

Enhancing Walkability in National City's Old Town Neighborhood



Prepared by



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Introduction

This report documents the results of a workshop and walk audit conducted by WalkSanDiego on August 20, 2005, including priority issues and recommendations for pedestrian improvements in the Old Town neighborhood. Also included are WalkSanDiego's suggestions for improvements.

Walkability is fundamental to a community's health, vitality and quality of life. Increasingly, cities and communities are looking to improve the pedestrian environment as a strategy for revitalizing business districts, increasing the safety and ability of children to walk to school, improving the health of residents, and creating a greater sense of "place" and community character. The Old Town neighborhood in the City of National City was originally such a community when developed in the early 20th century. The neighborhood features some excellent facilities to access by walking such as an elementary school, a public transit station with bus and trolley access, and a forthcoming nature center and walking path along the creek that flows through the neighborhood.

Like many neighborhoods in the region, Old Town experiences many of the negative consequences associated with streets and neighborhoods whose design has been changed over the years to favor automobile travel. The neighborhood's wide streets, lack of crosswalks, and weak traffic calming and safety measures make walking unsafe and unpleasant, particularly for those most vulnerable – children, the disabled and seniors. Additionally, being sandwiched between three major roadways (Interstate 5, National City Boulevard and Mile of Cars Way) and the mix of industrial/commercial and residential uses have further deteriorated the neighborhood's walkability.

To address walkability issues, the Old Town Neighborhood Council launched an effort to improve pedestrian safety and walkability in the City's neighborhoods. With funding from the San Diego and Imperial Regional Nutrition Network, WalkSanDiego conducted a Walkability Workshop and Walk Audit with Old Town community members. The purpose of the workshop was to educate community members about walkability as it affects access to healthy foods and physical activity, as well as to identify residents' pedestrian safety issues, needs, and priorities. As the City of National City is currently undergoing development of the Westside Specific Plan, which encompasses the Old Town neighborhood, results of the workshop may inform developments in that planning effort.

WalkSanDiego Background

WalkSanDiego (www.walksandiego.org) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit membership organization dedicated to enhancing the livability of communities throughout the San Diego region by helping cities and neighborhoods make walking a safe and viable choice for people of all abilities. WalkSanDiego has approximately 150 members, an 11-member Board of Directors, and a 10-member Advisory Council of distinguished community leaders. WalkSanDiego's efforts in Old Town are part of the Next Steps Project – an initiative to provide outreach, training, and technical assistance to low-income communities, where walking for transportation is still common and the risk of being hit by a vehicle is documented to be 2-4 times higher than the general population.



Acknowledgments

The Old Town National City workshop and audit and this report were funded by a grant from the San Diego and Imperial Regional Nutrition Network (www.sdnnonline.org and www.sd5aday.org). The Old Town Neighborhood Council provided logistical support for the workshop, RBF Consulting (www.rbf.com) donated workshop materials, and the City of National City (www.ci.national-city.ca.us) provided breakfast and lunch. Additionally, the Environmental Health Coalition (www.environmentalhealth.org) provided translation equipment, and Ervin Poka, Jr. provided translation services. WalkSanDiego gratefully acknowledges the support of these organizations and individuals.

Walkability Community Workshop

The workshop and audit occurred on Saturday, August 20, 2005 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Casa De Salud Community Center in National City. Workshop announcement flyers (in English and Spanish) were distributed to the Old Town Neighborhood Council and a local church group, and they were posted at key locations throughout the community. Approximately 60 community members attended, including approximately 15 monolingual Spanish community members who received simultaneous translation services throughout the workshop by Ervin Poka, Jr. and others. All participants received an agenda and a comment form (in English and Spanish), the latter for personal notes or submitting written comments to be included in the workshop results (included at the end of this report).

