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AlamedaCountySR2S.org
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December 17, 2020

Principal Ada Carter, MME
Sequoia Elementary School
3730 Lincoln Avenue
Oakland, CA 94602

RE: School Safety Assessment at [INSERT SCHOOL NAME]

Dear Principal Carter,

Thank you for participating in a school safety assessment (SSA) with the Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program. This packet contains an Existing Conditions Memo and Improvement Plan Map. The memo summarizes the existing conditions and what the SR2S team heard from stakeholders during the observation period and discussion. The document also contains educational and encouragement programmatic recommendations that the schools can pursue with the SR2S Program. The Improvement Plan Map contains infrastructure recommendations that the City of Oakland and Oakland Unified School District can implement.

If you have questions, comments, or wish to follow-up with the Program on the SSA or recommended programmatic recommendations, please contact your school site coordinator:

Sheila Islam
510.740.3150x309
sislam@alamedacountysr2s.org

To follow-up with City of Oakland staff about implementing improvements within their jurisdiction, please contact the City's SR2S contact or local City Council representative:

Lucas Woodward
Engineer, Assistant II, Bureau of Great Streets
510.238.6169
lwoodward@oaklandca.gov

Councilmember Seng Thao
Councilmember for District 4
510.238.7004
District4@oaklandca.gov

Sincerely,

Denise Turner

Denise Turner | Alameda County SR2S Program Manager
Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools
1111 Broadway, Suite 800 | Oakland, CA 94607
510.208.7461

The Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program is a program of the Alameda County Transportation Commission (alamedactc.org) and is funded with Alameda County's local sales tax Measure B, regional, state and federal funds.



School Safety Assessment Technical Memorandum

Sequoia Elementary School

3730 Lincoln Avenue, Oakland, CA 94602

Oakland Unified School District

February 2020



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Sequoia Elementary School


A school safety assessment was conducted at Sequoia Elementary School in Oakland during the afternoon dismissal on Tuesday, February 25, 2020. The assessment was attended by representatives from the City of Oakland, Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools staff, and Sequoia Elementary School staff and parents.

Participants included:

- Beaver Boonsook, Transportation Engineer, Oakland Department of Transportation (DOT)
- Ada Carter, Principal, Sequoia Elementary School
- Andre Huff, Engineer, Alameda County SR2S team
- Mauricio Hernandez, Planner, Alameda County SR2S team
- Ben Frazier, Planner, Alameda County SR2S team
- Nine Sequoia Elementary School parents (in-person and called-in)

School Information

Location & Enrollment

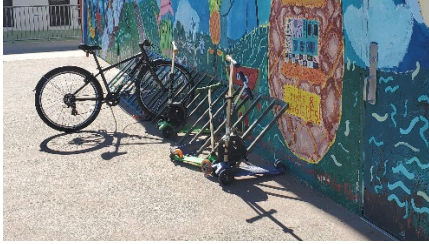


| | | |
|---|---|--|
|  | Address: | 3730 Lincoln Avenue Oakland, CA 94602 |
| | Morning Bell(s): | TK – K: 8:45 am Grades 1-5: 8:30 am |
| | Afternoon Bell(s): | Regular Days: 3:00 pm Minimum Days: 1:20 pm |
| | Grade Levels: | TK – Grade 5 |
| | Enrollment: | 436 |
| | School Type (neighborhood/magnet/charter): | Neighborhood |

Student Travel Data

| | |
|---|--|
| Students' Proximity to School (school estimate): | Less than ¼ mile (5-min. walk): 33% Between ¼ and ½ mile (5-10-min. walk): 33% Between ½ and 1 mile (10 to 20-min. walk): 17% Greater than 1 mile (more than 20-min. walk): 17% |
|---|--|

| Student Travel Mode Info: | Recent SR2S Hand Tally Data: Spring 2018 |
|---------------------------|--|
| | Walking: 25% Biking: 1% School Bus: 0% Transit: 0% Carpool: 5% Family Vehicle: 67% Other: 2% |

Bikes, Buses, and Drop-off/Pick-up

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Does the school have bike racks? What is the capacity? Is it secure bike parking?</p> <p>On a typical day, what percentage of racks are used?</p> |  | <p>Sequoia Elementary has “school yard” style racks with capacity for about 10 bicycle or scooters. These racks are located within the fenced off campus yard.</p> <p>The racks are not typically fully occupied.</p> |
| <p>How do school buses interact with the school?</p> |  | <p>School buses at Sequoia Elementary are only used by special needs students. There is a bus zone on Hearst Avenue.</p> |
| <p>Is the school served by local transit agencies? Are there stops within ¼ mile?</p> |  | <p>There are AC Transit stops at the Lincoln Avenue/Hearst Avenue intersection. Sequoia students do not typically use AC Transit.</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Does the school have special pick-up/drop-off policies/procedures? |  | The primary drop-off/pick-up area for Sequoia Elementary is located on Hearst Avenue. This area is typically managed by the principal or other school staff. |
|--|---|--|

