



DRAFT

# Feet First

## Enhancing Walkability in the Uptown Parking District

Supplement to the UPD Strategic Plan & Implementation Guide

Prepared by



January 2003





Enhancing Walkability  
in the  
Uptown Parking District

*Prepared for*  
**The Uptown Partnership, Inc.**

*Prepared by*  
**WalkSanDiego**

*in cooperation with*  
**San Diego County Air Pollution Control District's  
Indirect Source Program**

January 2003

**Note:** The recommendations included in this report represent the knowledge, experience, and expertise of WalkSanDiego in providing ideas and concepts to balance pedestrian safety and comfort with traffic flow needs. Implementation of any location-specific recommendations should be undertaken only after due consideration by the City of San Diego Traffic Engineering Department following an engineering study and in collaboration with the affected neighborhood's land owners, residents, businesses, and the Uptown Partnership, Inc.



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## Walkable Uptown

The Uptown Parking District (UPD) neighborhoods include some of the San Diego region’s most pedestrian friendly urban spaces. These include generous sidewalks buffered by planted parkways, historic bungalows facing the street, and delightful storefronts abutting wide walkways. The District encompasses the neighborhoods of Park West, Banker’s Hill, Mission Hills, Hillcrest, and University Heights. Unfortunately, lack of attention to pedestrian-oriented design details has, in some important corridors, undermined the historic character and allowed speeding cards to dominate the environment.



*Uptown Parking District includes the region’s most walkable neighborhoods.*

In March 2002, the Uptown Partnership, Inc. (UPI) initiated collaboration with *WalkSanDiego*, the region’s primary pedestrian design advocate, to determine the next steps to improve the pedestrian environment in the UPD. The collaboration was dubbed Feet First<sup>SM</sup>.

This report builds on the Uptown Parking District Strategic Plan & Implementation Guideline and Urban Design section of the Uptown Strategic Mobility Plan. Specifically, it suggests general and location-specific design approaches to improving corridors, nodes, or intersections identified by area stakeholders and residents during five Feet First events.

## Walk Audits, Public Forums, Survey Boards

The Feet First project included five public events. Each event was designed to educate participants on community walkability issues and the potential for improvements, while soliciting community opinions on the need for such improvements. These events were as follows:

### **March 23, 2002 ♦ Stakeholder’s Meeting**

UPI Board members and other community representatives received a one-hour PowerPoint presentation on walkability issues and solutions, and then participated in a brainstorming session on UPD areas needing improvements. The specific suggestions are listed in Appendix A.

### **April 13, 2002 ♦ Walking Tour “Hillcrest: The Vibrant Urban Village”**

Approximately 35 participants explored the history of University Avenue, the Uptown District, and some adjacent streets while considering the pros and cons of the existing pedestrian facilities.



*March 23 –“Stakeholder’s Meeting”*



*April 13 Walking Tour –  
“Hillcrest: The Vibrant Village”*



*June 8 Walking Tour –  
“Historic Churches & Foot Bridges”*



*June 29 – Community Forum  
“Just for the Health of It”*

## *Survey Boards*

Three survey boards were displayed at the June 29 Community Forum and at the Hillcrest “City Fest” in August. Two boards asked the questions: “Why do you walk?” and “How much do you walk per week?” A third board was a map of the Uptown neighborhoods on which respondents were asked to draw their regular walking route.

### **May 11, 2002 ♦ Walking Tour**

#### **“Mission Hills: Historic Neighborhood, Wonderful Trees”**

Approximately 50 participants learned about the history of development and the planting of historic trees in Mission Hills, and discussed its pedestrian environment.

### **June 8, 2002 ♦ Walking Tour**

#### **“Park West/Bankers Hill: Historic Churches & Foot Bridges”**

Another 50 participants toured four historic churches and three footbridges, while examining the pedestrian environment of the area.

### **June 20 & August 1, 2002 ♦ Walk Audit**

#### **Mission Hills: Washington Street & University Avenue**

A small group of community representatives explored the need and potential for pedestrian improvements on Washington Street, University Avenue, and other streets in Mission Hills.

### **June 29, 2002 ♦ Community Forum**

#### **“Just for the Health of It”**

This event repeated information from the Stakeholders Meeting but for a general audience. It also included a presentation on recent research showing the health benefits of walking by James Sallis, PhD., an expert on recreation and health from San Diego State University.



**“Favorite Walking Routes”**



## Walking Survey Results

The FeetFirst survey boards at the June 29 Community Forum and the Hillcrest “City Fest” in August revealed the following:

### Why Do You Walk?

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For exercise or relaxation . . . . .	55 (34%)
To shop . . . . .	39 (24%)
To visit friends . . . . .	20 (12%)
Other . . . . .	14 [11 to eat] (9%)
To catch a bus . . . . .	13 (8%)
Commute to work or school . . . . .	11 (7%)
Walk a dog . . . . .	8 (5%)
Walk a child to school or bus stop . . . . .	2 (1%)
Total respondents . . . . .	162

**Interpretation:** The results show the most popular reason to walk is for exercise/relaxation. Nevertheless, walking as transportation, (i.e., to reach a specific destination) accounts for two-thirds of walking trips, which is probably far higher than in most neighborhoods in Southern California. This high proportion is made possible by the close proximity of mixed uses within the UPD and the facilities connecting them. These data suggest there is a strong potential for success should the UPI embark on a campaign to encourage residents to walk to local businesses.



### How Much Do You Walk Per Week?

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None . . . . .	0
Less than 1 hour . . . . .	0
1-3 hours . . . . .	23 (35%)
3-6 hours . . . . .	16 (24%)
More than 6 hours . . . . .	27 (41%)
Total respondents . . . . .	66

**Interpretation:** The largest segment of respondents indicated they walk more than six hours per week. This indicates a large number of people answering the question have incorporated walking as a regular part of their daily routine. Although this survey is far from representative, it is encouraging to see that no respondents answered that they walk less than one hour per week.