Old Town Neighborhood Council President Ted Godshalk began the workshop by thanking participants for attending and introducing WalkSanDiego Board members Danielle Putnam and Andy Pendoley, who subsequently acknowledged additional stakeholders in the audience: Blanca Meléndrez, Program Coordinator of the Latino 5-a-Day Campaign, and Bobbette Bidulph of EDAW, project manager for the Westside Specific Plan. Ms. Putnam and Mr. Pendoley then presented a one-hour informative slide show with an interactive format that discussed why walkable communities are important, typical problems that impair walkability, and the elements of a walkable community. Participants shared comments throughout the presentation and provided input on Post-It notes regarding what they like and what needs improvement related to Old Town's walkability.

WalkSanDiego's Ms. Putnam and Mr. Pendoley then each led a separate group of participants on a different walking route through the neighborhood. Participants applied what they learned in the slide show, pointing out the positive and negative pedestrian safety issues and potential solutions, with facilitation by WalkSanDiego. Upon returning from the one-hour walks, participants formed four small groups to further discuss the problems and solutions identified on the walk audits and reported this back to the larger group. Participants documented their comments by drawing and writing on large maps, allowing them to specifically indicate problem areas and suggest solutions.





Introduction & Methodology

Positive Walkability Features

Old Town features the following aspects of a walkable community:

- ▶ The neighborhood is compact, has primarily small lots, and has many destinations within easy walking distance.
- ▶ Blocks are short, arranged in a grid pattern, and easily navigated on foot or by bicycle.
- ▶ Some commercial and residential buildings feature shallow or zero set-backs, which provide interest for walkers, help maintain “eyes on the street” for crime prevention, and slow traffic somewhat.
- ▶ The West 24th Avenue Transit Station is located in the southwest corner of the neighborhood and offers local bus and regional trolley service.
- ▶ Casa De Salud Community Center and Kimball Elementary School are centrally located and serve as focal points for the community. Many children in the neighborhood walk to school alone or accompanied by parents.



- ▶ The neighborhood’s future nature center and walking path along Paradise Creek are unique and exciting features, which should help to encourage walking as a desirable recreational activity in the neighborhood.
- ▶ A number of public facilities exist on the edge of the neighborhood including City Hall, the new public library, the police station, and the Martin Luther King Community Center.
- ▶ The future of the neighborhood looks bright: The Westside Specific Plan is intended to provide a vision and blueprint for bringing in more residents and neighborhood-serving retail uses, and developing a desirable mixed use environment that is designed to be more walkable.

Challenges to Walkability

Old Town features the following challenges to being a walkable community:

- ▶ Few crosswalks are available in the neighborhood. Only one crosswalk serves Kimball Elementary School.
- ▶ Traffic speeds are excessive on streets that feed to or from freeway ramps.
- ▶ Most streets are too wide for the number of lanes, which encourages speeding and exposes pedestrians to traffic for longer than necessary when crossing streets. Few traffic calming features exist in the neighborhood.
- ▶ Lighting is limited on many streets.
- ▶ Bus stop shelters are not available in the neighborhood.
- ▶ Pedestrian connectivity is sometimes blocked by dead-end streets or no access across Paradise Creek.





General Findings

Following is a combined summary of community members’ issues and solutions, as well as WalkSanDiego’s recommendations for improvements.

“Do Everywhere” Improvements

Walkability improvements should be incorporated gradually wherever possible including the following:

1. Crosswalks – In addition to providing a safer space for pedestrians to cross streets, crosswalks remind drivers to watch for pedestrians when entering an intersection and encourage calmer driving speeds. These effects are enhanced when crosswalks are painted with more visible markings (ladder or zebra style) and supplemented by appropriate legends and signage as compared to the minimal double-line painting.
2. Bulb-outs – Curb extensions at the corners of blocks decrease crossing distance and improve visibility of pedestrians by motorists. Coolidge Avenue and 18th Street are excellent areas for such improvements as they are feeder streets to Kimball Elementary School.
3. Lane width reductions – Narrower lanes calm traffic, especially when combined with street trees, diagonal parking, and/or curb extensions.
4. Corner curb ramps – Two curb ramps per corner should be installed, each facing directly to crosswalks, so users remain within the crosswalk and not the intersection.
5. Diagonal parking – Diagonal parking provides two improvements to walkability: reducing street widths and providing additional parking.
6. Reduced perceived pavement width – Install shoulder stripes or possibly bike lanes where there is excessive street width.
7. Street lights – Improved lighting may entice residents to walk during evening hours and can add character to the neighborhood. Civic Center Drive already features attractive street lighting, which could be carried into the Old Town neighborhood, though longer distances in the spacing between light standards may be warranted.
8. Lead pedestrian indicator – LPI’s provide a 3-second “head start” for crossing pedestrians. These should be provided as necessary at signalized intersections, particularly in locations near bus stops.
9. Art in infrastructure – Public art elements should be included in infrastructure and redevelopment projects. If not already developed, the City of National City should consider a public art master plan, with criteria that identify appropriate infrastructure.





