

# Pico-Aliso Boyle Heights Train-the-Trainer: Safe Routes to School Follow-Up Technical Assistance



**Comunidades Activas y Seguras  
(Active and Safe Communities)**

**Summer 2025**



UC Berkeley SafeTREC

# Acknowledgments

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

Our work took place on the ethnohistoric territory of the Tongva. We recognize that every resident of Boyle Heights has, and continues to benefit from, the use and occupation of Tongva land.

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# Introduction

Comunidades Activas y Seguras<sup>1</sup> (CAyS) is a statewide, joint program of UC Berkeley Safe Transportation Research and Education Center ([SafeTREC](#)) and California Walks ([Cal Walks](#)) under the Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program (CPBSP). The program engages residents and safety advocates, utilizing the Safe System Approach, through multiple meetings and a community workshop to develop a community-driven safety action plan that aims to improve the safety of those walking<sup>2</sup> and biking in the community and strengthen collaboration with their local officials and agency staff. In alignment with the Safe System Approach, the CAyS program prioritizes reducing fatalities and serious injuries resulting from traffic crashes involving people walking and biking. This program supports the needs of monolingual Spanish speakers by providing a culturally sensitive and relevant curriculum that aims to improve walking and biking safety in communities across California. The program also includes follow-up technical assistance to past CPBST and CAyS sites, supporting the implementation of the action plans and recommendations outlined in their initial CPBSP summary and recommendations report.

In the summer of 2020, SafeTREC and Cal Walks (Project Team) hosted a CPBST workshop with Boyle Heights residents, and representatives from Proyecto Pastoral, Comunidad en Movimiento<sup>3</sup> (CEM), Promesa Boyle Heights, Dolores Mission School and Church, Partnership for Los Angeles Schools, and Self-Help Graphics. The goals of the CPBST workshop were to improve Safe Routes to School (SRTS) efforts near Mendez High School, Utah Street Elementary School, and Dolores Mission School, engage local agencies to plan with the community and champion the implementation of walking and biking safety improvements, and create a community vision for pedestrian and bicycle safety advocacy. The 2020 CPBST report included recommendations to increase community capacity to advocate for walking and biking safety improvements for students and families. For more information on the 2020 workshop, please see the full [2020 Pico Aliso, Boyle Heights CPBST Summary and Recommendations Report](#).

In the summer of 2025, the Project Team provided follow-up technical assistance to the community of Boyle Heights, building on the walking and biking safety goals identified in the 2020 CPBST report. [Proyecto Pastoral](#), a community-based organization, specifically requested a Train-the-Trainer walking assessment workshop. A walking assessment is a systematic way to identify and document safety concerns and barriers, as well as opportunities for improvements along specific routes in a community. This workshop was designed to build the skills and capacity of the Proyecto Pastoral team and the CEM volunteers, a core group of 25 leaders dedicated to community safety and health.

Currently, the group is focused on improving pedestrian safety in the community, and operates Caminos Seguros (Safe Passage), a volunteer crossing guard program supporting students and families at [Dolores Mission School](#) at arrival and dismissal.

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1 Active and Safe Communities, in English.

2 People who roll on wheels with a scooter, skateboard, or mobility device, such as a wheelchair or stroller, to travel in their community are counted as people walking.

3 Community in Motion, in English.

The workshop is a response to safety concerns identified by the Planning Committee in the Pico-Aliso neighborhood near Dolores Mission School. They noted issues related to driver behavior, such as high speed, hit-and-run incidents, and pedestrian crashes that have resulted in serious injuries and death. Additionally, the Planning Committee expressed concern that the existing infrastructure does not adequately support the safety of people walking and biking. Because of this, the workshop sought ways to strengthen the CEM volunteers' skills to advocate for meaningful change on their streets by identifying and documenting safety concerns and opportunities.

On August 4, 2025, the Project Team conducted a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) focused Train-the-Trainer walking assessment virtual<sup>4</sup> workshop. The goal of the workshop was to equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct a walking assessment and school arrival and dismissal observations. Ultimately, the workshop's purpose was to provide additional tools to enhance the safety of students at Dolores Mission School and other schools in the community.

## About Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs are built on a broad partnership of community stakeholders who work together to promote walking and biking to school through education, incentives, and infrastructure improvements. These programs aim to encourage active transportation among schoolchildren and to make streets safer at and around school campuses.

The Planning Committee expressed interest in improving walking and biking safety conditions for students of Dolores Mission School and other schools in Boyle Heights and the Pico-Aliso neighborhood. This focus stems from concerns over challenging street conditions, including high driver speeds, traffic congestion, and unsafe driver behavior. Given that students currently travel to and from school using various modes – including walking, biking, rolling, and driving – addressing these safety issues is a critical priority for the community.

