community engagement is the [SELA Community Map](#) which posts public service information such as city council meetings.
- 3) Build community groups focused on pedestrian and bike safety from the folks who have been involved and engaged in these campaigns. These community groups could take on different forms, with bike co-ops or cycling groups mentioned as possibilities. On the advocacy side, [People for Mobility Justice](#) were mentioned as a model organization.
- 4) Engage the city to build improvements based on these campaigns.
  - a) This engagement can occur across many settings, including events similar to the workshop. Community members can engage elected officials by providing public comment at council meetings. City commissions, such as the Education and Traffic & Safety Commissions, can provide another venue for engaging the city on pedestrian and bike safety issues.
  - b) Workshop participants expressed a desire to better understand the city's practices and procedures so that they can identify procedural barriers to making safety improvements. City staff should work with Planning Committee members to communicate what the best methods are for navigating these barriers.
  - c) Community groups will play a key role in supporting the city's grant applications by providing community input. The city should involve community members in each step of the process of identifying, designing, and planning pedestrian and bike safety improvements.

# Project Team Recommendations

The Project Team recommends the following for local stakeholder consideration.

## **Integrate Street Story Safety Reporting into Community Engagement Events**

The Project Team recommends the Planning Committee partner with UC Berkeley SafeTREC to use Street Story as a way to gather data on near misses and other road safety concerns. Community groups can use the Street Story tool, available in English and Spanish, to engage residents, community groups, and agencies to collect information about transportation crashes, near-misses, and general hazards. These recorded experiences can then be used as qualitative data to support transportation safety initiatives, such as improvements at dangerous intersections, traffic calming measures, and bike facilities. Street Story may provide a way for the Planning Committee to make connections directly with those impacted by traffic violence and can bolster community outreach efforts for the projects listed above and other City-led projects. Bell Gardens already has a large amount of Street Story data but it is mostly from 2018, so newer experiences will more strongly support the Planning Committee's efforts. SafeTREC works directly with community organizations across California to incorporate the Street Story tool into their existing projects and programs. They also provide workshops, webinars, and one-on-one technical assistance.

## **Enhance the Active Transportation Safety Role of the Traffic and Safety Commission**

The Project Team recommends the existing Bell Gardens Traffic and Safety Commission strengthen its work in addressing pedestrian and bicyclist safety concerns. Pedestrian and bicycle safety should be explicitly added as a focus for the Commission and the City Council should appoint additional members to represent pedestrians, bicyclists, and other communities who may experience disproportionate vulnerability using the road. The Project Team further recommends that the Commission's meetings, deliberations, and minutes be made accessible in Spanish. The Commission should consider whether the creation of an ad-hoc Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee would help support the Commission's work on these safety issues. Finally, the Commission should seek opportunities to collaborate with other concerned Commissions, including Planning and Education, on overlapping safety topics, such as SRTS programs.

## **Conduct Community-Led Data Collection on Bike and Pedestrian Trends**

The community should gather more data on pedestrian and bicyclist volumes and routes in the city. Either city staff or community groups can perform these types of counts and observations, and provide training to community members on how to conduct such fieldwork, such as walk audits, note-taking, and safety. Once collected, the community should share this data with city staff, schools, and city commissions, including the Education and Traffic & Safety Commissions.

# Appendix

- CPBST Site Visit Data Presentation
- Street Story Presentation
- Esri Data
- To learn more about coalitions on active transportation, please review the [Santa Ana Active Streets Coalition \(SAAS\)](#). Based out of Santa Ana, California, SAAS builds community leadership by hosting community events partnering with local organizations, and working directly with city officials.

# Bell Gardens Pedestrian and Bicycle Crash History

CPBST Site Visit – June 1, 2023  
Garrett Fortin, [fortinga@berkeley.edu](mailto:fortinga@berkeley.edu)

1

## What is a pedestrian crash?



### Pedestrian-motor vehicle crash

- Includes a person afoot, on a skateboard, stroller, wheelchair, electric assistive mobility device

One crash may result in multiple pedestrian victims.