Street Profiles

| Street Name | Width | Lanes | Posted Speed Limit | Traffic Volumes | Notes |
|----------------|---------|---------|--------------------|------------------|-------|
| Lincoln Avenue | 32 feet | 2 lanes | 25 mph | 7,306 ADT (2013) | - |
| Hearst Avenue | 30 feet | 2 lanes | 25 mph | - | - |
| Scenic Avenue | 30 feet | 2 lanes | 25 mph | - | - |
| Laguna Avenue | 32 feet | 2 lanes | 25 mph | - | - |

Pedestrian- and Bicycle-Involved Collision Summary (2014-2018)

The collision summary table shows all bicycle- and pedestrian-involved collisions within one-half mile of the school. These collisions may or may not be school-related travel.

| Radius from School | Total Collisions | Fatal Collisions | Severe Injury Collisions | Visible Injury Collisions | Complaint of Pain Collisions | Pedestrian Collisions | Bicycle Collisions |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| < ¼ mi | 5 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 0 |
| ¼ mi – ½ mi | 32 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 21 | 26 | 6 |
| Total | 37 | 0 | 2 | 12 | 23 | 31 | 6 |

Source: UC Berkeley – Transportation Injury Mapping System, Safe Transportation Research and Education Center, University of California, Berkeley, 2019

Existing Conditions

Overview

Sequoia Elementary School is located in Oakland's Dimond District along Lincoln Avenue and hosts over 400 students every day. The school is located in a primarily residential neighborhood. Lincoln Avenue is a collector street that connects the neighborhood to the Oakland Hills, Highway 13 and MacArthur Boulevard. The school's traffic patterns are directly affected by neighboring schools including Head Royce School (K-12 private school) and Bret Harte Middle School.

Sequoia Elementary School's primary entrance is located along Lincoln Avenue. All vehicular pick-up and drop-off activity occur along Hearst Avenue. To accommodate these activities, school representatives set up cones along the western side of Hearst Avenue. There is an area marked off for the school buses transporting special needs students south and east of the drop-off area. A crossing guard helps students and families cross at the intersection of Lincoln Avenue/Scenic Avenue. Families who walk regularly do so along Lincoln Avenue and Laguna Avenue.

None of the streets that front Sequoia Elementary are on the Alameda County Transportation Commission's High Injury Network. However, Fruitvale Avenue and MacArthur Boulevard, which are located within ¼ mile from the school, are on the countywide pedestrian High Injury Network.

Observations

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

1. Lincoln Avenue

- ◆ Lincoln Avenue is a two-lane road. Parking is only available on the north side of the street.
- ◆ Lincoln Avenue serves as a collector street that links the neighborhood to Highway 13, the Oakland Hills, MacArthur Boulevard, and Interstate 580.
- ◆ Head Royce School is located further east on Lincoln Avenue, near Highway 13. Head Royce is a K-12 private school that enrolls students throughout the East Bay. School staff stated that traffic from Head Royce can contribute to congestion along Lincoln Avenue, especially during the morning arrival period.
- ◆ During the afternoon, a school bus picks up Head Royce School students on Lincoln Avenue near the Scenic Avenue intersection. Sequoia Elementary staff were not aware as to why this activity happens here and not closer to Head Royce's campus. At the time of the assessment, Sequoia's principal did not know why this activity occurred here and not closer to the Head Royce campus.

- There is no dedicated space for the Head Royce bus and it often blocks all or part of the westbound travel lane. Other westbound vehicles frequently cross the double yellow line to go around the bus as it boards students.
- ◆ No loading occurs along Lincoln Avenue in front of the school. This area is designated as “No Stopping.”
- ◆ There is ‘school zone’ signage for westbound traffic along Lincoln Avenue between Hearst Avenue and Wilbur Street. This sign is blocked by vegetation, reducing driver awareness of the crosswalks.
- ◆ Wilbur Street is a common crossing location for families walking north on Lincoln Avenue. Wilbur Street serves as an important connection to the neighborhood east of Dimond Park. Hearst Avenue and Scenic Avenue do not directly connect to this neighborhood. The intersection of Lincoln Avenue and Wilbur Street is stop-controlled on the Wilbur Street approaches only. There is currently a white transverse crosswalk across the northern (uncontrolled) approach of this intersection.
 - Sequoia Elementary parents stated that crossing Whittle Avenue at Wilbur Street can be stressful as the Whittle Avenue approaches are uncontrolled.



