

# Safer Sidewalks Along 166th Street

## Introduction

Pedestrian **safety** and **accessibility** are essential components of urban design, contributing to the overall quality of life and equity within communities. Along **166th Street** in **Norwalk**, California, the current conditions of high speed traffic, poor lighting, and narrow sidewalks obstructed by overgrown vegetation create significant challenges for pedestrians.

### Study Area

This study focuses on a one mile stretch of 166th Street. This site was selected for its strategic importance in the daily lives of local residents. This corridor functions as a vital pedestrian artery, linking several key community landmarks and services.

### Research Questions

How do local residents, government officials, and urban planners weigh the need for pedestrian safety against other urban priorities, such as vehicle flow and property development? Are there discrepancies between the needs and perceptions of local residents and those of decision makers regarding pedestrian infrastructure?

## Key Findings

- Frequent Obstacles On Sidewalks**
  - Overgrown vegetation, utility poles, and uneven pavements were commonly reported as obstructions, forcing pedestrians to walk single file or dangerously close to the street.
- Consistent Disregard For Designated Crosswalks**
  - Pedestrians on Sundays and off peak hours, were frequently seen crossing mid block, indicating inconvenient or poorly placed crosswalks.
- Widespread Perception of Unsafe Conditions**
  - Most survey respondents rated walking at night as very unsafe, citing poor lighting and high speed traffic as key issues. Even during the day, safety ratings remained only moderate.

## Methodology



DO YOU FEEL  
SAFE ALONG  
166TH STREET?

Share your  
experience! To  
complete the short  
survey scan the QR  
code!





¡Comparta su experiencia!  
Para completar la breve  
encuesta, escanee el código QR

Student Research Survey

 Cal Poly Pomona

College of Environmental Design

**Observations** were conducted during various times of the week to capture different patterns of pedestrian activity:

- Weekday school drop off and dismissal periods (8:30–9:00 am and after 2:30 pm)
- Nighttime hours
- Sunday church service hours (9:00 am–12:00 pm)
- Off-peak daytime hours

Variable	Observation Questions
Sidewalk Width	Are sidewalks following the city's standards and guidelines?
Presence of Obstacles	Are crosswalks and sidewalks obstructed by poles, debris, or overgrown vegetation?
Traffic Speeds	Are vehicles following the posted speed limit signs?
Lighting Conditions	Is there enough lighting to illuminate sidewalks and crosswalks at night?
Traffic Volume	What is the peak traffic volume during different times of the day?



## Recomendations

- Add a midblock crosswalk between Studebaker Rd and Gridley Rd, or at Maidstone Ave and 166th St, to give pedestrians a safer and more direct place to cross the street.
- Make existing crosswalks safer by improving visibility with better signage, paint, and curb ramps for easier access.
- Improve street lighting by replacing motion sensor lights with consistently bright lighting so the area stays consistently well lit at night.
- Keep sidewalks clear and safe through regular trimming of trees and removal of overgrown plants that block the walkway.
- Slow down traffic by adding features like speed bumps.

## Conclusion

This study highlights critical pedestrian safety and accessibility concerns along 166th Street, particularly near schools, homes, and community landmarks. Both survey responses and field observations indicate that residents face poor lighting, limited crossings, and obstructed or narrow sidewalks, creating unsafe walking conditions. While measures like crossing guards are in place near schools, the overall infrastructure falls short of meeting community needs. These findings suggest that pedestrian safety is often overshadowed by priorities like vehicle flow and development in planning decisions. The disconnect between residents' daily experiences and the actions of decision makers underscores the need for more inclusive, community informed urban planning. Aligning future improvements with the City of Norwalk's General Plan offers a clear opportunity to create a safer and more walkable environment for all.