### Most Popular Walking Corridors

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- 1 El Prado, Balboa Park
- 2 University Avenue, Hillcrest
- 3 6th Avenue, Park West
- 4 5th Avenue, Hillcrest, Park West
- 5 Park Boulevard, Upas to University
- 6 Robinson Avenue Hillcrest
- 7 Washington Street, Mission Hills
- 8 Fort Stockton Street, Mission Hills
- 9 1st Avenue, Park West
- 10 Maryland Street, University Heights

**Interpretation:** Again, this survey was far from representative as most respondents were from the Hillcrest area. Still, it is striking that the most frequently walked corridor, El Prado, is not part of the street system but a pedestrian-only corridor in Balboa Park. In fact, all of the corridors listed are particularly suited to pedestrians, with the possible exception of some aspects of Washington Street. Clearly, the more pedestrian-friendly a street is, the more people in the UPD will find it suitable for walking.



# “Do Everywhere” Improvements

## *Incorporate in Routine Maintenance and Capital Improvement Plans*

Based on the input from Feet First participants, including the UPI Board of Directors and field observations, it is apparent there are long-standing maintenance and safety improvement needs throughout the UPD neighborhoods. While the city has identified a \$2.5 billion infrastructure backlog, there is little reason these improvements could not be installed gradually as road improvements occur and as a result of development permit conditions. (Page 21 contains a longer list of potential funding sources.)

The city should pursue the following wherever possible:

1. **Bulb-outs** – Curb extensions decrease crossing distance and improve visibility of pedestrians by motorists.
2. **Install Missing Sidewalks** – (See page 19.)
3. **Install Missing Streetlights** – Give priority to long unlit stretches (such as 3rd Avenue) and poorly lit pedestrian-oriented commercial areas (such as 5th Avenue between University Avenue and Washington Street).
4. **Lane Width Reductions** – For most street classifications, the city’s revised Street Design Manual includes lane widths of 10-11 feet (rather than 12 feet) on streets of 45 mph or slower. Narrower lanes calm traffic, especially when combined with street trees, diagonal parking or curb extensions.
5. **Reduce Perceived Pavement Width** – Install shoulder stripes or bike lanes wherever there’s excess width. Examples include Park Boulevard, W. Lewis Street, and portions of 4th Avenue.
6. **Diagonal Parking** – Many low volume streets are excessively wide and lack sufficient parking. Both problems can be remedied by installing diagonal parking.
7. **Crosswalk Markings** – Replace the city’s minimal double-line crosswalk markings with more visible markings (e.g. ladder-type) supplemented by appropriate signage.
8. **Right Turn on Red Prohibition** – The city employs very few “right turn on red” prohibitions, even where pedestrians are repeatedly struck. Examine crash records and install prohibitions as appropriate.
9. **Corner Ramps** – The revised Street Design Manual calls for two ramps per corner, rather than the minimal single ramp required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Use two ramps wherever possible and place crosswalks back from the intersection accordingly.
10. **Walk Interval Lead Time** – Where possible, provide a 3-second lead time for pedestrian walk signals, which will allow pedestrians to enter the intersection before vehicles, thereby increasing visibility.
11. **Detectable Surfaces** – Install these to indicate the path of travel for sight impaired pedestrians, especially where the path weaves around obstacles.
12. **Light Timing** – Lengthen walk interval to allow slower pedestrians sufficient time to cross.
13. **Education Campaign** – Launch a campaign to educate residents and visitors on safe walking and biking behavior.



*Bulb-outs calm traffic, reduce crossing distance, and make pedestrians more visible.*



*Diagonal parking reduces street width and calms traffic on Olive Street in Park West.*



## Recommendations

### “Top Ten” Priority Areas

Feet First participants identified areas lacking pedestrian elements and pedestrian-friendly areas that should be improved. Based on their comments, *WalkSanDiego* observations, crash data, and traffic data, ten areas emerged as the best candidates for improvements. Not surprisingly, these are areas where pedestrians can be found in abundance, but where safety is compromised by an imbalance between traffic flow and pedestrian safety.

The history of pedestrian injuries was the main consideration in ranking the Top Ten. (Thorough analysis of crash incidents and prevailing conditions were beyond the scope of this report but would give greater insight to problem areas and potential solutions.) To illuminate possible solutions, the discussion of each also considers whether there exists excess roadway capacity, such that one or more lanes might be converted to other uses. This would have the effect of calming traffic, reducing crossing distance, and providing space for street trees, wider sidewalks, bike lanes, or diagonal parking.

It should be noted that street capacity is most needed at intersections, and conversely less necessary between intersections. It should be possible, therefore, to reduce traffic impacts by narrowing excessively wide arterial streets. (In some cases, this may require a community plan amendment.) This would make walking along a boulevard such as 5th Avenue in Park West far more inviting. Many of the suggested solutions address intersections. This is because, as the data clearly show, signalized intersections are among the more dangerous places to cross. Some of the recommendations also reflect the city’s proposed revisions to the Street Design Manual, which reflects greater sensitivity to the impacts of traffic on pedestrian safety. (*WalkSanDiego* participated in the revision process.)

Crash data for 1996-2000 were obtained through special request from the County of San Diego Emergency Medical Services. Traffic data were obtained from the San Diego Association of Governments database ([www.sandag.org](http://www.sandag.org)). Potential excess capacity was indicated where 10% of Average Daily Traffic (ADT) per lane fell below 600-1000 vehicles per lane per hour, depending on the segment, and from field observations. (Ten percent of ADT is a standard, conservatively high estimate of peak hour traffic volume.)