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<sup>4</sup> While walking assessments are typically conducted in-person, this training was delivered virtually to ensure accessibility and better accommodate participants.

# Safe Routes to School Train-the-Trainer workshop

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This virtual SRTS Train-the-Trainer workshop was conducted on Monday, August 4, 2025, to support the capacity-building efforts for Proyecto Pastoral's staff and volunteers. The workshop goals were to:

1. Enhance participant knowledge of the key elements required to prepare and conduct a walking assessment;
2. Increase participants' ability to conduct a walking assessment in their neighborhood; and
3. Provide additional strategies for identifying walking and biking safety priorities within a school community.

The workshop convened thirteen participants and consisted of:

- An introduction to SRTS and an overview of strategies to evaluate walking and biking safety along key school routes.
- A review of the elements, goals, and tools used to conduct a walking assessment.
- A virtual walking assessment that was conducted along a key route to provide hands-on experience.

## Training materials

The following materials were reviewed with participants during this Train-the-Trainer workshop.

### Walking and Biking Assessment Guide

The Walking and Biking Assessment Guide was developed by the Project Team and is organized by topic to help identify the community's walking and biking patterns, safety concerns, and assets along a key community route. It also encourages participants to discuss infrastructure and programmatic solutions to safety issues identified during the walk, including sidewalks, roads, signs and signals, crossings, intersections, lighting, curbs, a comfortable environment, bicycle facilities, and transit. Within each section, the guide prompts users to explore a series of questions to better identify assets and safety concerns in the walking and biking environment. The guide also encourages participants to prioritize their top concerns and propose specific projects or improvements to address them.

### Arrival and Dismissal Observation Checklist

The Project Team developed the Arrival and Dismissal Observation Checklist as a tool for participants to document both desired and risky pedestrian and driver behaviors during school arrival and dismissal times in a school zone. The checklist provides instructions on how to prepare for conducting observations, lists examples of desired and risky behaviors, and includes a debrief section for identifying top concerns and potential solutions using the Safe System Approach.