2



# What is a bicycle crash?

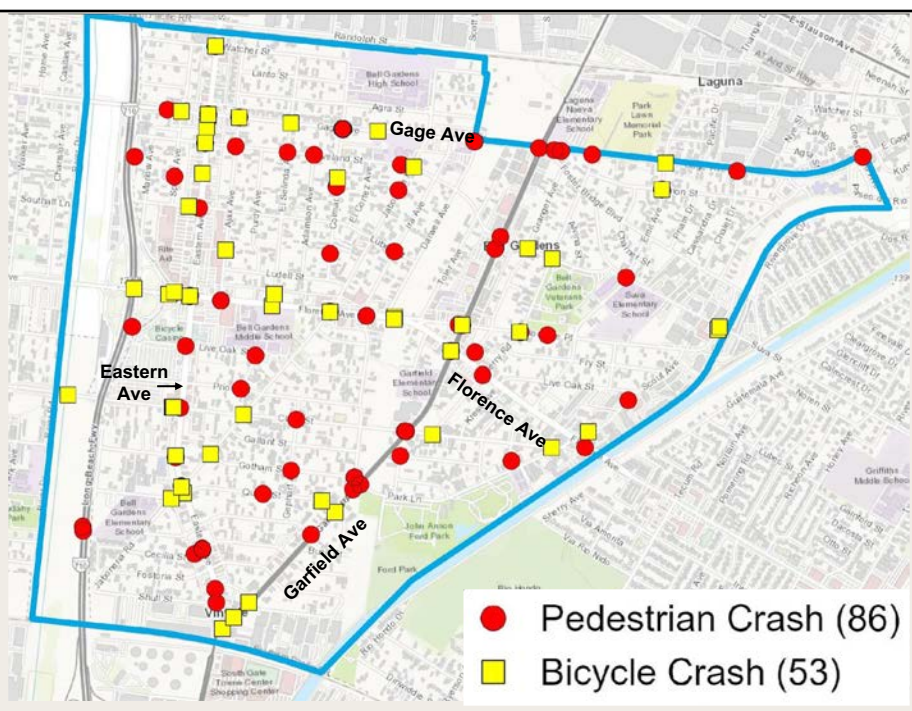


## Bicycle-motor vehicle crash

- Bicycles are considered vehicles and therefore violations committed by a “driver” could have been committed by a motor vehicle driver or bicyclist.

3

# Overview of crashes in Bell Gardens, 2017-2021

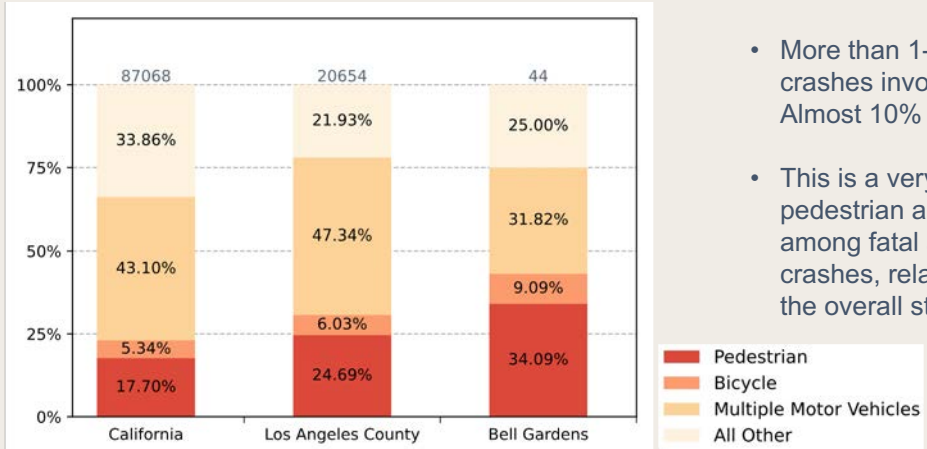


Data source: Statewide Integrated Traffic Record System (SWITRS) 2017-2021. 2020 and 2021 data are provisional as of May 2023.

4

# How does Bell Gardens compare to other areas?

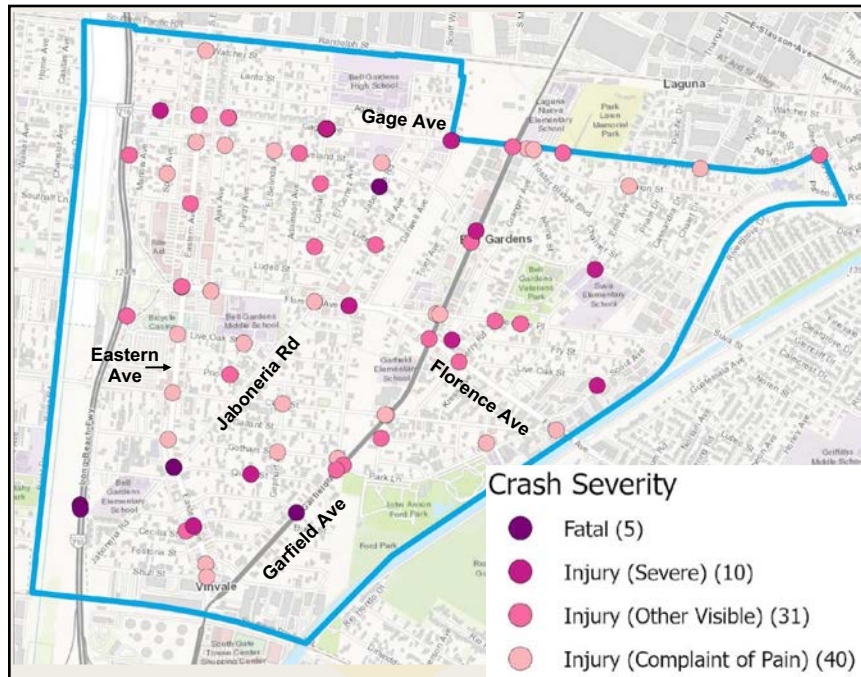
## Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes by Involvement 2017-2021



- More than 1-in-3 fatal or severe crashes involved a pedestrian. Almost 10% involved a bicyclist.
- This is a very high proportion of pedestrian and bicycle crashes among fatal and serious injury crashes, relative to LA County and the overall state figures.