#### 1 5th Avenue & Washington Street

Traffic Characteristics		Year	Travel	Potential
Street	Segment	Counted	Lanes	Excess Capacity?
5th Avenue	University to Washington	1996	3	Yes
Washington Street	5th to 6th	2000	4	No

#### 5-Year Pedestrian Crash History

- 5th & Washington – 4 injuries
- 4th & Washington – 4 injuries

#### Issues

High density medical offices, related businesses, and residences are located on the north side of Washington Street. This is a significant market for the vibrant 5th Avenue business corridor south of Washington Street. Unfortunately, poor pedestrian access across Washington Street creates a barrier between the two. Creating a better connection across 5th Avenue in this location would knit these two important areas together to the benefit of both.



5th & Washington – a pedestrian barrier



5th & Washington – current alignment

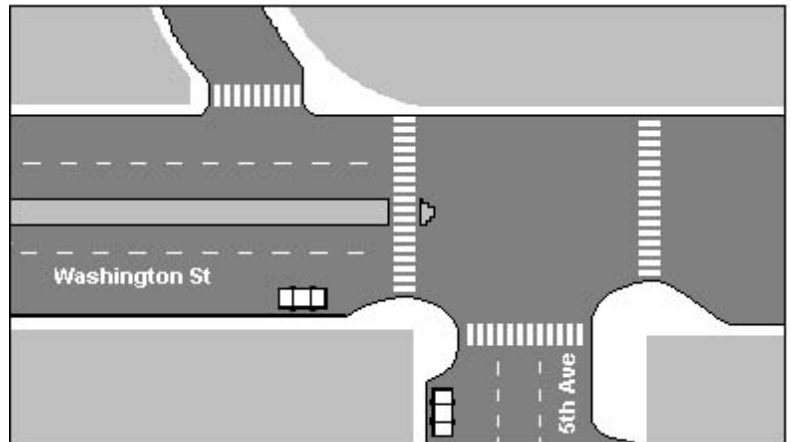
The intersection of 5th Avenue and Washington Street is simultaneously one of the busiest and one of the least friendly for pedestrians. A significant cluster of injuries is apparent at 5th Avenue and at the nearest alternative crossing location, 4th Avenue. The western leg of the intersection is blocked to pedestrians crossing 5th Avenue, forcing many pedestrians to use an indirect travel path and face more traffic risk by crossing two legs instead of one. (The blocked leg reduces delay for northbound vehicles turning left onto Washington Street from 5th Avenue.) Further exacerbating the lack of adequate crossing opportunities is the blocked pedestrian movement on the eastern leg of 4th and Washington.

**Solutions**

A suggested reconfiguration of the intersection is shown below. As in most of the City of San Diego, minimal pedestrian crossing markings are used. These should be replaced with far more visible “ladder” or other modern markings, as illustrated. Further, bulb-outs should be installed at all possible corners.

The presence of no-parking areas (red-painted curbs) indicates opportunities on the south side of the intersection for installing bulb-outs. These would not impede traffic significantly, and would reduce crossing distance and make pedestrians more visible, while slowing turning vehicles somewhat. Even a small reduction in speed translates as additional safety for pedestrians.

The most difficult of the improvements shown is re-introducing a crosswalk on the western leg. To accomplish this, the city should investigate queuing and consider alternative signal phasing (light timing) configurations. A similar analysis should be conducted at 4th and Washington to determine how the blocked eastern leg could be reopened.



5th & Washington – reconfigured

**2 4th/5th/6th Avenues between Robinson & University Avenues**

**Traffic Characteristics**

Street	Segment	ADT	Year Counted	Travel Lanes	Potential Excess Capacity?
6th Avenue	Robinson to University	27,000	1996	4	No
5th Avenue	Robinson to University	15,400	2000	3	Yes
4th Avenue	Robinson to University	11,600	1998	2	No
University Avenue	4th to 6th	22,800	1996	2-4	No
Robinson Avenue	4th to 6th	12,000	1999	2	No

**5-Year Pedestrian Crash History**

13 injuries



## Recommendations

### Issues

These three blocks are the pedestrian-oriented heart of Hillcrest's commercial node. Both daytime shopping, dining, and office uses are combined with nighttime dining and entertainment. As a result, significant volumes of pedestrians can be found here at most hours of the day and evening.

### Solutions

Because of their importance as the commercial core, these blocks should give a sense of welcome to pedestrians. While handling substantial vehicle traffic, one solution is to install curb extensions wherever possible, creating areas for pedestrian plazas, sidewalk cafes/displays, landscaping, or mid-block crossings. Candidate areas include red curbs, areas downstream of bus stops, and curbs on either side of driveways. Intersection curb extensions (bulb-outs) should be considered at each of the six intersections defining this area.



*Curb extensions don't always mean rebuilding drainage systems, as this solution shows.*

Of this group, the only street that may have excess capacity is 5th Avenue between Robinson and University Avenues. There may be an opportunity to reduce the number of lanes from three to two and introduce diagonal parking on one side of the street. (The intersection at University Avenue should remain three lanes with additional space for the existing bus stop.) This configuration would improve safety for the many pedestrians who cross illegally at mid-block locations.

The intersection of 6th and University requires special care on the part of pedestrians, due to traffic volumes, crossing distance, and right-turning drivers failing to watch for pedestrians to their right. At this intersection, the city should:

- ◆ Investigate setting the stop bars back,
- ◆ Investigate installing median refuges on each leg,
- ◆ Prohibit right turn on red at each leg where back ups into the upstream intersection would not occur,
- ◆ Install more visible crosswalk markings throughout, and
- ◆ Install pedestrian "countdown" signals to assist crossers.



