

Walk On:

The Assessment of Walkability in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles

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Introduction

Boyle Heights in the Eastside of City of Los Angeles is an area with rich history, but also significant public health Challenges. Automobile-oriented networks and urban forms have led to important impacts in terms of:

- Transportation congestion
- Air pollution
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Pedestrian safety
- Poor pedestrian environment
- Other built environment issues

Proyecto Pastoral at Dolores Mission, a local non-profit organization concerned with creating a healthy community through the empowerment and public participation, is partnering with colleagues from UCLA and UCI researchers. Funded by the California Endowment, this joint project "Academic and Community Collaborative to Improve Our Neighborhood (ACCION)" aims to improve current issues, to build community awareness and capacity in Boyle Heights, and to change policies to mitigate air pollution and pedestrian safety impacts. This study is one part of ACCION project.

Boyle Heights

Today, Boyle Heights is home to a growing concentration of Latinos, families, immigrants, renters, and many of whom live in poverty as well as very old and overcrowded housing.

Demographic Characteristics	LA	Boyle Heights
Average household size	2.95	3.97
Median household income	\$48,570	\$32,377
% of Latino/Hispanic	49%	93%
% of below high school	27%	55%
% of individual below poverty level	19%	30%

Means of Transportation to Work	LA	Boyle Heights
% of walking	4%	7%
% of public transportation	11%	19%
% of carpool	11%	14%

Car Ownership	LA	Boyle Heights
Zero-car household	13%	23%

% Pedestrian Collisions	LA	Boyle Heights
	7%	10%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2005-2009
 Los Angeles Department of Transportation, 1994-2001

Project Objectives

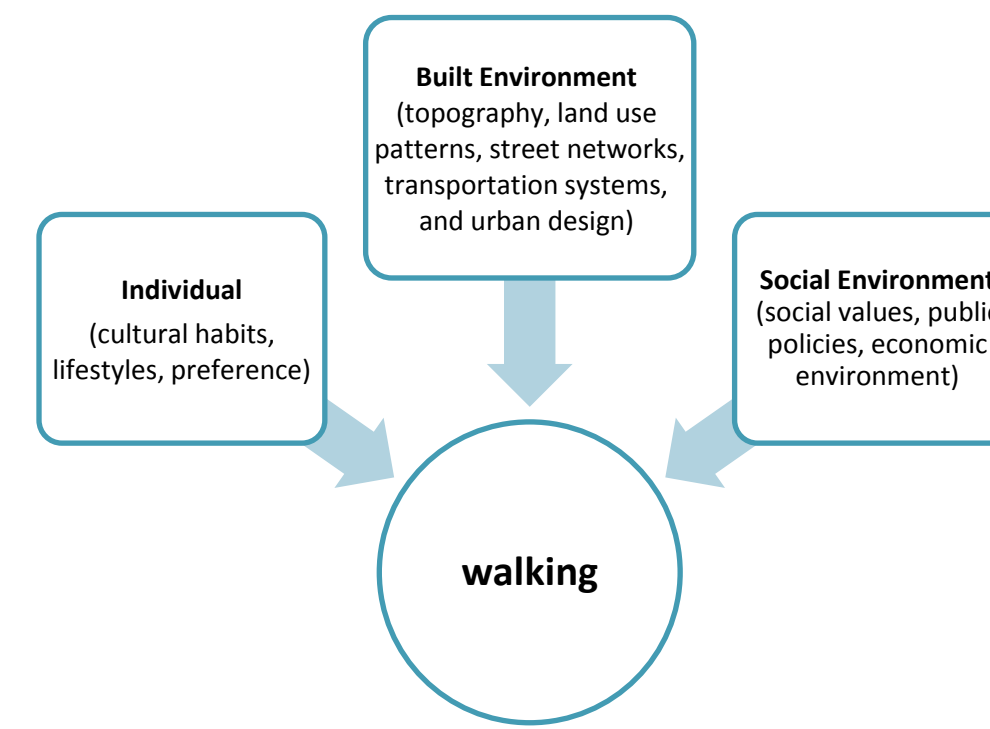
As one part of ACCION project, this study aims to

- To define "walkability" and its attributes through literature review
- To highlight the connection between urban planning and public health fields when designing and building healthy and sustainable communities
- To assess the current physical environment conditions
- To provide planning recommendations to improve walkability in the study area which can also be applied to the rest areas of Boyle Heights

What is Walkability?