Data source: Statewide Integrated Traffic Record System (SWITRS) 2017-2021. 2020 and 2021 data are provisional as of May 2023.

5



## Pedestrian Crashes 2017-2021

Of the 13 non-highway fatal or severe crashes:

- 3 occurred on Gage Ave
- 2 occurred on Jaboneria Rd (both fatal)
- 2 occurred on Garfield Ave (one fatal)

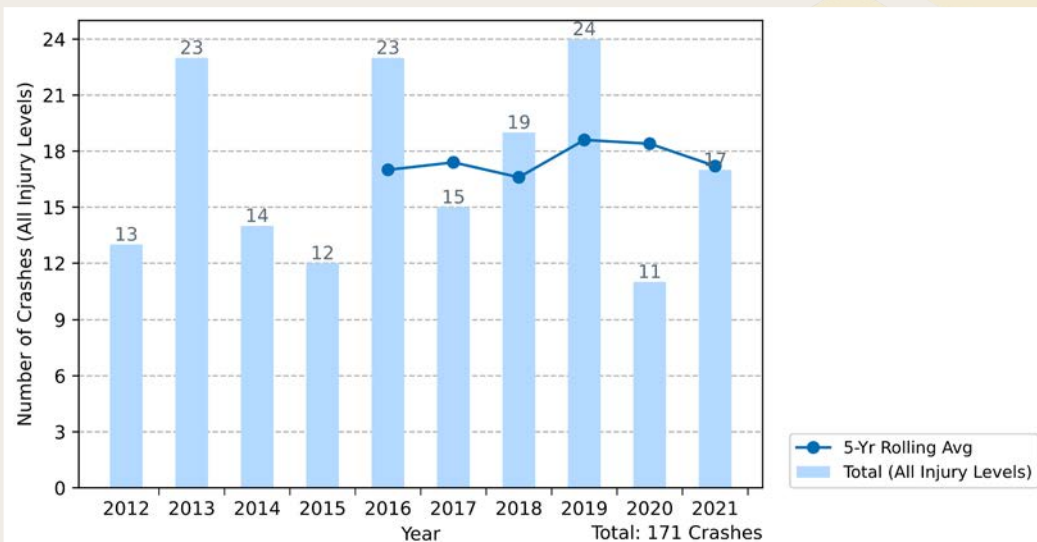
Of all 86 pedestrian crashes:

- Gage Ave had 17
- Florence Ave had 14
- Eastern Ave had 13

Data source: Statewide Integrated Traffic Record System (SWITRS) 2017-2021. 2020 and 2021 data are provisional as of May 2023.

6

## Pedestrian Crashes 2012-2021



Data source: Statewide Integrated Traffic Record System (SWITRS) 2017-2021.  
2020 and 2021 data are provisional as of May 2023.

7

## Pedestrian Crashes 2017-2021 By time of day & week

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total
09:00PM-11:59PM	2	1	0	0	0	1	1	5
06:00PM-08:59PM	7	2	2	2	1	4	4	22
03:00PM-05:59PM	3	1	4	1	3	4	1	17
Noon-02:59PM	3	4	3	0	4	2	0	16
09:00AM-11:59AM	1	2	3	0	0	1	2	9
06:00AM-08:59AM	2	2	5	2	1	0	0	12
03:00AM-05:59AM	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Midnight-02:59AM	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	4
<b>Total</b>	18	13	17	5	11	14	8	86

Data source: Statewide Integrated Traffic Record System (SWITRS) 2017-2021.  
2020 and 2021 data are provisional as of May 2023.

8

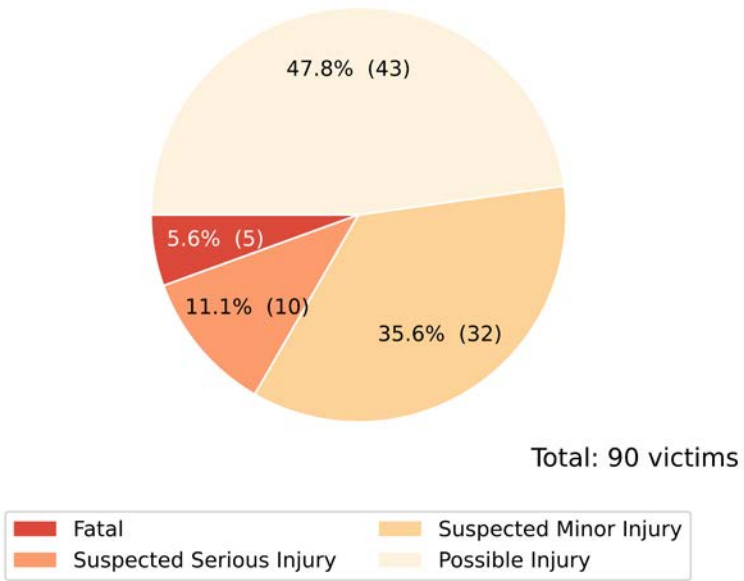
# Pedestrian Crashes 2017-2021

## By injury severity

90 victims were injured in 86 pedestrian crashes.

Five victims suffered a fatal injury and 10 suffered a serious injury.

There were a relatively large number of less-severe pedestrian injuries.