*A cautious pedestrian watches for right-turning vehicles at 6th & University.*



**3** 4th/5th Avenues between Walnut Street and Interstate 5

**Traffic Characteristics**

Street	Segment	ADT	Year Counted	Travel Lanes	Potential Excess Capacity?
4th Avenue	Grape to I-5	11,000	2000	2	No
5th Avenue	Grape to I-5	11,300	2000	3	Yes

**5-Year Pedestrian Crash History**

15 injuries (5 at Spruce Street)

**Issues**

Serving as a one-way couplet system, 4th and 5th Avenues process commuters to and from downtown San Diego. These streets’ regional commuting function has been allowed to dominate, while the high traffic speeds they encourage are a severe barrier to what is otherwise a very pedestrian-friendly environment.

**Solutions**

The configurations of these streets should be rethought. Both streets have three-lane segments but serve traffic volumes that may be handled



*4th Avenue transitions from two to three lanes at Walnut Street; two lanes appear adequate to handle the traffic.*



*5th & Spruce – a pedestrian injury “hot spot”*

adequately by two lanes. Consistent with the revised Street Design Manual, the lanes should be narrowed to 10-11 feet. This will produce greater caution on the part of drivers, although it may not reduce speeds significantly without further speed interventions, such as lane shifts around diagonal parking areas. Diagonal parking could be installed on alternating sides of the street, from one block to the next, to provide a chicane effect in long, uninterrupted segments.

Pedestrian crashes have been numerous along these two streets, particularly at Spruce Street. The city should install crossing enhancements at the intersections of 4th & Spruce and 5th & Spruce. These might include signals, bulb-outs, more visible crosswalks, and in-pavement flashers.



## Recommendations

Because the streets are multi-lane, crosswalks should be installed only if cars can be stopped at least 20 feet back from the crosswalk. (This is necessary to avoid a stopped, near-lane vehicle blocking the view of a pedestrian by a second vehicle approaching in the far lane.) In-pavement flashers coupled with stop bars should be investigated to provide these conditions.



*Diagonal parking creates a lane shift – a form of “chicane” that induces slowing.*

## 4 Park Boulevard & University Avenue

### Traffic Characteristics

Street	Segment	ADT	Year Counted	Travel Lanes	Potential Excess Capacity?
University Avenue	Florida to Park	18,300	1996	4	No
University Avenue	Richmond to Park	20,500	1999	4	No
Park Boulevard	University to Robinson	15,700	2000	4	No
Park Boulevard	University to Howard	13,800	1999	4	No

### 5-Year Pedestrian Crash History

7 injuries



### Issues

This intersection handles a fairly large volume of traffic, particularly on University Avenue. It is also a bus transfer location and has a large population of senior and disabled pedestrians. Crossing on the north leg of Park Boulevard is made difficult by the street’s excessive width and the hazard created by a retaining wall that blocks the view of westbound motorists turning right from University Avenue. The pedestrian signal phase is also not adequate for many of the seniors who cross here. These conditions may account for the high number of pedestrian crashes.

*Hot Spot – Hazards abound for the many elderly pedestrians at Park & University.*



**Solutions**

There is unutilized pavement at the northeast corner, which makes it an ideal location for a large bulb-out. A wider median with a pedestrian cut-through might also be incorporated in the north leg, allowing a resting area for slower pedestrians. The placement of the curb ramps, stop bars, and crosswalks should be reconsidered on all four legs, similar to the recommendations for the intersection of 6th & University on page 10. Finally, the signal phasing should be revised to account for the crossing rate of resident seniors.

**5 Goldfinch & Washington Streets**

**Traffic Characteristics**

Street	Segment	ADT	Year County	Travel Lane	Potential Excess Capacity?
Washington Street	Goldfinch to Front	27,000	1999	4	No
Washington Street	University to Goldfinch	25,500	2000	4	No

**5-Year Pedestrian Crash History**

4 injuries, 1 death



**Issues**

This corner is one of the busiest in Mission Hills; several injuries and one death also make this one of the deadliest intersections in San Diego. The intersection suffers from narrow 9-foot sidewalks and adjacent parking which blocks the view of cars traveling through the intersection.

The northeast corner is particularly precarious for wheelchairs because of the apex location of the access ramp, which is blocked by a corner building column.

**Solutions**

The ideal solution would be to install bulb-outs to increase the pedestrian space and pedestrian visibility, slow vehicle turns, and reduce crossing distance. Working with the neighborhood, the Fire Department, and disabled advocates, the city has proposed a bulb-out design. Construction is expected to start next year.

*Hot Spot – tight sidewalk conditions on Washington Street at Goldfinch create hazards, especially for disabled pedestrians.*



## Recommendations

### 6 University Avenue and Normal Street

#### Traffic Characteristics

Street	Segment	ADT	Year Counted	Travel Lanes	Potential Excess Capacity?
Normal Street	Lincoln to University	6,300	1998	4	Yes
University Avenue	Richmond to Park	20,500	1999	4	No

#### 5-Year Pedestrian Crash History

4 injuries, 1 death

#### Issues

This segment of University Avenue is exceedingly narrow but serves a relatively high volume of traffic. Gaps in traffic are rare during much of the day, but pedestrian crossing opportunities are spaced several blocks apart (Richmond Street to Park Boulevard). A large number of pedestrians cross in this area, and five have been struck, with one killed during the 1996-2000 period.



