



School Safety Assessment Technical Memorandum

Willard Middle School

Berkeley 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!

Willard Middle School

A School Safety Assessment was conducted at Willard Middle School during the morning arrival on Wednesday, February 7, 2018. The assessment was attended by representatives from the City of Berkeley, Alta Planning + Design, W-Trans, and Willard Middle School staff, parents, and students.

Participants included:

- Eric Anderson, City of Berkeley Associate Transportation Planner
- Peter Chun, City of Berkeley Associate Traffic Engineer
- Chris Albeck, Willard Middle School Vice Principal
- George Rose, Willard Middle School Staff
- Brett Hondorp, Alameda County SR2S planner
- Beth Martin, Alameda County SR2S planner
- Andre Huff, Alameda County SR2S engineer
- Willard Middle School parents
- Willard Middle School students

School Information

Address	2425 Stuart St, Berkeley, CA 94705
Morning Bell(s)	8:45 am
Afternoon Bell(s)	2:45 pm, 2:00 pm on Wednesday
Grade Levels	Grade 6-8
Enrollment	592
Students' Proximity to School (Percentage of students)	School Estimate: Less than ¼ mile (5-minute walk): 20% Between ¼ and ½ mile (5-10-minute walk): 20% Between ½ and 1 mile (10 to 20-minute walk): 20% Greater than 1 mile (more than 20-minute walk): 40%
Student Travel Mode Info (Percentage of students)	School Estimate: Walking: 15% Biking: 5% School bus: 1% Transit: 20% Carpool: 15% Family Vehicle: 44% 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?	Bike racks present in bike cage; bike cage not locked or secured. Capacity for 30 bikes. Racks are generally parked at full capacity
How do school and transit buses interact with the school?	Students use public transit to get to and from school.
Does the school have special pick-up/drop-off policies/procedures?	No

Willard Middle School is located off of Telegraph Avenue and Stuart Street in Berkeley. The school campus is adjacent to Willard Park. Willard Middle School is one of three middle schools in Berkeley and pulls from an enrollment zone that covers a southeastern portion of the city.

Between 2011 and 2016, there were 14 pedestrian and bicycle injuries (including 3 severe injuries) within a quarter mile of the school. On Telegraph, between Stuart and Derby, there were 5 bicycle injuries between 2011 and 2016.

Since 2000, the school and City reported to have done a number of improvements to upgrade bicycle and pedestrian safety and pick-up/drop-off at Willard Middle School. The school upgraded its student entrance gate along Telegraph Avenue. The City designated a passenger loading zone along the Telegraph Avenue curb frontage, and installed a traffic signal at the intersection of Telegraph Avenue and Stuart Street.

Existing Conditions

The safety assessment participants observed or reported the following existing conditions during the walk audit.

1. Telegraph Avenue

- ◆ Students on foot crossed Telegraph Avenue at the signalized intersection with Stuart Street. Vehicles yielded to pedestrians in the marked crosswalks at this location. Participants did not observe students using the mid-block crosswalk at Ward Street and vehicles parked very close to the crosswalk limiting visibility. There is no pedestrian activated beacon at this location to increase pedestrian visibility.



Left: Telegraph Avenue and Stuart Street intersection



Right: Midblock uncontrolled crosswalk at Telegraph Avenue and Ward Street

- ◆ The school recently completed renovations to the entrance gate along Telegraph Avenue to incentivize parents to use it as a drop-off location. Students indicated that in the past, the gate has been locked during the morning drop-off, although school officials report that it is now regularly open. The gate is closed and locked during school hours.
- ◆ The City designated a drop off curb for Willard Middle School along Telegraph Avenue. The curb was never painted white to denote a loading zone, and one of the two drop off zone signs has since been removed. Other cars often park in this location.



Left: Telegraph Avenue student entrance



Right: Student drop off curb along Telegraph Avenue

2. Stuart Street Entrance

- ◆ Students most often used the Stuart Street entrances for morning arrival. Students walked, biked, and used scooters along Stuart Street.
- ◆ Parents driving dropped off students on both sides of Stuart Street. Cars on the school-side of Stuart Street often used the designated white curb. If there was no curb space, vehicles would double park in the travel lane, creating a vehicle backup and forcing other cars to move into the opposite lane to go around cars would veer into the opposite lane to go around. One car pulled onto the school-side curb driving the wrong direction.
- ◆ A school supply delivery van used the school-side passenger loading zone during morning arrival, preventing other cars from being able to use the space.
- ◆ Substantial drop-off occurred on the side of Stuart Street opposite the school. The team observed students unloading and crossing the street quickly, often without looking for traffic and in front of other moving or unloading cars.