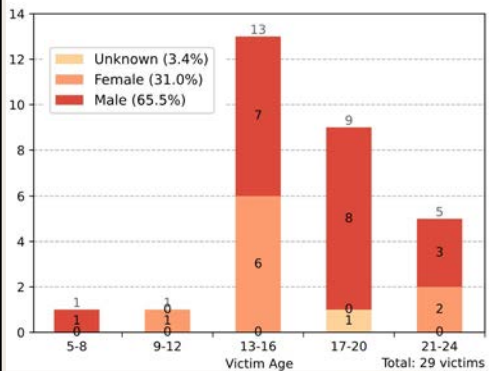
Data source: Statewide Integrated Traffic Record System (SWITRS) 2017-2021. 2020 and 2021 data are provisional as of May 2023.

# Pedestrian Crashes 2017-2021

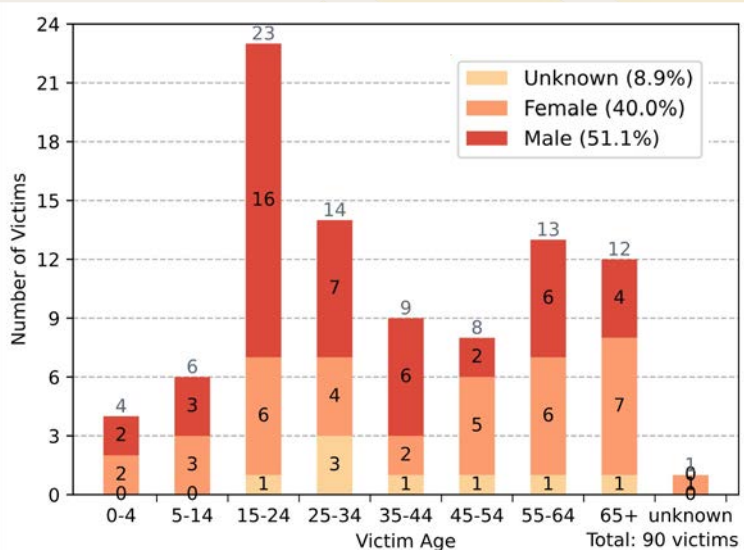
## By victim age & gender

28 victims were younger than 21 and 12 victims were 65 or older.

Bell Gardens Pedestrian Child and Youth Victims by Age and Gender



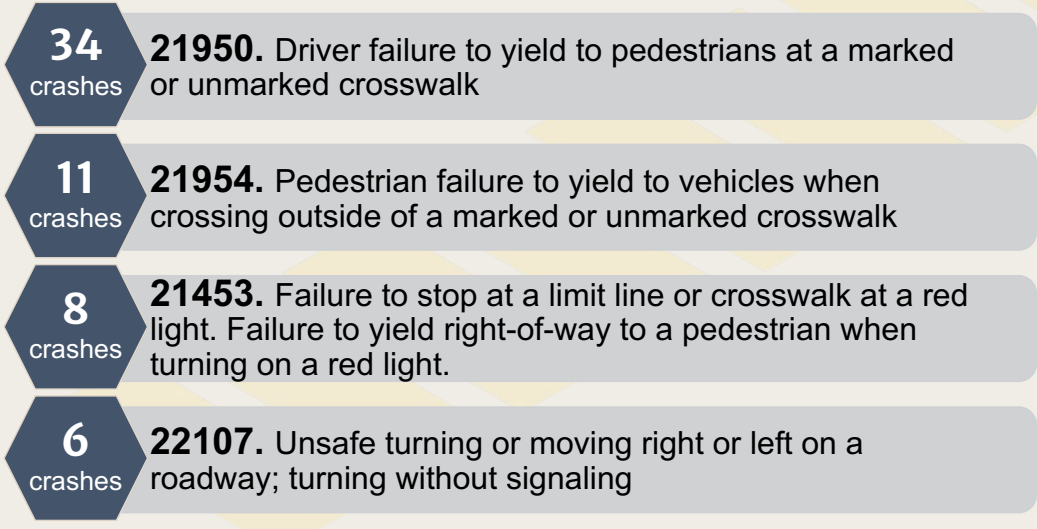
Data source: Statewide Integrated Traffic Record System (SWITRS) 2017-2021. 2020 and 2021 data are provisional as of May 2023.





# Pedestrian Crashes 2017-2021

## Most frequently cited violations in injury crashes



Data source: Statewide Integrated Traffic Record System (SWITRS) 2017-2021. 2020 and 2021 data are provisional as of May 2023.

