



School Safety Assessment Technical Memorandum

Cesar Chavez Middle School

Hayward Unified School District

February 2018



The Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program is funded by the Alameda County Transportation Commission. Your transportation dollars at work!

Cesar Chavez Middle School

The Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools team conducted a school safety assessment at Cesar Chavez Middle School in Hayward during the afternoon dismissal on February 1, 2018. The Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools team including planners and transportation engineers, staff from the City of Hayward, staff from the Alameda County Transportation Commission, Hayward Unified School District staff, and Cesar Chavez Middle School staff and parents attended the assessment.

Participants included:

- Sai Midididdi, City of Hayward Transportation Engineer
- Kelly Lara, Principal Chavez Middle School
- Casilda Peña, Chavez Middle Resource Center
- Daniel Gonzales, Hayward Unified Facilities Management
- Leslie Lara Enriquez, Alameda County CTC
- Kristen Villanueva, Alameda County CTC
- Kenny Jeong, SR2S Engineer
- Ben Frazier, SR2S Planner
- Nick Bliech, SR2S Engineer
- 5 Chavez Middle School parents

School Information

Address	27845 Whitman Street Hayward, CA 94544	
Morning Bell(s)	8:00AM	
Afternoon Bell(s)	M, Tu, Th, F: 2:50PM and W: 12:50PM	
Grade Levels	7-8	
Enrollment	583	
School Type (neighborhood or magnet)	Neighborhood	
Students' Proximity to School (Percentage of students)	Less than ¼ mile (5-minute walk): 0% Between ¼ and ½ mile (5-10-minute walk): 50% Between ½ and 1 mile (10 to 20-minute walk): 50% Greater than 1 mile (more than 20-minute walk): 0%	
Student Travel Mode Info (Percentage of students)	School Estimate: Walking: 75% Biking: 10% School bus: 5% Transit: 0% Carpool: 0% Family Vehicle: 10% Other: 0%	Recent SR2S Hand Tally Data: Spring 2016 Walking: 12% Biking: 2% School bus: 0% Transit: 6% Carpool: 23% Family Vehicle: 56% Other: 0%

Does the school have bike racks? What is the capacity? Is it secure bike parking? On a typical day, what percentage of racks are used?	Yes, the school does have secure bike parking.
How do school and transit buses interact with the school?	AC Transit buses serve Chavez students with stops on both Whitman Street and Tennyson Road. The school is not served by school buses, except for the home school program.
Does the school have special pick-up/drop-off policies/procedures?	Students may be picked up or dropped off from either of the drop-off loops. Many students also walk and take the bus (AC Transit). Some students bike as well.

Cesar Chavez Middle School is located in Hayward, near the South Hayward BART Station off of Whitman Street near Tennyson Road. The southeast side of the school borders the Union Pacific Niles Subdivision, an active railroad track that serves both Amtrak's Capital Corridor and freight trains. Both pedestrian and vehicle access to the school is located solely on Whitman Street. A 6-foot tall chain-link fence separates the school from Tennyson Road and the railroad corridor. Chavez Middle School has a high proportion of students walking to/from school.

Existing Conditions

The following existing conditions were observed or reported by participants during the school safety assessment (SSA).

1. Leidig Court/Tennyson Road

- ◆ This T-intersection is immediately southwest of the Niles Subdivision. The intersection approach is about 75 feet wide with one travel lane and parking lane in each direction; much larger than what is necessary for those uses.
- ◆ Traffic departing Leidig Court is stop controlled and is only able to turn-right onto westbound Tennyson Road.
- ◆ After dismissal, many students walked southwest along Tennyson Road across the tracks and through this intersection. Some students continued along Tennyson Road and others turned onto Leidig Court.

- ◆ Sidewalks on Leidig Court are only provided on the west side of the street. The eastside of Leidig Court is undeveloped in the area between the railroad tracks and the roadway.



Left: The crosswalk striping spanning Leidig Court was recently removed as part of roadway maintenance program.

Right: The unpaved area (commonly used for walking) between the tracks and Leidig Court.