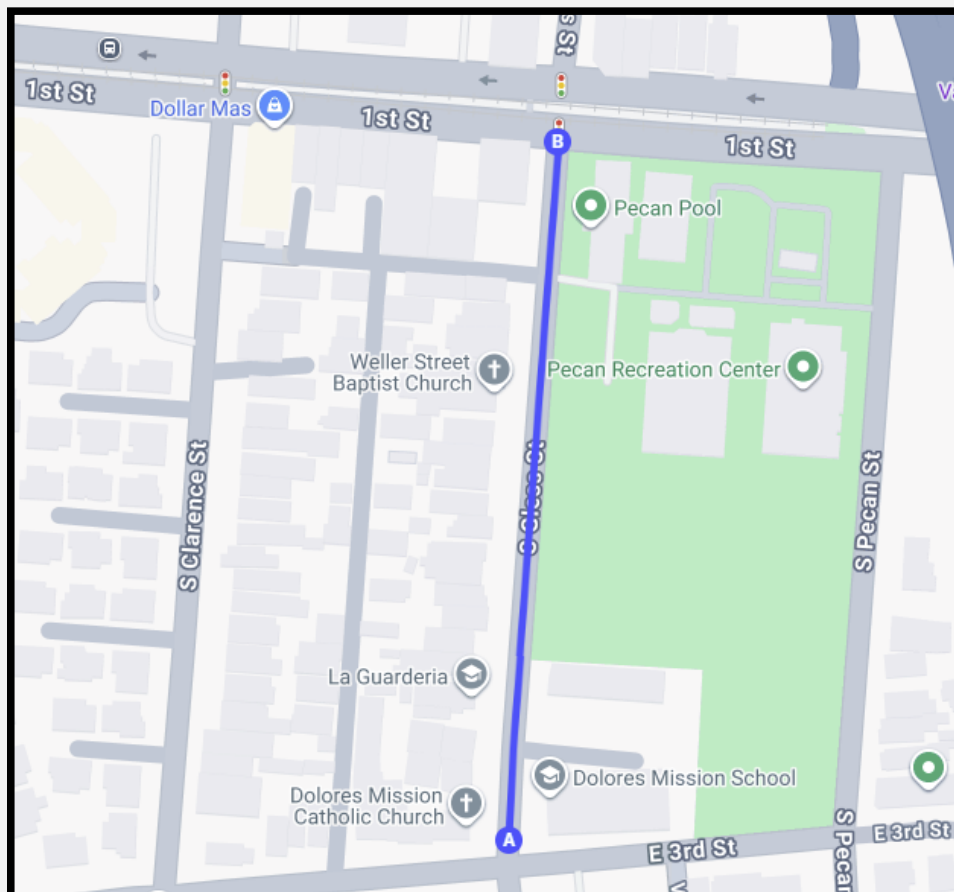
## Virtual walking assessment

A walking assessment is a vital tool for gathering data and advocating for safety improvements, such as community programs or infrastructure, along specific community routes. The Project Team led a virtual walking assessment of a key route frequently used by residents, students, and families in the community. Participants were asked to identify community assets, evaluate the conditions of walking and biking infrastructure, and share their observations on how road users interact with the built environment.

Although a virtual walking assessment was conducted for this workshop, the Project Team encourages an in-person walking assessment as the preferred method for gathering comprehensive data, capacity permitting. Walking assessments that are conducted in-person allow participants to experience the walking and biking environment directly and provide a more nuanced understanding of the real-world roadway conditions. Inviting elected officials or agency staff to participate at in-person walking assessments may empower them to more effectively advocate for tangible safety improvements.

### Route: South Gless Street, between East 3rd Street and 1st Street

The walking assessment focused on South Gless Street, a main street used by students in grades kindergarten through eighth grade and their families to travel to and from Dolores Mission School and other key community destinations, including Dolores Mission Catholic Church, La Guarderia (The Nursery), and Pecan Recreation Center and Park. The route is also regularly used by volunteers and community members of all ages and abilities commuting between Dolores Mission School, Proyecto Pastorals' office, and Promesa Boyle Heights office. Participants were asked to identify community assets, assess the condition of walking infrastructure, and share their experiences of how road users engage with the built environment. The following is a summary of the findings of the walking assessment for the route.



*Walking assessment route on South Gless Street, between East 3rd Street and 1st Street.*



## Strengths

- The South Gless Street/East 3rd Street intersection experiences significant pedestrian traffic due to its proximity to Dolores Mission School and Dolores Mission Catholic Church. The intersection has a variety of existing infrastructure that supports pedestrian safety and increases their visibility.
  - High-visibility yellow ladder crosswalks are available at all legs of the South Gless Street/East 3rd Street intersection, increasing the visibility of residents, students, and their families crossing the street. The intersection also features four-way stop signs, serving as a traffic calming measure for drivers traveling in the area.
  - South Gless Street has medians and [chicanes](#) (or offset curb extensions) that narrow vehicle travel lanes, effectively reducing driver speeds as they approach the intersection.
  - Volunteer crossing guards are stationed at each corner of this intersection during arrival and dismissal times. The presence of crossing guards can increase visibility for people crossing the street and deter unsafe driving behavior.
- A speed hump, north of the South Gless Street/East 3rd Street intersection, near the entrance to Dolores Mission School, serves as a traffic calming measure by reducing driver speeds.
- Large shade trees along the sidewalk near Dolores Mission School create a more comfortable environment for pedestrians, while also contributing to traffic calming by creating the perception of narrower roadways.

## Concerns

- Participants shared that drivers engage in unsafe behaviors that may put pedestrians at risk at the South Gless Street/East 3rd Street intersection.
  - Drivers often fail to respect stop signs and frequently perform rolling stops at this intersection, which can increase the risk of a crash between drivers and pedestrians.
  - Some drivers become impatient when pedestrians are crossing, inching their vehicles forward, which can lead to near-misses and increase the risk of a crash between drivers and pedestrians.
  - Drivers use the intersection to do donuts. These illegal maneuvers can put nearby pedestrians at risk and damage the street infrastructure.
- The South Gless Street/East 3rd Street intersection and the South Gless Street corridor both lack pedestrian-scale lighting. Lack of adequate lighting can put both pedestrians and bicyclists at risk of a potential crash due to reduced visibility.
  - Older adults, some of whom may require the use of an assistive mobility device, often walk in the evening after attending services at Dolores Mission Church, located at the northwest corner of the South Gless Street/East 3rd Street intersection. Adequate pedestrian-scale lighting can help increase their visibility to oncoming drivers.
- Participants shared that some adults exiting Dolores Mission Catholic Church become impatient and cross mid-block or outside of a marked crosswalk. This behavior, possibly influenced by the perception of unsafe conditions, puts them at greater risk since drivers may not expect to see people crossing in the middle of the street.