Top Priority Areas

Workshop participants identified priority areas in Old Town that lack pedestrian elements and require significant traffic calming measures. Based on their comments and WalkSanDiego's observations, the following are the priority areas for improvements in a relative priority order.

1 Kimball Elementary School (Coolidge Avenue & 18th Street)

Traffic Characteristics: Kimball Elementary School covers two city blocks and is bordered by Harding Avenue on the west, 18th Street on the north, Hoover Avenue on the east, and 19th Street on the south. The intersection of Coolidge Avenue and 18th Street is at the front entrance of the school and forms a "T." Drivers frequently use 18th Street as a thoroughfare for traveling from the western side of the city to National City Boulevard and eastern destinations. Of course, drivers also use 18th Street and other nearby streets to drive students to and from the school and the nearby church at 18th Street and Harding Avenue, which hosts activities and functions for children and adults almost every day. Comparatively, 18th Street accommodates a relatively high traffic volume when measured against other neighborhood east-west streets such as 16th and 17th Streets, but the traffic calming measures are not much different.

Issues: Drivers traveling eastbound on 18th Street typically travel at speeds well over 25 mph prior to entering this area due to higher speed limits and minimal traffic calming measures at the entrance to the community at 18th Street and Wilson Avenue (see "Wilson Avenue & 18th Street" section of this report). When these conditions are mixed with children walking to and from school, plus church traffic, these pedestrians are immersed in potentially dangerous conditions. Only one crosswalk paired with a stop sign currently exists along the entire stretch of 18th Street in this study area – crossing 18th Street on the west side of the intersection with Coolidge Avenue. Common to all streets in this residential neighborhood, the streets are wider than necessary, which exposes students and parents to longer crossing times and higher vehicle speeds than what is appropriate for a school zone or a residential street.



Solutions:

- ▶ Provide two more marked crosswalks at the intersection of 18th Street and Coolidge Avenue, with all crosswalks featuring a separate stop bar that forces drivers to stop farther back of the crosswalk. The crosswalks should be painted yellow as is standard for a school zone and could match the diagonal style of the intersection's current crosswalk. Corner bulb-outs at the intersection would reduce pedestrians' exposure to traffic, make pedestrians more visible to drivers, and provide pedestrians with greater visibility. The entire lengths of Coolidge Avenue and 18th Street are ideal for this treatment as they are the primary feeder streets for the school.
- ▶ Diagonal parking, which currently exists in some portions of Coolidge Avenue, would encourage slower driving speeds through reduced street widths, though some workshop participants expressed concern about children playing between diagonally parked cars and increasing their exposure to traffic. Some workshop participants suggested creating a student drop-off area on 19th Street behind the school that includes lighting. Others suggested closing Coolidge Avenue to traffic from the 16th Street to 18th Street and creating a park with vehicular access to residences via the alley, which may be feasible in longer-term planning for the area.



2 Wilson Avenue & 18th Street

Traffic Characteristics: As 18th Street is one of the few east-west streets in the Old Town neighborhood that crosses Interstate 5, it experiences a relatively high volume of traffic. Drivers typically use 18th Street to travel between eastern and western portions of the city, Interstate 5, and National City Boulevard. It also fronts Kimball Elementary School in the Old Town neighborhood (see “Kimball Elementary School” section of this report). Wilson Avenue is the only north-south thoroughfare in the Old Town neighborhood, connecting Mile of Cars Way with Civic Center Drive and Interstate 5 access points on both ends. Land uses on Wilson Avenue are primarily industrial/commercial on the north end, and residential on the south end with the West 22nd Street trolley station. While posted for slower neighborhood speeds, these streets tend to accommodate drivers who are entering the neighborhood from faster roadways, or who are anticipating connections to faster roadways.