2. Tennyson Road/Niles Subdivision

- ◆ The Union Pacific Niles Subdivision rail line intersects Tennyson Road with an at grade crossing. This location is equipped with vehicle crossing arms, but does not have pedestrian-specific rail warning or awareness infrastructure/signs.
- ◆ The sidewalk at/near this crossing is narrow and students were observed walking in the street or in the undeveloped area between the school chain-link fence and the railroad track rather than walk single file on the sidewalk.
- ◆ One pedestrian (non-school related) was observed walking on the concrete segment of the trackway; using it as a crossing of Tennyson Road.



Left: Students about to cross the track heading southwest of Tennyson Road.

Right: The pedestrian described in the above third bullet.

3. Niles Subdivision

- ◆ This is an active rail corridor used by both Amtrak Capital Corridor and freight trains.
- ◆ Once outside of fenced school property, there are no physical barriers or other separation isolating this trackway.
- ◆ During the safety assessment observation period, multiple students walked on, next to, and parallel to the trackway. SSA participants confirmed that this is regular behavior by both students and other local community members.
 - The only immediate parallel route is the sidewalk along the west side of Leidig Court, which was not well utilized as more students were observed walking on or near the railroad Right Of Way.
 - Students walking in this area were sometimes observed to be walking distracted (i.e. looking at phones or wearing headphones), which can contribute to the risks previously identified as it can be harder to hear/see a train approach from either direction.



*Left: Niles Subdivision looking south towards Union City
Right: Pedestrians walking along the railroad ROW.*



Students walking on the tracks, near the tracks, and next to Leidig Court

4. Tennyson Road/Whitman Street

- ◆ The intersection of Tennyson Road/Whitman Street is very active with many potential school-related pedestrian and vehicle conflicts. Students walked primarily in two directions: southwest towards Leidig Court via the sidewalk on Tennyson Road and south across Tennyson Road to Beatron Way via the marked crosswalk at the signalized intersection.
- ◆ The sidewalk along the westside of Whitman Street is narrow and becomes crowded during school dismissal. The limited space on the sidewalk sometimes results in students standing within the roadway.
- ◆ The western crossing across Tennyson Road is skewed, not a straight line, and the eastern crossing is impeded by a non-refuge median.
 - The skewed crosswalk shape limits visibility and lengthens crossing distance.
- ◆ SSA participants reported that cars regularly fail to yield to pedestrians when making right turns, from all approaches.
 - Participants reported that this was especially the case with the skewed western crossing. The geometry of the current crossing at the northwest corner pushes the staging area further away from vehicles, resulting in increased difficulties for vehicles approaching this turn to see pedestrians.
- ◆ Despite signage prohibiting the behavior during pick-up/drop-off times, SSA participants also observed vehicles performing U-turns at this intersection.



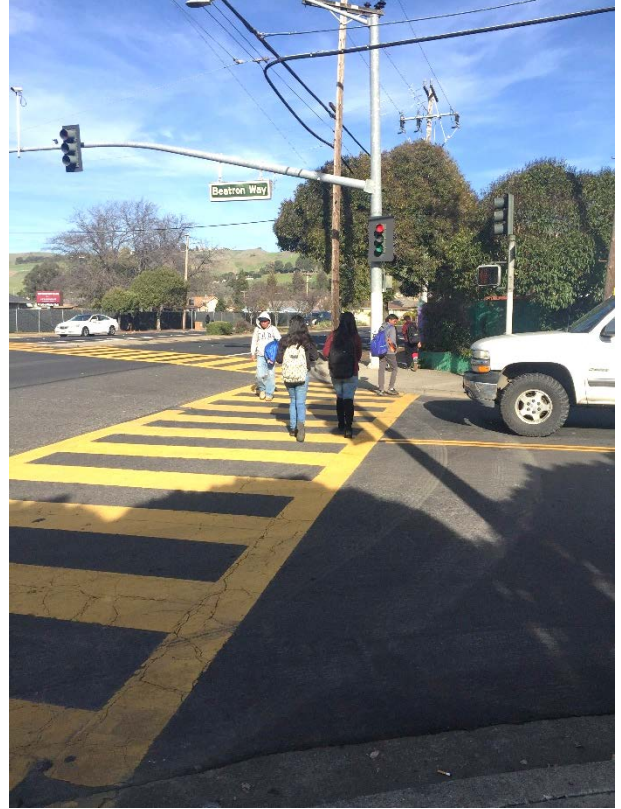
Left: Students crossing the skewed western crossing across Tennyson Road.

Top Right: The northern crossing across Whitman Street.