Above: Lincoln Avenue in front of Sequoia Avenue.



Left: The eastbound AC Transit stop on Lincoln Avenue at Hearst Avenue.

Right: Lincoln Avenue, north of Hearst Avenue.

2. Lincoln Avenue at Scenic Avenue

- ◆ Lincoln Avenue at Scenic Avenue is a T-intersection. The Scenic Avenue approach is stop-controlled.
- ◆ There are yellow high-visibility crosswalks across the northern (uncontrolled) and eastern approaches of the intersection.
 - These pavement markings are faded and cracked.
 - A project that trenched part Lincoln Avenue removed part of the crosswalk. At the time of the assessment, the crosswalk had not been patched and there was a gap in the crosswalk.
- ◆ A crossing guard serves this intersection during both the morning and afternoon drop-off and pick-up periods.
 - The crossing guard was observed idling between crossings close to campus, away from the corner. This behavior sometimes resulted in the crossing guard getting back to the crosswalk late and pedestrians beginning to cross before the crossing guard could attempt to stop traffic.
 - Sequoia staff and parents reported that some drivers do not stop for the crossing guard (failing to yield). Parents also reported that motorists turning from Scenic Avenue do not completely stop at the stop sign before continuing through the intersection.
- ◆ Drivers park very close to the intersection, limiting visibility of pedestrians crossing the street.
- ◆ Sequoia Elementary parents expressed concerns about perceived speeding by drivers, especially downhill (southbound) traffic on Lincoln Avenue through this intersection.
- ◆ School staff noted that Scenic Avenue is currently used more as a drop-off location in the morning than a pick-up location in the afternoon.



Above: The crossing guard helping pedestrians cross Lincoln Avenue.

3. Lincoln Avenue at Hearst Avenue

- ◆ Lincoln Avenue at Hearst Avenue is an all-way stop-controlled T-intersection. This is the main vehicle access point to the school's pick-up/drop-off area.
- ◆ There are two yellow transverse crosswalks across the northern and eastern approaches. This intersection has two AC Transit stops at the north and south corners.
- ◆ The formal curbside drop-off area begins about 100 feet south of the intersection along Hearst Avenue. Once traffic begins to back-up, it can limit the number of vehicles that can clear the intersection and complete their turn.
- ◆ There is existing red curb around the three curb ramps. Despite the stopping prohibition, many drivers were observed parking or idling closer to the intersection (especially along Hearst Avenue) to pick-up or drop-off students.
- ◆ Drivers traveling on Lincoln Avenue do not always completely stop at the intersection; sometimes failing to yield. Parents and staff also noted speeding along Lincoln Avenue. These behaviors were observed for drivers traveling both directions, but was more frequently observed with southbound drivers.



Left: The two transverse crosswalks at the Hearst Avenue intersection.

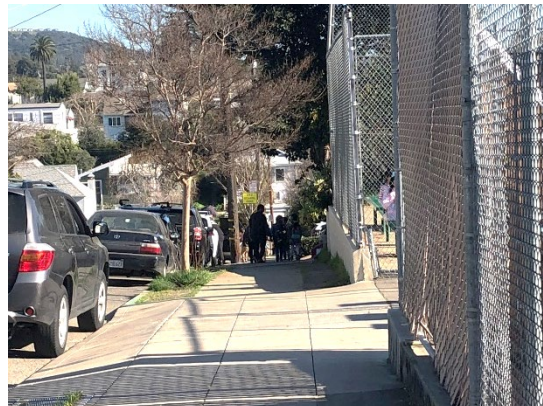
Right: Pedestrians walking in both crosswalks as eastbound cars yield.

4. Hearst Avenue

- ◆ Hearst Avenue is an undivided neighborhood street with parking on both sides.
- ◆ Most of the school frontage along Hearst Avenue is signed as “No Parking between the hours of 8 AM – 4 PM.”
- ◆ During arrival and dismissal periods, school staff sets up a curbside drop-off area along the western side of Hearst Avenue. Staff place cones about one lane width off of the curb.
 - The drop-off vehicle entrance is typically staffed at the entrance by the principal or other staff member.
 - During the afternoon dismissal, students exit from the Hearst Avenue side of campus and wait on the sidewalk for their driver to arrive.
 - With the cones in place, Hearst Avenue transitions into a de-facto one-lane road, with the drop-off area occupying the southbound area. This can create conflicts between northbound traffic and vehicles pulling out of/exiting the drop-off area.
- ◆ Drivers were observed parking or idling near the corner of Lincoln Avenue to pick-up or drop-off students.
- ◆ Parents and staff reported observing vehicles filling any available parking spaces across the street and parents crossing mid-block to pick-up students.
- ◆ South of the drop-off area, school staff place cones to demarcate the bus loading area.
 - The cones for the bus are typically placed on the sidewalk. There are not enough cones to sufficiently block-off the area and signs indicating that the area is reserved for buses cannot be easily seen. These factors cause confusion among drivers, especially those new to the arrival/dismissal procedures.