Issues: As the roadway travels downhill underneath Interstate 5, drivers tend to pick-up and maintain an accelerated speed along 18th Street through the intersection with Wilson Avenue and toward the school. Additionally, this section of 18th Street is designed in a slight “S” pattern, which limits drivers’ view of pedestrians and traffic on the right side when approaching the intersection. Drivers on northbound Wilson Avenue stop at the intersection, but then must creep through the crosswalk to view the difficult-to-see traffic on eastbound 18th Street that is not required to stop.



The sidewalks on 18th Street under Interstate 5 are of minimal width with no pedestrian buffer zones adjacent to the street. Many children who attend Kimball Elementary School live on the west side of Interstate 5 and walk these sidewalks and cross this intersection via 18th Street. When discussed during the walk audit, workshop participants related a number of vehicle crashes at this intersection, many of which go unreported due to drivers’ lack of insurance. Only one crosswalk currently exists at this intersection, which crosses Wilson Avenue on the south side.

Solutions:

- ▶ Eastbound 18th Street is in need of traffic calming measures, which could include a combination of measures such as narrowing the street, widening the sidewalk, or installing a traffic circle, raised medians near crosswalks, bulb-outs, or bicycle lanes.
- ▶ Crosswalks with stop bars should be added to the other three crossings at the intersection.
- ▶ Improved street lighting at the intersection may improve visibility of pedestrians at night.
- ▶ Public art along the walls on 18th Street under Interstate 5 may help add to the neighborhood’s sense of identity and further discourage speeding.

3 Residential Streets

Traffic Characteristics: In addition to use by residents, all neighborhood residential streets are used by commuters and employees of nearby businesses, often as an east-west “short-cut” alternative to the arterial streets of Civic Center Drive, East 18th Street, or Mile of Cars Way. Traffic typically moves faster than the posted speed limit. Several automotive oriented businesses are located on these streets, along with small lot single-family homes and some multi-family housing. Coolidge Avenue functions as the main school route through the neighborhood to Kimball Elementary School.



Recommendations

Issues: For the most part, residential street intersections do not have traffic controls, i.e., stop signs, yield signs, etc., nor marked crosswalks. Lack of these facilities is problematic at all intersections and is especially dangerous at intersections used by school children. Cut-through commuters speeding through residential streets pose a safety problem for pedestrians, with vehicular collisions occurring on a regular basis according to residents; however, due to the particular circumstances of the drivers involved, these accidents are not always reported to the police. School children also report incidents where either they or their friends have had “near misses” with vehicular traffic when crossing streets. Some auto repair shops in the area

double park the vehicles to be repaired so sidewalks are not passable or sight lines are blocked, which may also contribute to accidents. Sidewalks in some areas are cracked and broken. Residents would like to see street beautification, additional trash receptacles where needed, and additional street lighting.



Solutions:

- ▶ Crosswalks and stop bars should be marked at all intersections with installation of curb extensions at select intersections where needed to shorten crossing distances and increase pedestrian visibility. Further study should determine which intersections are the best candidates for curb extensions; however, the main school route along Coolidge Avenue is a prime candidate to receive this treatment. Other intersections suggested for curb extensions include Harding Avenue at 14th Street, 15th Street, 16th Street, and Civic Center Drive.
- ▶ Traffic calming should occur through a combination of traffic circles at intersections, additional stop signs, and painted lines to narrow lanes.
- ▶ All street curb corners should be painted red at intersections to improve the sight lines for oncoming traffic and coupled with a diligent enforcement program so violators understand that offenses will not be tolerated.
- ▶ Center lines should be marked on Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover Avenues, and their cross streets, which effectively narrows the traffic lane, as vehicles can no longer speed down the center of the street.
- ▶ Some workshop participants felt that diagonal parking along Coolidge Avenue between Civic Center Drive and 18th Street should be removed; however, it is WalkSanDiego’s position (widely shared by pedestrian experts) that diagonal parking is beneficial to the pedestrian environment because it creates a buffer between pedestrians and moving vehicles, plus it serves to slow traffic speeds along the street.
- ▶ A comprehensive signage program indicating traffic controls and pedestrian conditions should be prepared and installed, e.g., stop signs, “cross traffic does not stop” signs, school signs, “slow for pedestrians” signs, and signs prohibiting parking of 18-wheelers on residential streets.
- ▶ The Westside Specific Plan should address street beautification, including more plantings, additional trash receptacles, and additional street lighting.