Bottom Right: Students walking and biking through the Whitman Street/Tennyson Road intersection, heading southwest down Tennyson Road.

5. Beatron Way

- ◆ SSA participants reported that the southwest corner is commonly used as a drop-off/pick-up location for students. It was observed that cars would turn onto Beatron Way and pull over to the curb near the southwest corner to load passengers. Participants reported this results in near misses between idle cars and cars turning right from eastbound Tennyson Road onto Beatron Way.
 - Participants stated this drop-off/pick-up behavior regularly occurs.
- ◆ Participants also noted that students consistently cross Beatron Way against the pedestrian signal, which can increase the chance of collisions.
- ◆ Participants also observed that cars use both the cul-de-sac and intersection with Rochelle Avenue as U-turn locations.



Left: A car picking up a student on Beatron Way near the intersection

Right: Students crossing Beatron Way, despite the pedestrian signal head asking them to wait, displaying "Don't Walk."

6. Whitman Street/Beale Drive

- ◆ There is an existing yellow transverse crosswalk across Whitman Street, at the northern Beale Drive intersection; this is the only marked crosswalk on Whitman Street between Tennyson Road and Mason Drive (near Tennyson High, 1,700 feet away).
- ◆ Safety assessment participants reported that cars regularly fail to yield to pedestrians at this crosswalk and that sometimes cars will illegally travel in the bike lane to pass cars which have yielded to pedestrians in the crosswalk.
- ◆ Multiple cars traveled at speeds far greater than the posted speed limit along Whitman Street while students were present.
- ◆ Cars were parked on Whitman Street adjacent to the crosswalk and school driveways, limiting visibility of both pedestrians using the crosswalk and vehicular traffic using the driveways.



The Beale Drive/Whitman Street crossing.

7. Tennyson Road Bus Stops

- ◆ AC Transit has multiple bus stops that serve Cesar Chavez Middle School Students:
 - Tennyson Road/Whitman Street
 - Tennyson Road/Leidig Court
 - Leidig Court/Tennyson Road
 - Whitman Street/Burke Drive
 - Whitman Street/Beale Drive
- ◆ The bus stops along Tennyson Road/Whitman Street/Leidig Court serve many of the same lines.



Students walking past the Tennyson Road/Leidig Court AC Transit stop.

8. Chavez Middle Field Area

- ◆ Safety assessment participants observed two students attempting to climb under a small hole in the fence near the area at Tennyson Road and the railroad tracks. The students were attempting to use the broken fence as a shortcut to Tennyson Road.



Left: The hole in the fence, that students have climbed through in the past.

Right: This appears to be the former site of a gate that has subsequently been sealed.

9. Chavez Drop-off Loops

- ◆ At all school driveways (entry/exit/shared) left turns in to or out of them are prohibited during pick-up and drop-off periods.
- ◆ SSA participants observed cars making left turns into and out of these driveways and reported that this behavior occurs daily.
- ◆ Cars were observed parking a close distance to the edges of school driveways, limiting visibility of both pedestrians and other vehicular traffic.



Left: A truck making a prohibited left-turn while exiting a school driveway.

Right: One of the many signs instructing drivers about the turn restriction.

Recommendations

Recommendations to improve infrastructure or operations surrounding Cesar Chavez Middle School are provided on the conceptual improvement plan provided with this document.

The following improvements are recommendations for policy and program implementation at Cesar Chavez Middle School to increase safety and active commutes to school.