"Walkability is the extent to which the built environment supports and encourages walking by providing for pedestrian comfort and safety, connecting people with varied destinations within a reasonable amount of time and effort, and offering visual interest in journeys throughout the network"-Southworth, M. (January 01, 2005). Designing the Walkable City. Journal of Urban Planning and Development, 131, 4, 246.

Safety Sustainability Vitality Public health Equity Factors Influencing Walking



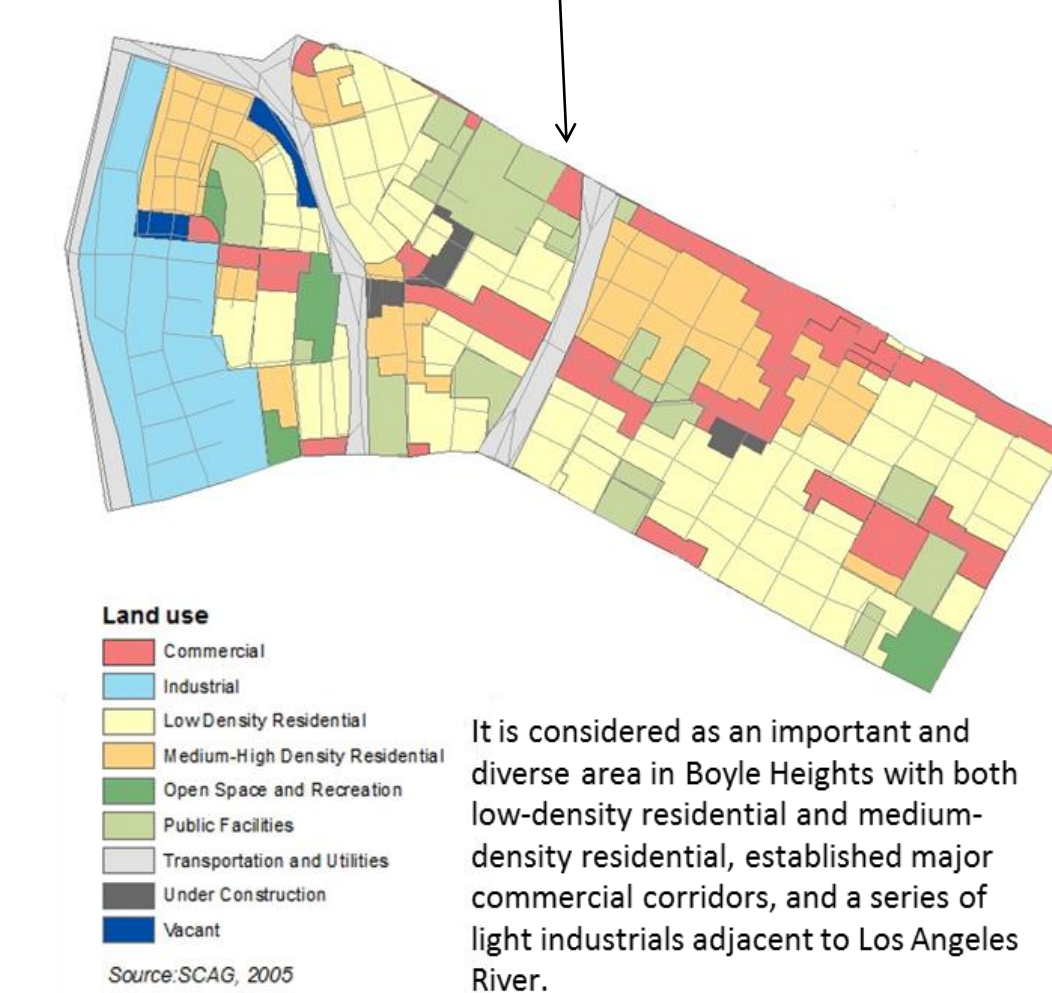
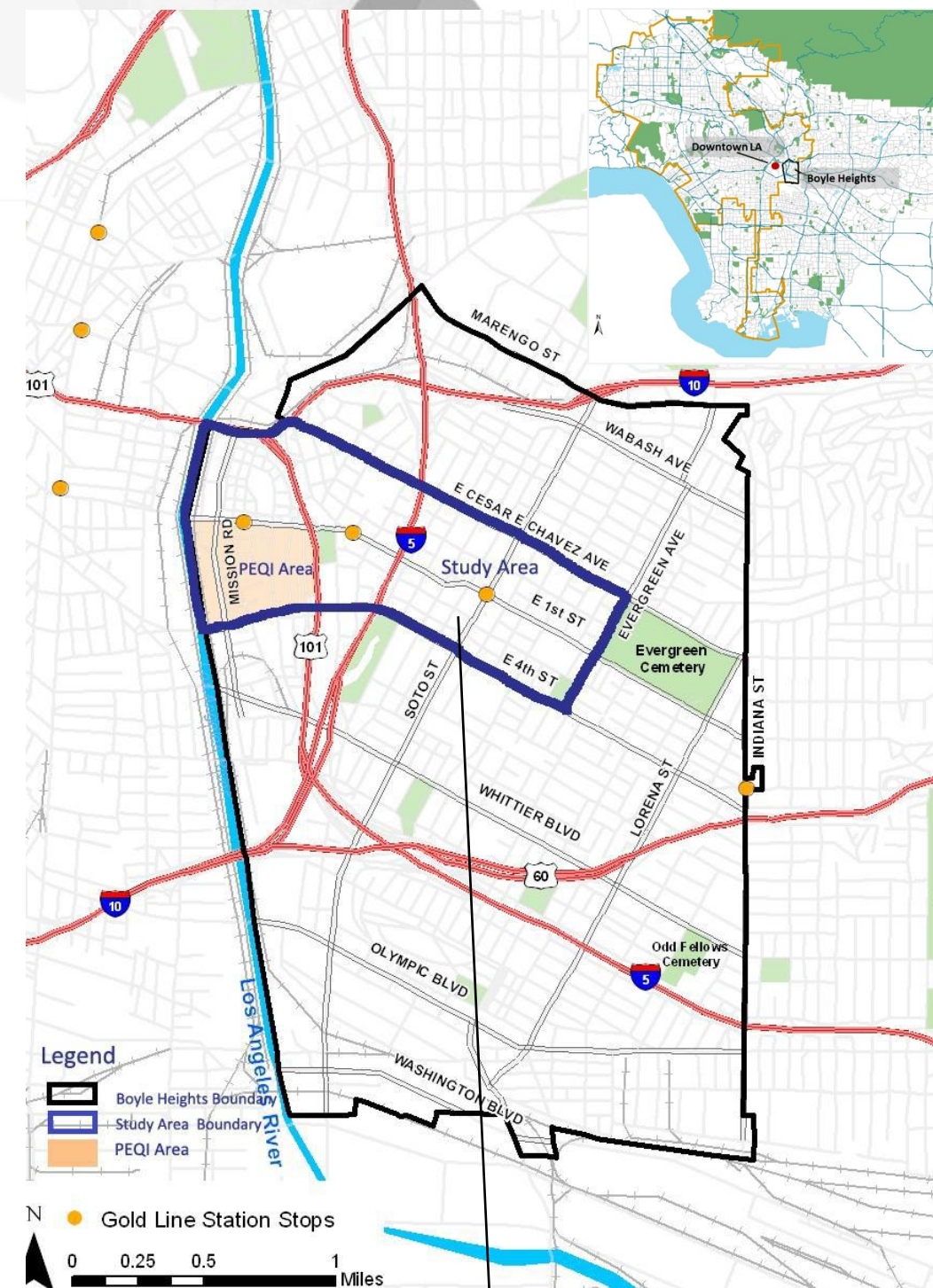
Major Findings