4 National City Boulevard between Civic Center Drive & 16th Street

Traffic Characteristics: National City Boulevard is a major arterial thoroughfare, with four lanes of traffic, some signalized intersections, and parallel parking on both sides of the roadway. Recent improvements have added positive pedestrian features to the roadway including a planted median, sidewalk improvements, and historic street lights.

Issues: The newly opened Library at East 15th Street and National City Boulevard has no marked crosswalks to enable pedestrians coming from the west side of National City Boulevard to safely access the facility. Additionally, there are no marked crosswalks to the Library from the immediately adjacent cross streets. Residents noted that the Library’s entry area is not inviting for pedestrians as it seems more car-oriented.



Solutions:

- ▶ Install marked crosswalks and curb extensions at National City Boulevard’s intersections with 14th and 15th Streets. Consider installation of a pedestrian activated light to further create safe crossings in this area for residents trying to reach this area from west of National City Boulevard.
- ▶ There should be safe and direct walking routes from the surrounding residential areas to the Library. Install marked crosswalks and supporting safety improvements as needed.
- ▶ Beautify the library’s entry area with plantings, shade, signage and interesting public art so it is more appealing to pedestrians. Sign the exiting driveways from the Library to alert drivers to pedestrians and consider paving treatment within the Library parking lot to enhance pedestrian circulation safety.

5 16th Street / Roosevelt Avenue / West Avenue Intersection

Traffic Characteristics: The intersection of West Avenue, 16th Street, and Roosevelt Avenue is designed for two lanes of traffic with parallel parking on both sides. West Avenue meets the intersection at an angle, which is different than most street intersections in the area.

Issues: Vehicles traveling south on Roosevelt gather speed on the hill, while vehicles traveling north on West Avenue are going uphill and do not have good sight distance as they approach the intersection at the crest of the slope. The intersection is not marked with crosswalks for pedestrian use, which when combined with excessive vehicle speeds and the long distances between street corners, creates an unsafe situation for pedestrians.



Solutions:

- ▶ Install marked crosswalks with curb extensions to shorten crossing distances.
- ▶ Consider installation of pedestrian-activated flashing lights embedded in the crosswalk to alert drivers to pedestrian traffic between Hoover and Roosevelt Avenues. Further study would be needed to determine if such an improvement is warranted.



Recommendations

6

Wilson Avenue, Civic Center Drive & I-5 Onramp

Traffic Characteristics: The intersection of Wilson Avenue, Civic Center Drive, and the northbound I-5 onramp is located at the northwest corner of the study area. Traveling east on Civic Center Drive showcases the neighborhood's recent pedestrian improvements with an abundance of attractive street lighting and relatively wide and improved sidewalks.

Issues: Civic Center Drive's wide sidewalks and historic street lighting terminate at this intersection. Wilson Avenue and Civic Center Drive are still wide streets that encourage faster vehicle speeds. Pedestrians are forced to cross the spacious intersection without crosswalks. Crossing the entrance to the I-5 onramp is particularly harrowing for pedestrians as the northeast curb's wide turning radius facilitates faster turning speeds onto the onramp. The sidewalk ramp on this corner fronts Civic Center Drive, but pedestrians using the ramp and crossing the onramp must spend more time exposed to traffic. Similarly, the sidewalk ramp on the northwest corner faces east for crossing the onramp, so pedestrians using the ramp and crossing south across Civic Center Drive are exposed to traffic longer than necessary.