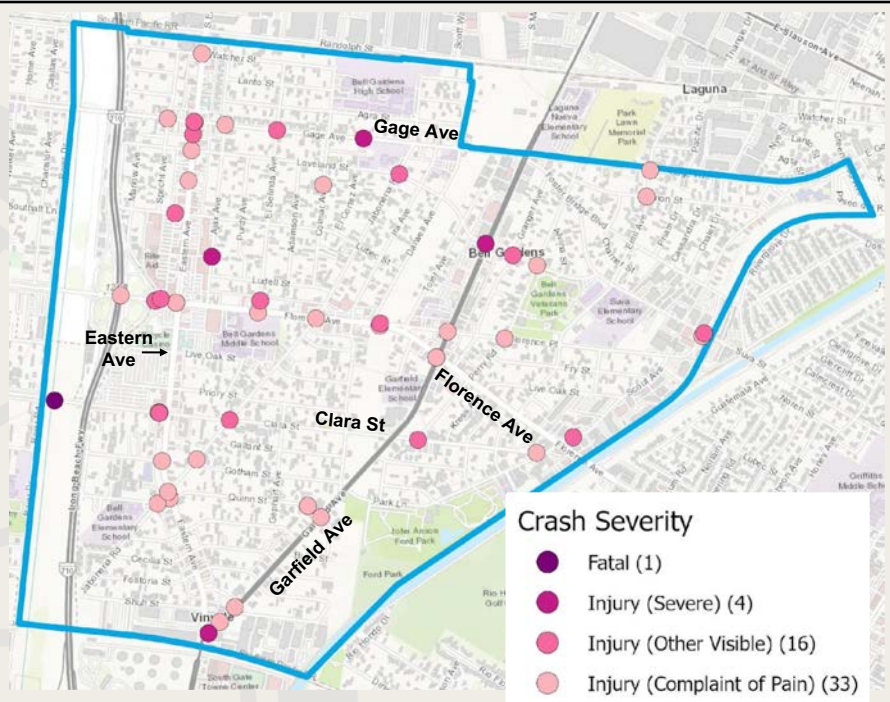
11

# Bicycle Crashes 2017-2021

There was one fatal crash, on the Clara St bridge over the LA River.

Of the all 54 bicycle crashes:

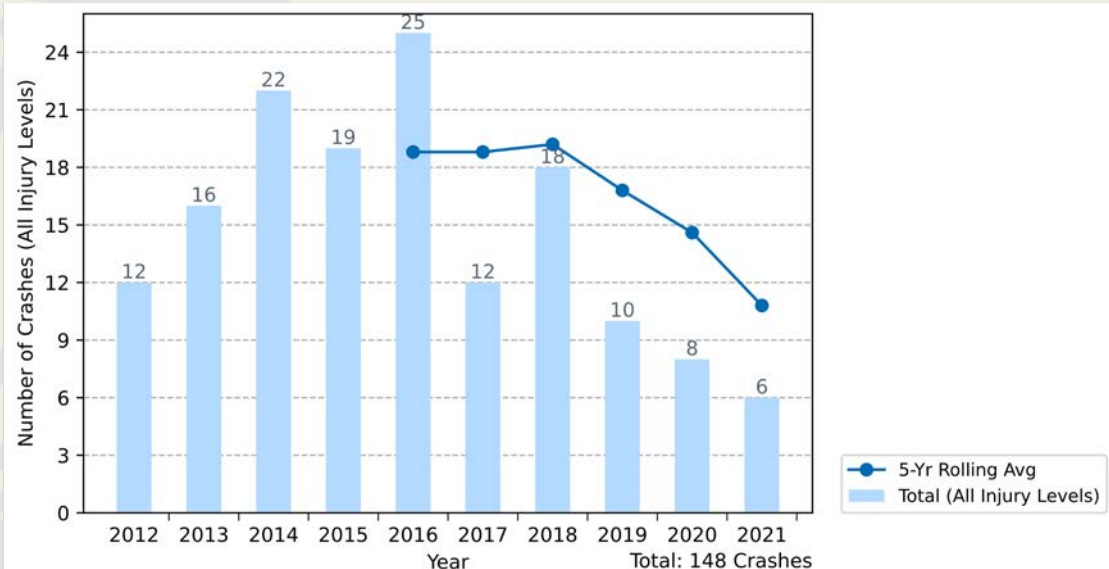
- Eastern Ave had 11
- Florence Ave had 8
- Garfield Ave and Clara St had 6



Data source: Statewide Integrated Traffic Record System (SWITRS) 2017-2021. 2020 and 2021 data are provisional as of May 2023.

12

## Bicycle Crashes 2012-2021



Data source: Statewide Integrated Traffic Record System (SWITRS) 2017-2021.  
2020 and 2021 data are provisional as of May 2023.

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## Bicycle Crashes 2017-2021 By time of day & week

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total
09:00PM-11:59PM	1	0	2	2	2	0	1	8
06:00PM-08:59PM	2	0	3	1	3	0	2	11
03:00PM-05:59PM	2	3	2	3	0	2	1	13
Noon-02:59PM	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	4
09:00AM-11:59AM	2	2	1	0	2	0	0	7
06:00AM-08:59AM	0	2	2	3	0	1	0	8
03:00AM-05:59AM	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Midnight-02:59AM	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	9	9	10	10	8	3	5	54

Data source: Statewide Integrated Traffic Record System (SWITRS) 2017-2021.  
2020 and 2021 data are provisional as of May 2023.