Constraints

- Lack of sidewalks and crosswalks
- Lack of grocery stores
- Lack of benches, bus shelters, trees, plantings and other street furniture
- Lack
- Truck Traffic
- Damaged Sidewalks
- Bad smell and noise

Opportunities

- Rich history and culture
- Social capital and community organizations
- City and community projects invested in improvements in Boyle Heights
- Pedestrian streetscape guidelines and improvements
- Land use mix of residential, commercial, services, and open space at 1st street and Cesar E. Chavez Avenue
- Smaller average block size
- Higher transit service level
- Higher residential density
- Higher walking rate
- Lower car ownership rate



The Study Area

The project will look at: the neighborhood bounded by Los Angeles River, East Cesar E Chavez Ave, Evergreen Ave, and E 4th Street, which is shown as a area within light green boundary.



Analysis

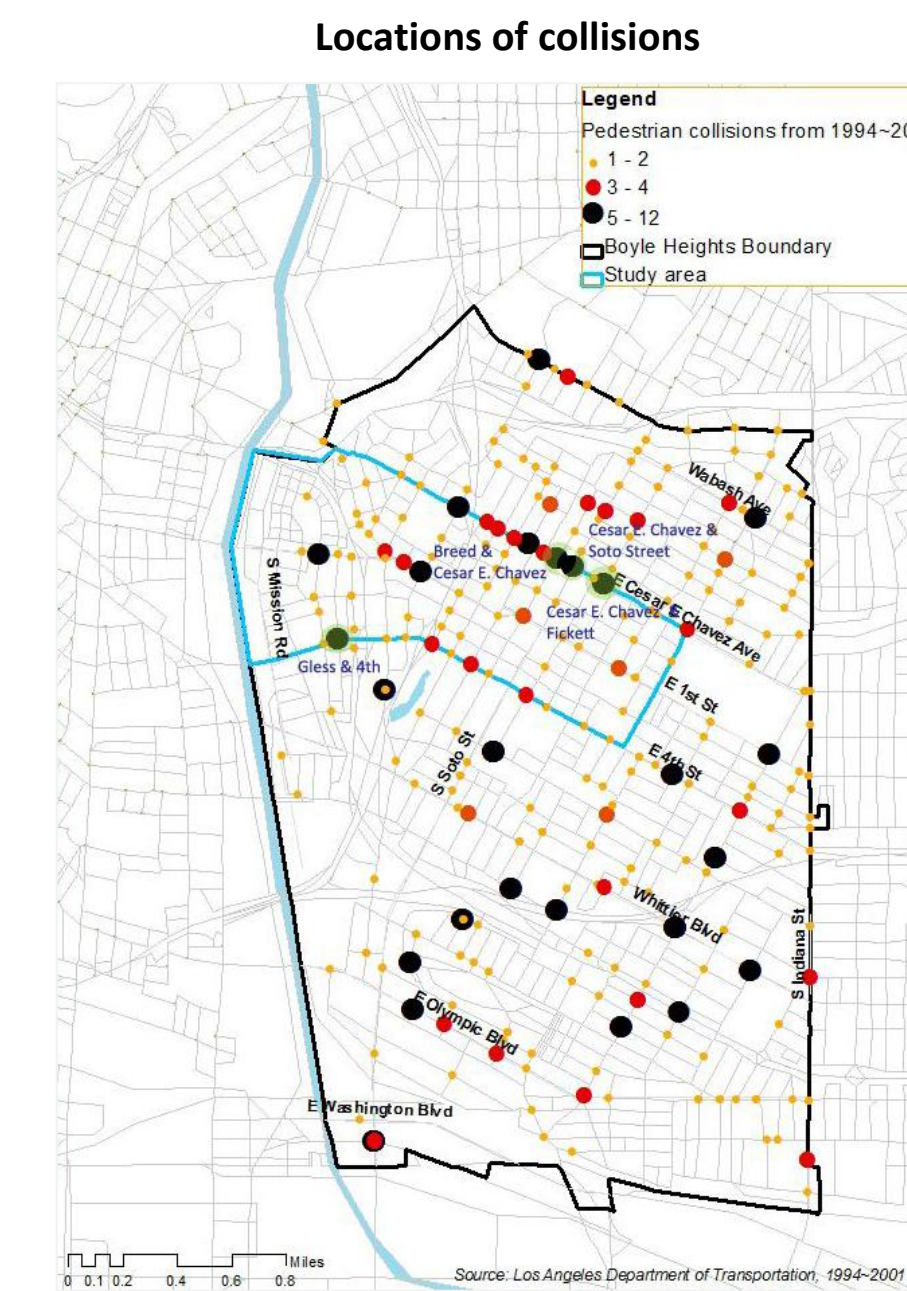
Site analysis

Source: Housing + Transportation Affordability Index



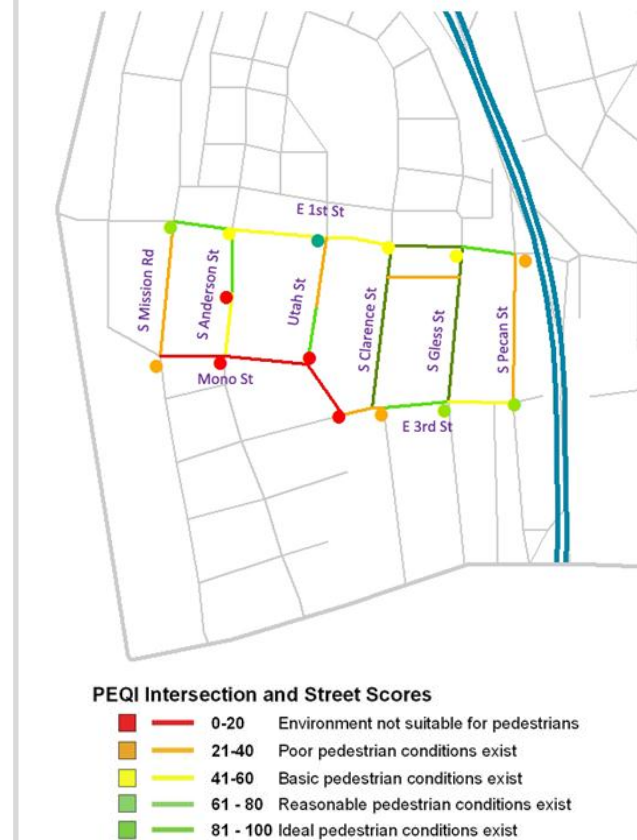
Collision Analysis

Source: Los Angeles Department of Transportation, 1994-2001



Pedestrian Environment Quality Index Analysis

Source: Survey data collected by Proyecto Pastoral



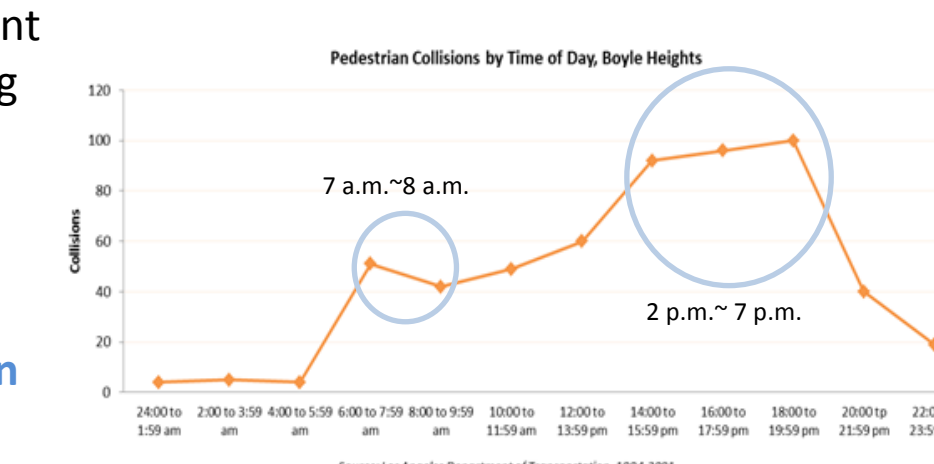
The PEQI is a quantitative observational tool that was originally developed in 2008 by the San Francisco Department of Public Health to assess the quality and safety of the physical pedestrian environment and inform pedestrian planning needs.

57% of intersections
40% of street segments
 =
unsuitable or poor pedestrian conditions

Reasons for Collisions

Pedestrian	32%
Pedestrian outside crosswalk	
Driver	31%
Pedestrian right of way violation	

Time of Collisions



Recommendations

The Active Living by Design (ALBD) Five "P" Model

Preparation

It includes walkability assessment and building partnership. Involved partners might include advocates for redevelopment, equity, and affordable housing; representatives from transportation, parks, and land use; local schools; clinics; local foundations; local and state health departments; local and regional planning agencies; higher education; and public decision makers.

Physical projects-Built environment

Physical projects range from small crosswalk improvements to large multi-year planning projects. They create opportunities to remove barriers to pedestrians by directly changing the built environment. Based on PEQI Survey, sidewalks, pathways and crossings, lighting should be designed and built in study area.

Promotions-Individual

Boyle Heights might place an emphasis on walking through bi-lingual printed materials or workshop, public meeting, signage, public art, and educational campaigns.

Programs-Individual

Programs and ongoing activities are organized to encourage routine physical activity and promote pedestrian safety, such as Complete Street and Safe Route to School.

Policy Strategies-Social Environment

The first goal is to integrate public health goal in policies and codes; the second goal is to elevate walking to equal status as a transportation mode. In the long term, walkability can be improved through land use planning. Land use planning process can include general plan, redevelopment plan, zoning, development review, subdivision plans, and pedestrian plans.