Solutions:

- ▶ The intersection is a strong candidate for a traffic circle to calm traffic. The onramp to I-5 is adequately long for vehicles to build speed for entering the highway from the intersection, so traffic calming measures should not cause unsafe driving conditions on the onramp.
- ▶ The corners would benefit from bulb-outs that would reduce pedestrians' exposure to traffic, make pedestrians more visible to drivers, and provide pedestrians with greater visibility. Such treatments could include attractive landscaping, would complement the existing improvements on Civic Center Drive, and would serve as a pleasant gateway to the neighborhood.

7

Civic Center Drive between Harding Avenue & National City Boulevard

Traffic Characteristics: Civic Center Drive is a busy roadway that carries vehicular traffic between freeway on- and off-ramps and up to National City Boulevard. It has four lanes, parallel parking on both sides, wide sidewalks, plantings, and attractive street lighting. Except for a traffic signal at National City Boulevard, there are no other traffic signals.



Issues: Civic Center Drive is considered too wide for safe crossing by residents and acts as a barrier for pedestrians coming from the residential streets to the north. These residents feel left out of the Westside Specific Plan process, consider their area to be a part of the Old Town neighborhood, and want it included in planning and implementation activities. Residents feel that while the historic street lighting on Civic Center Drive is attractive, light standards are spaced too close, making the street too bright at night and affecting adjacent homes. Additional features to improve the pedestrian environment for local residents were also mentioned, such as more shade trees and benches.



Solutions:

- ▶ Install curb extensions and a marked crosswalk at the intersection of Civic Center Drive and Coolidge Avenue, which is along the main route to Kimball Elementary School.
- ▶ Residents suggested that some street lights from Civic Center Drive be moved to 12th Street where there is a need for additional lighting. Another alternative to reduce brightness could be use of lower wattage bulbs or a different bulb type, which would also reduce energy usage.
- ▶ Consider installing some benches in select appropriate areas along Civic Center Drive.

8 West 24th Street Trolley Station

Traffic Characteristics: The West 24th Street Trolley Station is located in the southwest corner of the study area at the intersection of 22nd Street and Wilson Avenue. The Blue Line trolley and a number of local city transit buses serve the station. The intersection features an unusual pattern of corners with four-way stop signs. No two crossings are the same distance due to variations in street width.

Issues: While the sidewalk between the station area and Wilson Avenue features an attractive design, is a good width, and has shade trees, the positive elements for pedestrians stop there. The ramp at the corner of this sidewalk is positioned behind the stop bar for southbound traffic, in effect allowing drivers to drive through and stop inside the crossing area. Also, pedestrians crossing Wilson Avenue on the south side of the intersection who must use the sidewalk ramps are forced to cross at a longer diagonal distance due to the unusual placement of the intersection's curbs. Thus, these pedestrians are exposed to traffic for an unusually long period of time given the short width of this one lane street.



When entering the station area, it is clear that parking and vehicle access dominate. Pedestrians may use a long crosswalk from the intersection to the bus island and train area, but the majority of this crossing area is crossed by parking lot traffic. This includes buses, which must cross the crosswalk and often drive over part of the island where passengers walk and wait. Previously, reflective domes were placed along the crosswalk in an effort to further articulate the crossing area to vehicles, but many have been worn off and removed. The passenger island is narrow and features benches, trash receptacles, and bus stop signs that take up much of the standing room. Pedestrians using wheelchairs, strollers, or other walking aids are probably

not able to use the island to board buses. Some waiting passengers are forced to stand off the island in the parking lot when many people are waiting.

Two portable public toilets are located in the middle of the parking lot next to the crosswalk. Their doors open directly onto the drive aisle and put departing toilet users directly in the line of traffic. Additionally, a separate vehicle entrance/exit exists north of the intersection on Wilson Avenue, which crosses the sidewalk and is used by the buses entering the station area. The egress direction does not have a stop sign before vehicles cross the sidewalk.

Solutions:

- ▶ Pedestrians at the intersection and in the trolley station area may be best served by a redesign that eliminates areas designated for both pedestrians and vehicles. As the neighborhood is projected to evolve into a more residential area, improving pedestrian safety and access in the station area may help to encourage residents to increase their use of the station. While this may be a long term solution, other short term improvements may be considered in the meantime.