Policy & Program Recommendations

- ◆ Distribute Recommended Walk/Bike Maps to students and their families in an effort to promote walking and biking to school on suggested routes. Safety tips are also included on these maps to promote good behavior among bicyclists, pedestrians, and drivers. SR2S resources would be very useful in creating these documents.
- ◆ Work with parents to connect them with others who live nearby to increase the number of students carpooling, which may reduce the number of vehicles coming to campus. Similarly, Bike Trains can be established with the same type of coordination.
- ◆ Participate in more SR2S events, including Pedestrian Safety Rodeos, the Step Up Crew, and especially the Drive Your Bike Program.
 - These educational opportunities will be a great opportunity to teach and reinforce safe walking and bicycling behavior. This will be an especially important resource for Chavez with the observed student behavior near the rail tracks.
- ◆ Participate in more bike-focused SR2S-related events throughout the course of the year.
- ◆ Consider starting a student safety patrol (with the 6th graders) through AAA's Safety Patrol Program. The program provides trainings to students to help them become patrollers to help direct and teach other students about traffic safety. [This is not an offering of the Alameda County SR2S Program, but rather something the school can independently look into]
- ◆ Work with Alameda County Safe Routes to School on bringing rail safety education to Chavez Middle.
- ◆ Host transit training workshops for students. These workshops encourage more students to ride transit and learn how to get discounted fare.
- ◆ Participate in SR2S evaluations each fall and spring to monitor progress on mode shift goals.
- ◆ One of the potential recommendations from the improvement plan is closing off the small northern pick-up and drop-off loop, relocating this activity to the street. The school should encourage parents to use the relatively underutilized drop-off/pick-up space along Tennyson Road and other available curb space in the surrounding area. The school should also remind parents to not stop near crosswalks and to not block driveways, even if only temporarily.
- ◆ If possible, place a staff member or parent volunteer in the area near the railroad track to encourage better student travel behavior during drop-off and pick-up times.

- ◆ SSA participants also noted that ice cream trucks and other street vendors commonly park along Whitman Street, and attract a large number of students, blocking the sidewalk while queueing, forcing through students into the street to go around the crowd of people. The school and school district should work with these vendors and position them further away from the school, improving the flow of pedestrian traffic.



Students queued up to buy items from this food/ice cream truck.

Transit Recommendations

- ◆ Chavez Middle School is relatively well served by transit with five bus stops within close proximity of the campus. All of the bus lines that serve the Tennyson Road/Leidig Court stop also serve the Tennyson Road/Whitman Street. The school district and the city should work with AC Transit to consider thinning the Tennyson Road/Leidig Court stop. This change would potentially keep more students away from the railroad tracks, and further incentive them to use a closer stop.
- ◆ Through Walk/Bike Maps, the school can also encourage students to use the Whitman Stop.
- ◆ The most recent hand tally data indicated that 6% of students use transit to get to/from school.

**Cesar Chavez Middle School,
DRAFT Hayward**
Safe Routes to Schools Improvement Plan
Site Assessment held February 2018

- 1 Leidig Court/Tennyson Road**
- Install curb extensions at both corners
- Install yellow high visibility crosswalk
- Stripe advance stop markings for southbound departure
- 2 Tennyson Road/Union Pacific Niles Subdivision**
- On the north side of Tennyson Road, install pedestrian-scale railroad crossing arms on both sides of the tracks with tactile pavement markings
- On the south side of Tennyson Road, install pedestrian gates on both sides of the tracks with tactile pavement markings
- At all pedestrian approaches, install appropriate "WATCH FOR TRAINS" signage
- 3 Union Pacific Niles Subdivision**
- Long Term: The City and School District should work with Union Pacific to build a sidewalk or shared-use path parallel to the tracks along Leidig Court/Huntwood Avenue to the existing railroad track crossing behind Tennyson High (0.7 miles). A fence should separate this path from the active tracks
- Short Term: The City and School District should reach out to Amtrak to bring more attention to the issue and discuss short term improvements
- 4 Tennyson Road/Whitman Street**
- Consider installing curb extensions at the northwest & southwest corners
- If curb extensions are not installed, consider installing perpendicular curb ramps at the west corners
- Extend the median and straighten the western crosswalk across Tennyson Road; if space is available, create median refuge island
- 5 Beatron Way**
- Install R3-4 "No U-TURN" sign
- 6 Drop-off Area & Whitman Street/Beale Drive**
- Near the southern driveway, across the street, replace the existing time-restricted "NO LEFT TURN" with a non-time restricted sign. On either side of the exit-only driveway, install "EXIT ONLY" signage
- Install curb extensions on both sides of the Whitman Street crossing at Beale Drive
- Upgrade the Whitman Street crossing to a high visibility crosswalk
- Install a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) for the Whitman Street crossing
- Install advance yield markings
- Install/refresh red paint near crosswalks and school driveways
- U All Intersections Near Schools**
- Paint red curbs for 20 feet at intersection approaches and 10 feet for the departure where there is marked or unmarked crosswalk



The above items are recommendations only and based on Safe Routes to Schools site assessment best practices. Feasibility determination, final design, accessibility, funding, and implementation of any recommended improvements is the responsibility of the appropriate governing agency.