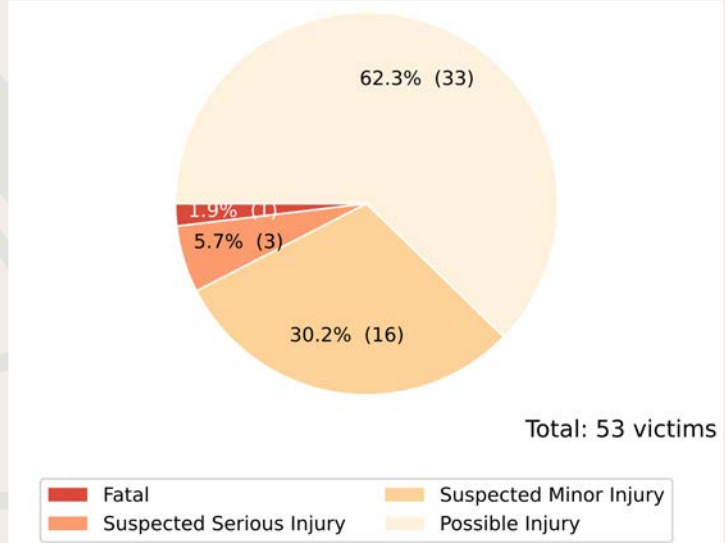
14

# Bicycle Crashes 2017-2021

## By injury severity

There were 53 injured bicyclist victims of these 54 crashes. (One bicyclist crash injured a pedestrian.)

One bicyclist suffered fatal injuries and another three suffered serious injuries.



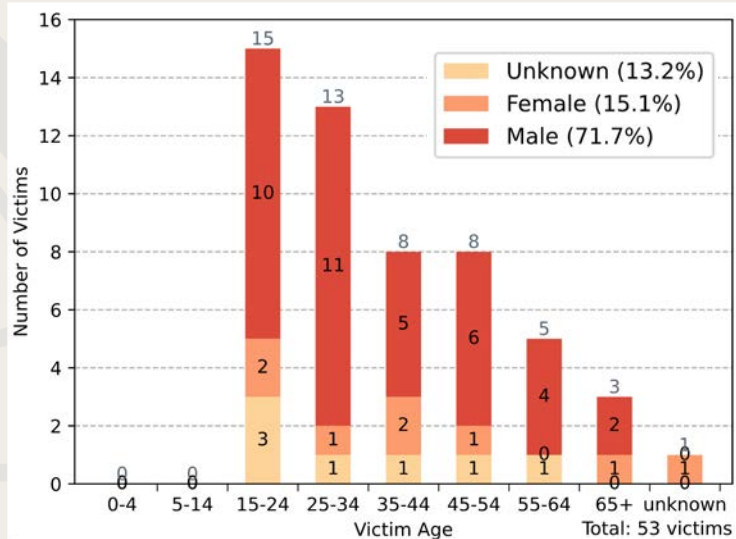
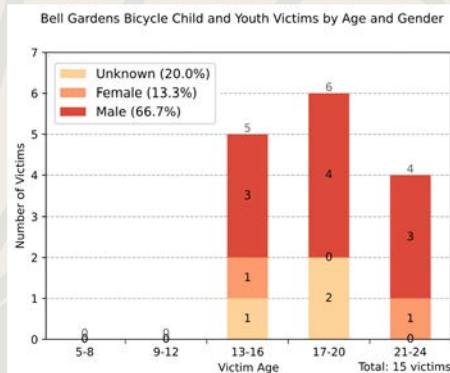
Data source: Statewide Integrated Traffic Record System (SWITRS) 2017-2021. 2020 and 2021 data are provisional as of May 2023.

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# Bicycle Crashes 2017-2021

## By victim age & gender

11 victims were younger than 21. Three victims were 65 or older.

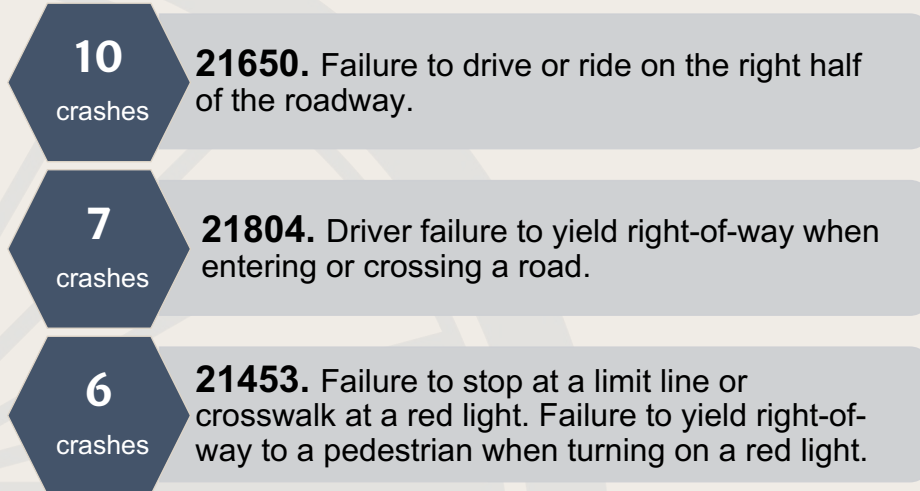


Data source: Statewide Integrated Traffic Record System (SWITRS) 2017-2021. 2020 and 2021 data are provisional as of May 2023.