*University Avenue east of Normal Street:  
No place for pedestrians.*

#### Solutions

There are no easy solutions to the problems in this area. However, a safer crossing opportunity should be provided at Normal Street, where the width of University Avenue increases significantly. Because of the prevailing vehicle speeds and volumes, no crosswalks should be installed, but a large median island, a bulb-out on the north side, and possibly a traffic signal, should be provided. The large number of pedestrians crossing in this area will likely continue, but their safety can be improved without providing an “official” crossing location.

Probably the best solution at this location is a signal, but it should be synchronized with the signal at Richmond Street to maintain traffic flow. If a signal is installed, the recently completed improvements that prohibit left turns from southbound Normal Street onto University Avenue will need to be reconstructed.

### 7 4th/5th/6th Avenues at Laurel Street

#### Traffic Characteristics

Street	Segment	ADT	Year Counted	Travel Lanes	Potential Excess Capacity?
4th Avenue	Laurel to Robinson	9,000	2000	2-3	Yes
4th Avenue	Laurel to Grape	8,000	2000	3	Yes
5th Avenue	Robinson to Laurel	13,400	Pre-1996	3	Yes
5th Avenue	Laurel to Grape	10,000	2000	3	Yes
6th Avenue	Robinson to Laurel	17,300	2000	4	Yes
6th Avenue	Laurel to Grape	13,200	Pre-1996	4	Yes

#### 5-Year Pedestrian Crash History

6th & Laurel – 1 injury



**Issues**

Because of a traffic signal at 6th Avenue, Laurel Street is an important entrance to Balboa Park for automobiles, bicycles, and pedestrians. Because of this, high volumes of pedestrians and bicyclists are drawn to the intersections of Laurel and 4th, 5th and 6th Avenues. While only a single pedestrian crash was reported during the five-year period, each of these intersections should be considered for enhancements to reduce the crossing distance and make pedestrians more visible to motorists.

**Solutions**

Existing traffic volumes suggest there is excess capacity on 4th and 5th Avenues. Consideration should be given to reducing the number of lanes and converting the unused space to diagonal parking, additional sidewalk space, a bike lane, curb extensions, and/or a pedestrian refuge island. In addition, a “countdown” signal could assist crossers without delaying traffic.



*Laurel Street at 6th Avenue – the only controlled crossing point for pedestrians accessing Balboa Park from 6th Avenue.*

**8 6th Avenue between Walnut Street and Interstate 5**

**Traffic Characteristics**

Street	Segment	ADT	Year Counted	Travel Lanes	Potential Excess Capacity?
6th Avenue	Grape to I-5	10,400	2000	4	Yes
6th Avenue	Laurel to Grape	13,200	Pre-1996	4	Yes

**5-Year Pedestrian Crash History**

3 injuries

**Issues**

This stretch of 6th Avenue features high-speed traffic and an abundance of pedestrians, many crossing to access Balboa Park. Many of the pedestrians in this area are elderly. At present, crossing opportunities are spaced too far apart, hence the large number of pedestrians crossing mid-block and at unmarked crosswalks (i.e., intersections). Installing crosswalks is not appropriate given the number of lanes, traffic volumes, and traffic speeds, which exceed 50 mph. (WalkSanDiego observations.)



*High-speed traffic, few crossing opportunities, and the attraction of Balboa Park create dangerous conditions on 6th Avenue.*

**Solutions**

The city should investigate ways to slow traffic and provide more crossing opportunities. With the present configuration, two or three additional signals, coupled with curb extensions and/or median refuge islands, would be required to ensure safe crossing. However, this is not the recommended approach. The road’s present configuration appears to be excessive for the volume of traffic it handles.



# Recommendations



*Narrow medians function as de facto pedestrian refuges. With fewer lanes, expanded refuges could be accommodated.*

The function and traffic volume of this segment of 6th Avenue are consistent with the Revised Street Design Manual characteristics for a Two Lane Collector with Two Way Left Turn Lane. Specifically, this configuration applies to collector streets with 10-15,000 vehicles/day in highly urbanized, pedestrian-oriented areas. It is strongly recommended the city re-stripe the road to this configuration. The extra width could be used to provide bike lanes which, in addition to serving bicyclists, would make parking maneuvers safer by providing a buffer from traffic.

By reducing the number of lanes to two, traffic would be forced to slow to the speed of the most prudent drivers. By incorporating a two-way turn lane, the present volume can be readily accommodated. With this configuration and reduced vehicle speed, installing crosswalks would also be possible, avoiding the expense of installing and maintaining signals. Particular attention should be paid to enhancing crossing safety at Spruce Street, which is a high-volume crossing point.

## 9 Washington Street between Lincoln and 9th Avenues

### Traffic Characteristics

Street	Segment	ADT	Year Counted	Traffic Lanes	Potential Excess Capacity?
Washington Street	Lincoln to 9th	37,800	2000	4	No

### 5-Year Pedestrian Crash History

0 injuries

### Issues

This stretch of Washington Street serves multiple traffic functions, handling 40,000 vehicles/day, local traffic, and movements to and from SR 163 ramps. It also serves bicyclists and a surprising number of pedestrians. This segment, which lacks sidewalks most of its length, was the gap in the UPD's

pedestrian network most frequently mentioned by the community. Community members felt strongly that a walkway should be provided, despite vehicle speeds regularly exceeding 55 mph and difficult pedestrian crossing conditions at Lincoln Avenue. (It was because of these conditions that the Vermont Street bridge over this section was replaced in 1994 following demolition of the original wooden structure in 1979.)



*Washington Street (facing west) – to the right, pedestrians have forged a dirt path.*



*The Vermont Street bridge over Washington Street is a safer but less direct pedestrian route.*



**Solutions**

The city should investigate the means and cost of providing sidewalks on one or both sides of Washington Avenue. The most significant obstacles are providing safe crossings at the SR 163 ramps and building sidewalks on hillside locations on either side. The south side appears most promising due to excess width. There are a number of standard approaches that could work. The city should investigate these and propose one of them for neighborhood consideration.