Recommendations

- ▶ The street intersection should include crosswalks and stop bars that are located behind the pedestrian crossing areas and ramps, requiring some of the current stop bars to be moved farther back. The current crosswalk in the station area could be made safer with more paint, articulated concrete, or a speed table.
- ▶ Restrooms should be moved from the parking area to the passenger waiting area. The passenger island could be widened and feature furnishings that take up less floor space. Workshop participants suggested including shelter on the island to protect waiting passengers from sun and rain, as well as improving lighting for visibility at night.



9 Wilson Avenue between 18th Street and Civic Center Drive

Traffic Characteristics: Wilson Avenue has two traffic lanes with parallel parking on both sides but no traffic control south of Civic Center Drive. The street is excessively wide, which encourages speeding from vehicles traveling between the two major east-west cross streets, Civic Center Drive and Mile of Cars Way. The west side of Wilson Avenue in this area is made up of industrial uses, while the east side of the street has a mix of industrial businesses and residences on small lots.

Issues: High traffic volumes and speeding during commute hours is the biggest problem for this section of Wilson Avenue. Littering from employees in the area was also mentioned by the residents.



Solutions:

- ▶ Adding a stripe to delineate the parallel parking area from the traffic lane would effectively narrow the street with potential to slow traffic. Installation of a traffic light at 18th Street has been previously mentioned, while residents suggested that stop signs may be appropriate at other intersections.
- ▶ Residents also suggested that speed bumps and lower speed limits may be appropriate; however, studies show that use of speed bumps need to be considered very carefully, as they are often not effective and only serve to anger drivers. Additionally, their use is not recommended if Wilson Avenue is a main route for emergency vehicles. WalkSanDiego typically does not endorse use of speed bumps. While lower speed limits can be very effective when law enforcement is present to vigorously enforce them, it is recognized that police officers have many duties and cannot always be available for this purpose.
- ▶ WalkSanDiego suggests further study to determine which portions and intersections of Wilson Avenue pedestrians are using most frequently and focus improvement efforts on those areas or encourage alternate routes for pedestrians.
- ▶ Additional trash receptacles, maintained by the City, could be placed on the streets to reduce litter.



Additional Community Input from Old Town Walkability Workshop – August 20, 2005

(Note: Comments written in Spanish were translated to English and included herein.)

Post-It Note Exercise

What do you like about walking here?

- ▶ Neighbors are like family and good friends.
- ▶ Good gardens.
- ▶ Wide sidewalks. Trees.
- ▶ Bright lights. Quiet. Safe.
- ▶ Lots of people on the streets. Wide sidewalks.
- ▶ Nice and mellow evenings. Safe neighborhood.
- ▶ I like walking here because it's not polluted. The sidewalks are smooth.
- ▶ ...That when I walk to school there are crosswalks. I have a nice neighborhood. Nice people.
- ▶ Weather is great for walking.
- ▶ It's good exercise.
- ▶ I like walking around the community because I see new things.
- ▶ Most parents walk their kids to and from school.
- ▶ I always see people on the street in my neighborhood.
- ▶ I like walking to see experience different environments, see the houses/trees/plants in the neighborhood.
- ▶ I walk to visit with my neighbors in the community and to enjoy the great weather, as well as visit the neighborhood park.
- ▶ I like that walking has become a high interest to the members of our community in National City making the city a better place.
- ▶ I like that our mayor is making some positive changes in our community. For example, we have a new fire department and a new library.



What needs to be improved?

- ▶ Bigger sidewalks.
- ▶ Put stop signs in places where cars go fast and more crosswalks.
- ▶ Less traffic in desirable. Need slower traffic. Need more stop signs.
- ▶ Slow speed. Prettier trees. Better crosswalks.
- ▶ What can be done to ensure enforcement of yield signs? Improvement of blind corners at intersections.
- ▶ Wilson Avenue should have speed bump and/or stop signs. Commuter traffic is too fast. Same for Cleveland.
- ▶ Neighborhood beautification: Rid of parked cars (auto park). More gardens. New paint on homes (grants).