Above: The principal managing the drop-off entrance.



*Left: The bus loading zone (left) and cars traveling out of the drop-off towards Laguna Avenue.
Right: Students and families walking towards Laguna Avenue on Hearst Avenue.*

5. Hearst Avenue at Laguna Avenue

- ◆ Hearst Avenue at Laguna Avenue is an uncontrolled T-intersection.
 - There is a yellow high-visibility crosswalk across the western approach of Laguna Avenue and a yellow transverse crosswalk across the northern Hearst Avenue approach.
 - The southwest landing area (connecting to the high-visibility crosswalk), is a private driveway and there is no curb ramp on this side of the crosswalk.

- No curb ramps were observed on the northeast and northwest corners of the intersection.
- Most traffic exiting the drop-off area passes through this intersection.
- This intersection also experiences a high volume of pedestrians walking to or leaving school.
- Parents reported that because both the Hearst Avenue and Madeline Street intersections are uncontrolled, they regularly see drivers speed on Laguna Avenue through this area.
- ◆ The high volume of vehicles turning from Hearst Avenue creates conflicts with fast moving traffic traveling on Laguna Avenue.
 - Parents and staff reported they regularly experience congestion at this intersection due to drivers waiting for an opportunity to turn onto Laguna Avenue.
 - Staff and parents reported that drivers routinely perform U-turns at this intersection.
- ◆ While there are red curbs delineating no parking areas at the intersection, a number of cars were observed parking too close to each corner, limiting visibility of pedestrians waiting to cross the intersection. Drivers were also observed pulling over and loading at these locations.
- ◆ Overgrown vegetation along the western sidewalk on Hearst Avenue was documented. The overgrown vegetation can limit available sidewalk width for people walking.
- ◆ Parents reported that there is additional school traffic on Laguna Avenue from nearby Bret Harte Middle School, located on Coolidge Avenue.
 - These drivers typically travel east on Coolidge Avenue, turn left onto Madeline Street, and then left onto Laguna Avenue.
 - At Laguna Avenue and Scenic Avenue, there is a high-visibility crosswalk across the eastern approach of Laguna Avenue. Curb ramps are missing from both corners.



Above: Families crossing Laguna Avenue as a car idles next to the crosswalk waiting for students.



Left: The Laguna Avenue/Hearst Avenue intersection, looking west.

Right: A driver performing a U-turn west of the intersection. A turning car rounded the corner and encountered the U-turning vehicle.

Participant Comments

Parents and staff from Sequoia Elementary expressed traffic safety concerns on the following topics:

- Conflicts that result in the narrow street widths along Hearst Avenue.
- Perceived speeding along Lincoln Avenue and Laguna Avenue.
- Perceived conflicts (turning movements) and aggressive driving resulting from increased traffic volumes from Head Royce School and Bret Harte Middle School.

Recommendations

Engineering Recommendations

Recommendations to improve infrastructure or operations surrounding Sequoia Elementary School can be seen on the conceptual improvement plan found following this memo.

Policy & Program Recommendations

In addition to engineering improvements, the Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program has many encouragement and educational activities that can benefit students and the campus community at Sequoia Elementary.

The School Site Coordinator for Sequoia Elementary is Sheila Islam. The Site Coordinator can help schedule, organize, and promote many of the program offerings of Alameda County SR2S. The contact information for the Site Coordinator is below:

Shelia Islam, sislam@alamedacountysr2s.org

Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Site Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns, or if you wish to move forward with additional programming activities.

Programs

The following improvements are recommendations for policy and program implementation at Sequoia Elementary School to increase safety and active commutes to school.