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# Bicycle Crashes 2017-2021

## Most frequently cited violations in injury crashes



Data source: Statewide Integrated Traffic Record System (SWITRS) 2017-2021. 2020 and 2021 data are provisional as of May 2023.

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## Additional Resources

### Street Story

Street Story is a tool for collecting community feedback on transportation safety issues.

Share stories on Street Story of where you've been in a crash or near miss, or where you feel safe or unsafe traveling.

[streetstory.berkeley.edu](http://streetstory.berkeley.edu)



### Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS)

TIMS is a web-based tool that allows users to analyze and map data from California's Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS).

To further explore collision data, register for a free account to access the tools and resources on TIMS.

[tims.berkeley.edu](http://tims.berkeley.edu)

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# Street Story Data: Crashes and Near-misses

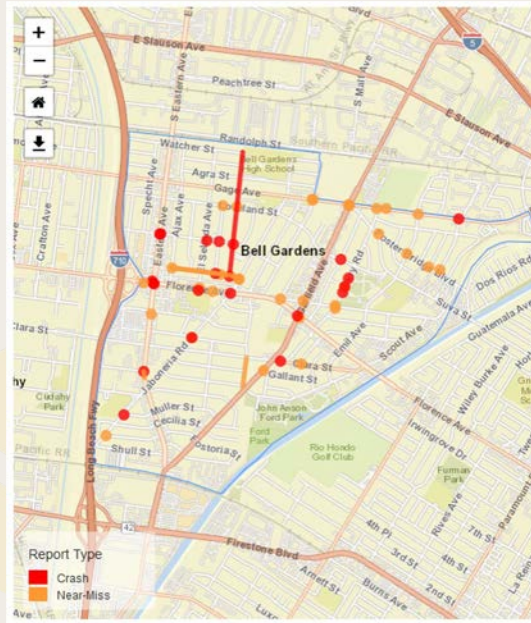
There are 58 crash or near-miss reports, including five pedestrian crashes and 13 pedestrian near-misses.

Speeding is the most mentioned cause of crashes and near-misses.

Many crashes were reported on side streets, including Lubec St and Perry Rd.

All entries are from 2018.

Narratives are available at [streetstory.berkeley.edu](http://streetstory.berkeley.edu)



Crash/Near-miss Cause	Count	Percent
someone was speeding	20	24 %
people don't yield	15	18 %
some other event	15	18 %
signs, signals or markings were not working or missing	12	14 %
poor lighting	8	10 %
poor/missing bike lanes or paths	3	4 %
the road was curving, I couldn't see what was coming	3	4 %
poor/missing sidewalk	2	2 %
cracked/uneven street	2	2 %
there was an obstacle in someone's way	2	2 %
there was loose gravel, ice or water on the road/sidewalk	1	1 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	

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# Street Story Data: Hazards and Safe Areas

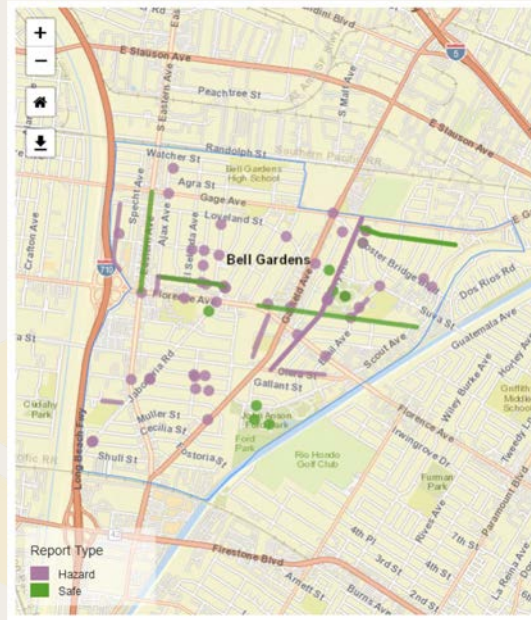
There are 58 hazard reports, of which 20 mentioned walking and 22 mentioned multiple modes.

Speeding was the most mentioned hazard, followed by poor lighting and failure to yield.

Safe sidewalks were the most mentioned attribute of safe places.

All entries are from 2018.

Narratives are available at [streetstory.berkeley.edu](http://streetstory.berkeley.edu)



Hazard Location Cause	Count	Percent
people drive at unsafe speeds	36	32 %
poor lighting	18	16 %
people don't yield	18	16 %
some other event	12	11 %
signs, signals or markings were not working or missing	9	8 %
there was an obstacle in someone's way	8	7 %
cracked/uneven street	6	5 %
poor/missing sidewalk	4	4 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	