- Drivers traveling east on 1st Street and turning right onto South Gless Street often travel at high speeds, which can increase the risk of collisions between drivers and pedestrians or bicyclists crossing the street.
  - Participants shared that approximately four crashes have occurred at or near this intersection over the last five years. This crash history underscores the urgent need for safety improvements, given the high volume of children, youth, and families who frequently use this intersection to access key community destinations, like Pecan Park and Recreation Center and a nearby school located south of this intersection on Gless Street.
  - Over the past five years, from 2020 to 2024, there have been two crashes reported at the 1st Street/South Gless Street intersection, including one motor vehicle-to-motor vehicle crash and one bicycle crash.<sup>5</sup> The motor vehicle-to-motor vehicle crash occurred in 2021 and resulted in a 55-year old driver sustaining suspected minor injuries. The bicycle crash occurred in 2023 and resulted in a 16 year-old bicyclist sustaining serious injuries.
  - There have also been two pedestrian crashes reported at the intersections near the 1st Street/South Gless Street intersection, including the intersections of 1st Street/South Clarence Street and 1st Street/South Pecan Street. The pedestrian crash at the 1st Street/South Clarence Street intersection occurred in 2023 and resulted in a 61 year-old pedestrian sustaining suspected minor injuries. The pedestrian crash at the 1st Street/South Pecan Street intersection occurred in 2022 and resulted in a 15 year-old pedestrian sustaining suspected minor injuries.

## Community recommendations

Participants proposed improvements to address these safety concerns, including:

- Participants highlighted a need for more signage to reduce driver speeds and raise awareness of the posted speed limit and high pedestrian foot traffic near the South Gless Street/East 3rd Street intersection. They suggested that rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) or a high-intensity activated crosswalk (HAWK) beacon may help increase driver awareness of people crossing at the crosswalks near the church and school.
- Participants highlighted a need for improvements that improve visibility for pedestrians, such as a leading pedestrian interval (LPI) at the 1st Street/South Gless Street intersection. An LPI improves pedestrians' visibility and gives them the right-of-way for crossing the street before drivers get a green light.
- Participants also proposed considering the installation of speed humps for drivers traveling eastbound on 1st Street to calm traffic and slow their speeds as they approach the 1st Street/South Gless Street intersection and the nearby key community destinations.

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<sup>5</sup> Statewide SWITRS Summary. Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS). Retrieved from <https://tims.berkeley.edu/>. Data from 2024 is provisional as of September 2025.

## Conclusion

The SRTS technical assistance workshop demonstrates the Planning Committee's strong commitment to enhancing safe and walkable streets for residents, students, and families in the Pico-Aliso neighborhood of Boyle Heights. By providing their volunteers and staff with training and tools for conducting SRTS activities, such as walking assessments and arrival or dismissal observations, the workshop effectively bolstered the internal capacity needed for effective advocacy for safer streets.

The Project Team's continued collaboration with Proyecto Pastoral is a testament to our shared goal of creating a safer, more walkable and bikeable community. As they move forward to identify and advocate for pedestrian and bicycle safety improvement projects in Boyle Heights, this foundational training will be instrumental in supporting their ongoing efforts.



*This workshop was designed to build the skills and capacity of Proyecto Pastoral's Comunidad en Movimiento volunteers, a core group of 25 leaders dedicated to community safety and health.*

# **Resources**

## **Safe Routes to School resources**

- Active Transportation Resource Center (ATRC) - [Safe Routes to School Basics: Resources for Planning, Creating, and Sustaining a Safe Routes to School Program](#)
- Active Transportation Resource Center (ATRC) - [Safe Routes to School Resources](#)

## **SafeTREC resources**

- [California Safe Speeds Toolkit: Research on Speeds, Speed Limits and Safety](#)
- [Safe System Approach Toolkit](#)

## **Student arrival and dismissal resources**

- SRTS Guide - [Safe Routes to School Student Travel Tally](#)
- SRTS National Partnership - [Curbing the Car Loop: Making Arrival and Dismissal Work for Everyone](#)
- SRTS National Partnership - [Keep Calm and Carry On to School: Improving Arrival and Dismissal for Walking and Biking](#)

## **Walking assessment resources**

- AARP - [Walk Audit Tool Kit \(English and Spanish\)](#)
- America Walks - [All About Walk Audits](#)
- America Walks - [How to Conduct a Walk Audit in Your Community](#)
- PedBikeInfo - [Audit Tools](#)
- SRTS National Partnership - [Let's Go For A Walk: A Toolkit for Planning and Conducting a Walk Audit](#)

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

For more information, please visit:

<http://bitly/CPBSP>

For questions, please email

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Visit SafeTREC's website at

<http://safetrec.berkeley.edu/>



**UC Berkeley SafeTREC**

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