**10 Fort Stockton Drive & W. Lewis Street**

**Traffic Characteristics**

Street	Segment	ADT	Year Counted	Travel Lanes	Potential Excess Capacity?
Fort Stockton Drive	Sunset to Hawk	6100	2000	2	No
W. Lewis Street	Fort Stockton to Goldfinch	3500	1997	2	No

**5-Year Pedestrian Crash History**

0 injuries

**Issues**

This Y-intersection, originally designed to accommodate streetcars, is excessively wide. While no injuries were reported during 1995-2000, the intersection is difficult to cross and should be made safer for pedestrians.



*The Y-intersection of W. Lewis & Fort Stockton is extremely wide but handles only modest traffic.*



*Speeding on W. Lewis Street is a common complaint. Affordable remedies such as striping a bike lane are readily available.*

**Solutions**

Since it serves a relatively low volume of traffic, this intersection could benefit from an intersection treatment to improve pedestrian safety without significantly affecting traffic flow. W. Lewis Street is a designated bike route; a bike lane should be provided. This would reduce the street width perceived by drivers, calming traffic. At the intersection, bulb-outs and/or a landscaped “pork chop” island would ease crossing and further channelize traffic. However, care should be taken to avoid constricting movement of emergency vehicles since this is a designated emergency access route.



## Other Locations of Note

### *Park Boulevard*

This street is excessively wide, encouraging speeding and discouraging walking. The street is clearly too wide for the volume of traffic served. The city should consider expanding the width of the median and narrowing the travel lanes to slow traffic and decrease crossing distance between sidewalk and median, much like Orange Avenue in Coronado. A signal has been proposed at Lincoln Avenue, which is a good solution for increasing crossing opportunities. Many elderly pedestrians cross at this location.

### *Reynard Way / Goldfinch Street*

This street is more auto-oriented than most areas of the UPD. The city should examine the street for pedestrian crossing demand and consider installing stop signs or pedestrian-activated signals in these locations.

### *Foot of Washington (India Street)*

This area needs crossing enhancements – more visible crosswalks, curb extensions, and perhaps signal re-timing.

### *Fort Stockton Drive*

Much of Fort Stockton Drive has extremely narrow sidewalks and less than ideal features (driveways, parking lots, and fencing). The passable width is as little as two feet in some blocks. The city should consider ways to increase the sidewalk width and remove obstacles. Where parking meters are blocking the sidewalk, they should be consolidated. At the southwest corner of Ibis Street and Fort Stockton Drive, redevelopment potential is high and could be conditioned on rebuilding the curbs to eliminate unnecessary curb cuts.



*Narrow sidewalks are squeezed further by parking meters, which could be consolidated.*

### *Washington Place at Ibis Street*

Where Washington Place enters the Mission Hills neighborhood, westbound traffic tends to travel at high speed and encounters cross traffic at Jackdaw Street. A more effective traffic calming treatment would be appropriate here. Further, the lane should be repainted to force vehicles to the left (against the island) rather than to the right (against the curb) to encourage slowing. Signs and pavement messages warning drivers to slow down might be effective as well.



*The channelization island at Washington Place should be altered to serve as a traffic calming device.*



## *University Avenue from Washington Street to 4th Avenue*

This segment of University Avenue encourages high speed, endangering frequently-crossing pedestrians. A shoulder stripe should be installed to narrow the perceived lane width, and bulb-outs installed at appropriate corners such as Dove Street.

## *Washington Street from Dove Street to Front Street*

Numerous pedestrians cross mid-block or at unmarked intersections in this segment. The city should consider a pedestrian-activated signal at an appropriate location in this area.

## *3rd Avenue from Walnut Street to Robinson Avenue*

Although pedestrian volumes on this street are relatively high, there are no streetlights, creating uninviting and hazardous nighttime conditions. Streetlights should be installed.

## *Park Boulevard at Polk Street*

Absent a comprehensive treatment to Park Boulevard north of University Avenue, crossing conditions at the intersection of Park & Polk should be improved. This might include crossing phase lead time and curb extensions on either side to reduce crossing distance.



*Access to the historic Quince Street Bridge is made difficult by lack of safe pedestrian facilities.*

## *Missing Sidewalks*

The city should install sidewalks in the following areas:

- ◆ 4th Avenue near Quince Street, west side (at Quince Street pedestrian bridge)
- ◆ Richmond Street between Myrtle Avenue and Cypress Way
- ◆ Cypress Way



*Sidewalks on W. University Avenue, once a residential cul de sac, are very narrow and missing in places.*



## Next Steps

### *Immediate Action ♦ Address the “Hot Spots”*

The Feet First effort uncovered four especially dangerous “hot spots” for pedestrians. We recommend the UPI immediately inform city Traffic Engineering staff that safety improvements are needed as soon as possible in these locations:

- ♦ University Avenue and Park Boulevard
- ♦ 4th/5th Avenues and Washington Street
- ♦ Washington Street and Goldfinch Street
- ♦ Spruce Street and 4th/5th Avenues

### *Demonstration Projects ♦ Comprehensive Redesigns*

We recommend the UPI work with neighborhood interests to choose one or two of the “Top Ten” locations for comprehensive redesign to serve as demonstration projects. A consultant should be hired to conduct neighborhood visioning meetings and create a new design for the area(s) chosen. Subsequent funding could be targeted for implementation. (Funding sources are considered on page 21.) To better understand the process involved, it is important to consider the sequence of steps required to improve a particular location and then consider where the Feet First project fits in this sequence.