Community Comments

- ▶ Need stop signs to slow traffic down at intersections.
- ▶ Cars from auto body shops in the way. No stop signs. Fast traffic.
- ▶ 18th Street built below high tide level of Paradise Creek.
- ▶ More light and safer.
- ▶ Lights at night. Damaged cars parked for weeks at a time. Scenery.
- ▶ Take out all *tagging*.
- ▶ The underpass at 18th and 19th and I-5 needs to be made safer for pedestrians.
- ▶ More National City clean-up.
- ▶ Parking availability.
- ▶ Businesses-Know what they do. Share with the community.
- ▶ Fights. Car parts where they're not suppose to be. Police come to the house.
- ▶ Need more or better landscaping in some areas. Some areas need "green".
- ▶ Stop signs on all cross streets. Yield signs are not respected. Parking.
- ▶ There's busted up sidewalks. There are no speed bumps.
- ▶ The streets are a bit narrow. Some streets do not have stop signs and the cars drive too fast. Also, there's not enough lighting at night.
- ▶ Local commercial trade and walking at night.
- ▶ The sidewalks are in bad shape and there's not enough lighting at night and not enough crosswalks.
- ▶ We would like to see wider sidewalks, more plants and trees. We also think that we need to enforce some speed control.
- ▶ We wish that we could have benches and shade at the bus stops.
- ▶ There's not a safe place for the kids to play. Adding ramps at the corners would be helpful. Also some areas of the streets are lacking stop signs.
- ▶ Some of the streets and sidewalk paths need cleaning maintenance. Also some of the homes are lacking tidiness in their lawn areas.
- ▶ The sidewalks look tacky and dirty. We need more stop signs and lighting at night. We'd like to have a better view of the city streets - to lack hindrance and crime... feeling safe with more lighting during the evenings and cars driving with speed control. (Three people made these comments.)
- ▶ Clearing the walkways by making them more level enabling them to be safer to walk on and fix/cover the potholes on the street.
- ▶ More garbage cans available.





Comment Sheets

- ▶ Traffic lights on 18th and Wilson. More streetlights. Speed bumps. Lower speed limits. Paint red zones on every street corner for visibility of oncoming traffic. Move Bus Company (Tour Bus). Trash cans down Wilson Avenue with the City responsible for emptying them.
- ▶ Improvement of blind corners especially near schools. Improve walk time limit at intersections with traffic signals, especially with children and seniors crossing the intersections.
- ▶ Overall the walk was informative, however, it is important for us as residents north of Civic Center that we be included as part of the Old Downtown Redevelopment area. This is important for us because we can implement/use what we have learned today into our neighborhood.
- ▶ We need to include (north of Civic Center) community in the Old Town plan. We need to beautify the neighborhood by removing vehicles that are being fixed by many auto shops. Improve sidewalks to make accessible for disabled persons and the elderly. Crosswalks for all intersections to make it safe for pedestrians. Make library accessible to all by having crosswalks on National City Boulevard.
- ▶ No condos to be built at the old Public Work Center. Houses only and townhouses. No mass construction. Wilson Avenue will not handle any more overflow traffic.
- ▶ I would like my front fence to be 6 feet rather than 4 feet. People can easily jump over and kidnap a child. Four feet gives you no privacy.
- ▶ The sidewalks at Harding are too narrow and the neighborhood grass is too dry. There's no place to sit and the walls are not tall enough.
 - ◆ The school does not have clear crosswalks.
 - ◆ At College and 18th, the area near the church does not always feel safe. A diagonal area of College is causing an obstructed view that does not permit us to see the children.
 - ◆ At Harding and 21st, the ends of the streets do not have paved sidewalks.
 - ◆ At Wilson in front of the trolley stop, the empty lot is very dirty... seems like an obvious place for high crime. Also, the trolley stop area needs a crosswalk.
 - ◆ At 18th Street in front of Kimball, the sidewalks look abandoned.
 - ◆ At Harding and 20th, too many empty lots without lighting.