Drop off occurs on both sides of Stuart Street

3. Stuart Street/Regent Street

- ◆ Vehicles were observed pulling up to intersection from all directions to let students out. The team observed cars behind the unloading vehicles trying to pass.
- ◆ Crosswalks are currently standard transverse crosswalks.
- ◆ Parents reported motorists not yielding in crosswalks at this location, or near misses when crossing the street.

4. On Campus

- ◆ The north-east corner of campus has a semi-enclosed area with bike parking. The area has a gate, but it is not closed or locked during school hours. Bike parking appeared to be at capacity, and one bike was locked to the gate outside of the bike cage.



Semi-enclosed bike parking area on Willard Middle School campus

5. Willard Park Path

- ◆ There is a narrow paved path that connects Derby Street to a back entrance to Willard Middle School. Currently the back entrance gate is not open during drop-off and pick-up times, and parents and teachers mentioned that there was poor lighting of the path and overgrown vegetation.



Path connecting Derby Street to Willard Middle School back entrance

Recommendations

Recommendations to improve infrastructure or operations surrounding Willard Middle School are on the conceptual improvement plan found on the following page. Engineering cost estimates for the infrastructure recommendations are also provided.

The following improvements are recommendations for policy and program implementation at Willard 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.
- ◆ Willard Middle School is a prime location to coordinate a Bike Train among students and parents as it is located near two major bike boulevards in Berkeley.
- ◆ Participate in more SR2S events, including Drive Your Bike, Pedestrian Safety Rodeos, and the Step Up Assembly.
- ◆ Participate in SR2S evaluations each fall and spring to monitor progress on mode shift goals.
- ◆ Send regular reminders to parents regarding the drop-off and pick-up location options. Encourage parents to use the Telegraph Avenue entrance for drop-off and pick-up, and ensure that the gate remains unlocked at these times. Remind parents who want to use Stuart Avenue entrance to drop off their children on the school-side curb. Promote the Willard Park curbside as a nearby Park and Walk location for parents driving.

Willard Middle School

Safe Routes to Schools Improvement Plan

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Telegraph Avenue/ Derby Street
1a. Consider signal modification to reduce pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. Improvements are subject to traffic operations analysis
1b. Install advance stop bar markings at all approaches.
- 2

Telegraph Avenue/Ward Street
2a. Refresh high visibility crosswalk across Telegraph Avenue.
2b. Install curb extension on Willard Middle School curb-side to shorten crossing distance.
2c. Install bulb-out on northwest curb
2d. Install advance yield markings and R1-5 "Yield to Pedestrians Here" signage in both directions of Telegraph Avenue
2e. Install Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons to increase visibility of crossing pedestrians
- 3

Telegraph Avenue Student Entry
3a. Install second Passenger Loading Zone sign and stripe curb white
3b. Consider extending passenger loading zone and white curb north to abut the accessible parking space curb cut
3c. Keep Telegraph Avenue Student Entry unlocked during pick-up and drop-off times
- 4

Telegraph Avenue/ Stuart Street
4a. Consider signal modification to reduce pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. Improvements are subject to traffic operation analysis.
4b. Install advance stop bar markings at all approaches.
4c. Consider signal modification to reduce pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. Improvements are subject to traffic operations analysis.
- 5

Stuart Street Entrance
5a. Extend passenger loading zone 100 feet along school-side curb and include rolling drop-off. Move and reinstall passenger loading zone signs
5b. Install double yellow centerline along Stuart Street between Telegraph Avenue and Regent Street
- 6

Stuart Street/Regent Street
6a. Upgrade transverse crosswalks to high visibility crosswalks on all approaches of Stuart Street and Regent Street
6b. Install updated directional curb ramps
- 7

Derby Street
7a. Consider signal modification to reduce pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. Improvements are subject to traffic operations analysis.
7b. Implement recommendations of City of Berkeley Bicycle Plan to install a bicycle boulevard along Derby Street.



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.

*Subject to turn movement conflict analysis

** Subject to turn movement and radius analysis

Willard Middle School
Safe Routes to Schools Improvement Plan
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- 8 Stuart Street Entrance**
8a. Consider implementing attended rolling drop off for 2018-19 school year on school-side curb of Stuart Street to streamline drop-off and pick-up.
8b. Encourage parents driving to use the traffic circle to turn around on Stuart Street and drop of students on the school-side curb.
- 9 On Campus**
9a. Install additional secure bike and scooter parking options.
- 10 Willard Park Path**
10a. Explore formalizing path from Derby Street to back entrance of the school as an additional entry. Upgrade surface and install lighting that would accommodate students bicycling on the proposed bike boulevard on Derby Street.
- 11 Willard Park Perimeter**
11a. Promote “Park and Walk” for parents who drive to drop off their students along Willard Park curb frontage.
- 12 Derby Street**
12a. Promote “Park and Walk” for parents who drive to drop off their students along Derby Street frontage.



0 200 ft
Improvements not to scale



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