The typical sequence is:

1. **Community Visioning** – In a facilitated meeting, a cross-section of community interests reaches consensus on changes they would like to see. This step is sometimes combined with the next step.
2. **Engineering Study** – A transportation expert familiar with pedestrian needs as well as requirements for vehicles, transit, and bicyclists assists a community group to plan changes to the right-of-way (street plus sidewalk) based on the community’s vision. All affected agencies (traffic engineering, fire department, utilities, police, ADA compliance experts) participate, and engineering issues of sight lines, stopping distance, right-of-way width, and other details determine the feasibility of various ideas.
3. **Construction Engineering** – Engineering drawings are created for each block. Physical constraints not apparent in the first two steps are sometimes encountered.
4. **Construction** – Construction is carried out in phases as funding becomes available. Having complete engineering drawings increases the chance of obtaining construction grants.
5. **Maintenance** – Agreements or contracts covering landscape and hardscape maintenance help ensure the project continues to look appealing and function as intended.

The Feet First project was successful in building interest in the Community Visioning step and identified areas where physical improvements are most needed. The next step is to approach the respective community planning groups to narrow the priority areas to one or two candidates for a demonstration project. The planning groups should then initiate a planning process with the city for these areas.



# Potential Funding Mechanisms

The following are sources of funding that might be applicable to either planning, engineering, or construction phases of a demonstration project:

1. **Right-of-Way Easement Lease-Back** – An opportunity exists to raise funds by leasing back water facilities easements, using the funds for infrastructure repairs.
2. **Right-of-Way User Fees** – As part of the “City of Villages” Framework Element, the City Council may impose new public right-of-way fees for utilities. These funds may be dedicated for street infrastructure improvements.
3. **City’s Capital Improvements Budget** – Pedestrian and bicycle safety are legitimate transportation expenditures. For this reason, pedestrian and traffic calming needs should be, and usually are, funded through the yearly transportation budget. *Walk.SanDiego* will be working with the city to establish a traffic calming budget and assigned engineering staff.
4. **Parking Meters** – Some of the local meter revenue administered by the UPI could be used for street and sidewalk improvements, and traffic calming.
5. **Community Development Block Grants** – Each city receives yearly federal outlays for community development needs. Infrastructure improvements are a common use of these funds.
6. **Lighting and Landscape Maintenance District** – North Park and other city neighborhoods assess themselves a small yearly tax on property owners to fund street lighting, landscaping, and other street improvements.
7. **Private Donations** – Some neighborhoods have raised money for either improvements or to pay for ongoing maintenance of landscaping installed as part of a project.
8. **Building Permit Conditions** – Building permits, especially for redevelopment projects, may include conditions requiring the developer to fund design and construction of traffic calming, sidewalk improvements, or other infrastructure improvements. An opportunity exists for requiring development projects to bring the adjacent public right-of-way into conformance with the city’s new Street Design Manual.
9. **Sewer and Storm Drain Repair Projects** – As water infrastructure repairs are made, the opportunity exists to rebuild portions of the street.
10. **Utility Undergrounding** – Similar to #9, the city’s undergrounding program could provide opportunities to rebuild curbs and intersections during utility undergrounding projects.
11. **Safe Routes to School Grants** – The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) administers the multi-million dollar Safe Routes to School program, including installing pedestrian crossing and sidewalk facilities.
12. **SANDAG-Administered Funds** – Various state and federal funds for pedestrian and bicycle facilities projects are administered by SANDAG. The 2030 Regional Transportation Plan envisions increasing these programs substantially.



*Parking meters are a potential source of revenue.*



## Public Input: Problems and Solutions

*March 23 — Stakeholder's Meeting*

Location	Problem	Suggested Solutions
Fort Stockton & Sunset	Y-intersection excessively wide	None
University at 4th & 5th	Traffic congestion	Optimize signal phasing, synchronization
University between SR163 & Park	Excessive speed	Traffic calming such as curb extensions, wider medians, diagonal parking (Curb extensions and signal at Normal Street proposed for University Avenue Beautification Phase II)
University between 8th & 10th	Poor pedestrian experience	None
University & Park	Crossing distance, time excessive for seniors	Install pop-outs, refuge islands on Park Boulevard; allow longer crossing phases
3rd & Washington	High pedestrian volume but poor crossing conditions	None
4th Avenue	Need to segregate left-turning vehicles	Install left-turn pockets along entire length
4th Avenue	Speeding between S-curve & Robinson	Traffic calming
5th Avenue	Speeding between S-curve & Robinson	Traffic calming
5th Avenue	No street lights between University & Washington	Install street lights, possibly including pedestrian lights (see Street Design Manual)
5th & Robinson	Drivers don't yield to crossing pedestrians	"Pedestrian Head-Start" signal
5th & Robinson	No crosswalk marked	Paint crosswalks
5th & Washington	Northbound right turn conflict with crossing pedestrians	None
6th Avenue	Speeding between S-curve & Robinson	Traffic calming
6th Avenue, Balboa Park	Divider islands inadequate	Make these true pedestrian refuge islands
6th & University	Southbound right turn to westbound University fails to yield to pedestrians crossing	Prohibit right turn on red at this location
Robinson westbound to southbound SR163 ramp	Sharp turning radius; cars don't yield to pedestrians	Realign ramp to 90°; add corner bulb-out to slow entering traffic and increase pedestrian visibility
Cleveland & Richmond	Difficult to cross near post office	None
Cleveland at Blaine/Richmond	Vehicle queue into post office driveway blocks pedestrian crossing	None
Lincoln & Cleveland; Lincoln & Normal	Pedestrian access to DMV (Hillcrest Farmer's Market) difficult	None