- ◆ Develop Walk and Bicycle Route Maps
 - The Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S) Program can create recommended Walk and Bicycle Route Maps. These maps illustrate preferred routes to school for walking and biking. Maps also provide safety tips to encourage better travel behavior.
 - These maps can also be used as a part of Walking School Buses (WSBs), Bicycle Trains (BTs), or other Walk and Roll to School activities. Park and Walk, WSB, and BT meeting locations are also shown on these maps where appropriate.
- ◆ Encourage and Help Facilitate Carpooling
 - The SR2S Program can assist schools in working with parents to connect them with other families who live nearby to increase the number of students carpooling. This can reduce congestion by reducing the number of vehicles coming to campus.
- ◆ Encourage Parents to Park and Walk from Designated Locations
 - Potential park and walk locations have been identified on the Improvement Plan Map.
 - Scenic Avenue

- The school should encourage parents to utilize these locations to reduce congestion in and near existing drop-off/pick-up locations on Hearst Avenue.
- ◆ Facilitate Walking School Buses
 - Walking School Buses (WSBs) are groups of students, led by parent/adult chaperone(s), that meet at designated locations and times to gather and walk to school together. WSBs can be regular events, occurring daily, weekly, or monthly or occur in coordination with other events like International Walk and Roll to School Day or the Golden Sneaker Contest. SR2S staff can assist schools with the planning, coordination, and execution of the WSBs. Walking in groups with parental supervision can not only increase the visibility of these road users, but can reduce barriers to walking for some families while making it fun and exciting for the students.
- ◆ Schedule Pedestrian Rodeos and Bicycle Rodeos
 - These interactive rodeos are great educational opportunities to teach and refresh safe walking and bicycling behavior. These workshops cover a wide range of relevant topics from understanding traffic signals and signs, to bicycle hand signals, to how to safely cross the street. Pedestrian Safety Rodeos and Bicycle Safety Rodeos are geared towards elementary school students.
- ◆ Participate in International Walk and Roll to School Day (IRW2SD), the Golden Sneaker Contest (GSC), and Bike to School Day (B2SD)
 - These are the three main countywide encouragement events that occur throughout the academic year. All schools can participate in International Walk and Roll to School Day, held in October every year. The Golden Sneaker Contest, held in spring, is for elementary and middle schools and is a two-week contest both within schools and across the county challenging classrooms to travel to/from school using active and shared modes. All schools can also participate in Bike to School Day, held in tandem with Bike to Work Day, which encourages schools to sponsor Energizer Stations and students and families to bike to school.

Safe Routes to Schools Improvement Plan
Sequoia Elementary School
Oakland

School Safety Assessment held February 2020

- 1
- Lincoln Avenue**
1a. On Lincoln Avenue, trim vegetation in front of both school zone signs (near Wilbur Street and Damuth Street) to improve visibility of the signs and beacons
1b. Consider installing speed feedback signs along Lincoln Avenue
- 2
- Lincoln Avenue/Scenic Avenue**
2a. Restripe the two existing high-visibility crosswalks across the eastern and southern approaches
2b. Restripe the advance stop markings at the southern approach. Reposition “STOP AHEAD” sign to improve visibility
2c. Work with the crossing guard program to retrain/instruct the crossing guard on standard operating procedures
2d. On the north side of Lincoln Avenue, paint 10 feet of red curb west of the crosswalk
2e. Install a paint-and-post curb extension at the northwest corner
- 3
- Lincoln Avenue/Hearst Avenue**
3a. Upgrade the two existing crosswalks to high-visibility crosswalks
3b. Install/restripe advance stop markings at all three approaches
- 4
- Hearst Avenue**
4a. Refresh all curb color paint along the Sequoia Elementary frontage
4b. Extend the red curb on the west side of Hearst Avenue near the Lincoln Avenue intersection by an additional 10 feet
4c. Designate 40 feet of yellow curb for school bus loading south of the ADA parking/loading area
4d. Update signage to match updated curb striping plan
- 5
- Laguna Avenue/Hearst Avenue**
5a. Restripe the high-visibility crosswalk across the western approach. Install advance yield markings
5b. Upgrade the transverse crosswalk across the northern approach to high-visibility
5c. Refresh “SLOW SCHOOL XING” pavement markings
- 6
- Lincoln Avenue/Wilbur Street
Whittle Avenue/Wilbur Street**
6a. At Lincoln/Wilbur, upgrade the transverse crosswalk across the eastern approach to a high-visibility crosswalk. Install a high-visibility crosswalk across the western approach. Install transverse crosswalks across the northern and southern approaches
6b. At Lincoln/Wilbur, consider installing an RRFB for the Lincoln Avenue crosswalks
6c. At Whittle/Wilbur, upgrade the crosswalk across the western approach to high-visibility. Install School Assembly B signs
6d. At Whittle/Wilbur, install curb ramps at the southwest and northwest corners



*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.
**Red curb and/or parking restriction signage should be provided between advance stop/yield markings and the crosswalk. Exact red curb distance should be determined in accordance with the CA-MUTCD and City policies/standards. Red curb not symbolized on map.