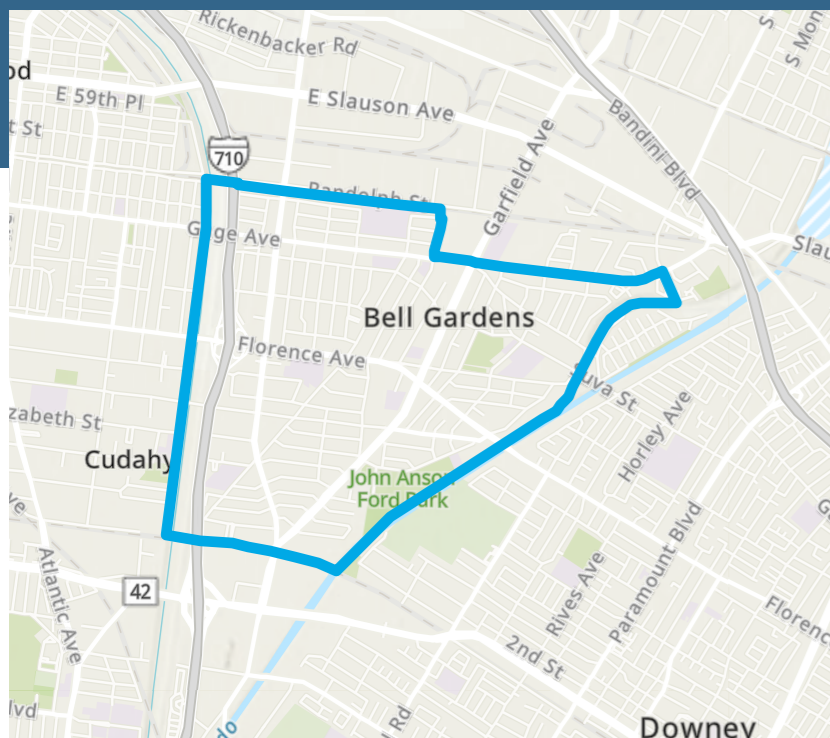
Safe Places Cause	Count	Percent
safe sidewalks	8	38 %
good lighting	5	24 %
low car traffic	3	14 %
safe speeds	2	10 %
signs, signals or street markings work well	2	10 %
safe bike lanes and paths	1	5 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	

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# Bell Gardens

## Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program



### Key Facts



22%

Households with 1+ Persons with a Disability

### Vulnerable Population



8%

Population 65+



12%

Households without a vehicle



25%

Households Below the Poverty Level

### Commute Profile



4%

Took Public Transportation



12%

Carpooled



2%

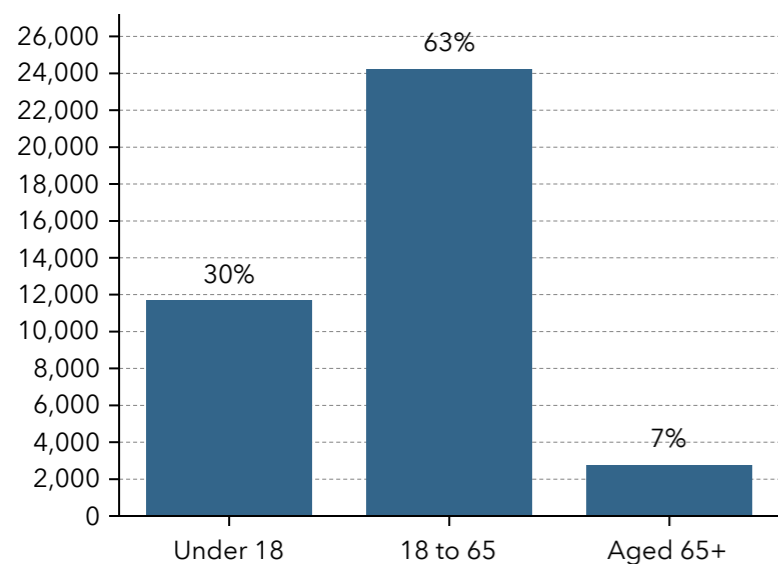
Walked to Work



1%

Bike to Work

### Population by Age



### 2023 Race and Ethnicity (Esri)

The largest group: Hispanic Origin (Any Race) (96.49)

The smallest group: Pacific Islander Alone (0.06)

Indicator ▲	Value	Diff
White Alone	13.66	-17.44
Black Alone	0.69	-7.21
American Indian/Alaska Native Alone	3.22	+1.58
Asian Alone	0.68	-14.79
Pacific Islander Alone	0.06	-0.18
Other Race	62.42	+33.91
Two or More Races	19.28	+4.15
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	96.49	+47.36

Bars show deviation from 06037 (Los Angeles County)

### Household Income (2021)

Median Household Income	\$50,879
Household Income less than \$15,000	1,028 (10%)
Household Income \$15,000-\$24,999	1,034 (11%)
Household Income \$25,000-\$34,999	1,134 (12%)
Household Income \$35,000-\$49,999	1,606 (16%)
Household Income \$50,000-\$74,999	2,184 (22%)
Household Income \$75,000-\$99,999	1,354 (14%)
Household Income \$100,000-\$149,999	929 (9%)
Household Income \$150,000-\$199,999	419 (4%)
Household Income \$200,000 or greater	159 (2%)

# Thank you for your interest in the Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Training Program.

For more information, please visit:  
<https://safetrec.berkeley.edu/programs/cpbst> or  
<https://www.calwalks.org/cpbst>

For questions, please email:  
[safetrec@berkeley.edu](mailto:safetrec@berkeley.edu) or [cpbst@calwalks.org](mailto:cpbst@calwalks.org)

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.



**California Walks**  
Stepping Up for Health, Equity, & Sustainability

**Berkeley** SafeTREC