Location	Problem	Suggested Solutions
Centre south of University	Poorly lit with broken sidewalks	Install lighting and repair sidewalks
Richmond & Upas	Unsafe crossing to Roosevelt Jr. High	None
Washington Street	Planned widening is a bad idea	Remove widening project from Uptown Community Plan
Washington Street	Inefficient phasing and conflicts at intersections	Investigate restriping to increase efficiency, e.g. Goldfinch example
Washington between 4th and El Cajon	Poor pedestrian access	Install missing sidewalks
Washington & Lincoln	Walk signal too short	Increase walk signal phase
Washington at Polk/Normal/Campus	Confusing pedestrian access	None
Park & Polk	Blind right turns endanger pedestrians in crosswalk	Prohibit right turn on red; give pedestrians a head start phase
Park & Polk	Intersection too wide	None
Residential streets	Too wide — encourages speeding	Narrow traveled way by installing diagonal parking, bulb-outs, trees in the street, landscaped medians, etc.
Residential streets	Two-way stops inadequate	Install four-way stops
Residential streets	Speed bumps work but have problems	Install raised crosswalks instead
General	Drivers fail to yield to pedestrians	Install "Pedestrians Have Right-of-Way" or "Pedestrian/Bike Zone" signs
General	Vehicles parked close to intersections reduce visibility	Prohibit parking close to intersections
General	Inadequate street lighting	Install more street lights, pedestrian lights
General	Bicyclists use sidewalks, endangering pedestrians	None
General	Landscaping not maintained	Fund landscape maintenance
General	Bikes parked haphazardly	Provide more bike racks
General	Planned road widenings in Uptown Public Facilities Financing Plans would harm pedestrian environment	PFFP should reflect Uptown Community Plan

### LAND USE

General	General Plan deviations create pedestrian barriers	Prohibit plan deviations; ensure pedestrian-character requirements adhered to in all new development
General	Outdated Community Plan does not reflect community values of enhancing pedestrian environment	Update Community Plan
Pernicano's Restaurant, 6th Avenue	Long-closed restaurant diminishes the pedestrian experience	Site should be redeveloped



# Appendix A

## June 29 — “Just for the Health of It!” Community Forum

Location	Problem	Suggested Solutions
India Street	Commercial/pedestrian area is high speed, street too wide	Narrow street and expand sidewalks
Reynard (west side) & south of Sutter	Sidewalks lacking	Improve and complete sidewalks
Goldfinch & W. Lewis	Lacks sidewalk at end of these streets	Install the missing sidewalks
Goldfinch & University, southeast corner	Sidewalk narrow, corner impediments	
Fort Stockton, W. Lewis, & Washington	Not safe for bicyclists	
Fort Stockton Drive	Parking meters block sidewalk travel	Move or remove parking meters
Fort Stockton & Sunset	Unsafe crossing	Install pop-outs on corners and larger refuge islands
Fort Stockton Drive	Wide, fast street	
Albatross & Washington	Needs traffic light and crosswalk	
Albatross & University	Difficult to cross, senior housing is there	
W. University & eastbound Hawk	Excessive speed	
University Avenue	Buses run red lights	
University Avenue	Broken sidewalks	Finish sidewalks being repaired and repair badly broken sidewalks
University & Front	Cars driving east on University can't see pedestrians crossing at Front; street at a weird angle	
University between Park & Normal	Need improved bike safety	Install bike lanes on either University or Robinson
Washington from Ibis to India	Lacks sidewalks	Install sidewalks
Washington from Ibis to India	Lacks pedestrian route	Install hiking/walking path in canyon to complete connection and to trolley station
Washington at 163 on-ramp	No sidewalks, dangerous to walk past	Install sidewalk and safe crossing
Washington Street	No sidewalk over 163 freeway from Lincoln to 8th	Install sidewalks
3rd & Washington	Needs raised crosswalk	
4th near Quince	When walking south, sidewalk ends on right side at canyon bridge; dangerous to cross or pass	



Location	Problem	Suggested Solutions
5th & Washington	Needs pedestrian refuge	
5th & Washington	Right turners don't see pedestrians crossing	Prohibit right turn on red at this location
5th & University	Newsstand bar is an obstruction	
5th & University	Dangerous for pedestrians crossing from cars turning right onto University	
6th Avenue	Need for several crosswalks entering into Balboa Park	
6th & University	Difficult to cross	
7th, Pennsylvania, University in front of fire station parking lot	Lumpy, broken sidewalks	
Cypress Way	Lacks sidewalks	Install sidewalks
Park & Polk	Very confusing intersection for drivers and pedestrians, needs clarity; street too wide for pedestrian crossing	
Park & University	Difficult intersection for older people to cross	Make pedestrian crossing phase longer, install pop-outs and raised crosswalks

### *June 20 and August 1 — Mission Hills Walk Audits*

Location	Problem	Suggested Solutions
Goldfinch & Washington	Sidewalks only 9' wide, intrusion by meters, planters, etc.	Widen sidewalks
Goldfinch & Washington	Corners very narrow behind apex ramps	Install pop-outs
Falcon & Washington	Corners narrow behind ramps	Community requested developer to install pop-outs
Washington between Falcon & Eagle	Potential narrowing when Starbucks encroaches with café	Reduce or prohibit encroachment; additional setback being built might be sufficient
Washington & Dove (west side)	Lack of crosswalks	Install crosswalks and bulb-outs
4th & Washington	Crossing prohibited on east leg	Mike Singleton: Not apparent why. Install a crosswalk?
University east of Dove	Sidewalk close to travel lane	When/if Vons rebuilds, have them install buffer between sidewalk and curb
University & Albatross	Sharp turn causing accidents	Install bollards, reflectors
University & Albatross	Narrow sidewalks and narrow street	Obtain property easement and increase sidewalk width