

A photograph of a community garden with several raised wooden beds containing various plants. A purple semi-transparent overlay covers the top half of the image, containing white text. The background shows a clear blue sky and some buildings in the distance.

ch. 6

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WESTMONT/  
WEST ATHENS  
COMMUNITY PEDESTRIAN PLAN



## COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Westmont/West Athens area is just over three square miles and consists of the unincorporated communities of Westmont and West Athens.

For planning purposes, both communities are considered together, collectively called Westmont/West Athens. Westmont has a population of approximately 32,000 and West Athens a population of 9,000.

The Westmont/West Athens area is bordered by the City of Los Angeles to the north and east, the cities of Inglewood and Hawthorne to the west, and the City of Gardena to the south. The communities are served by the Metro Green Line Vermont / Athens Station, located at the intersection of Vermont Avenue and I-105, which runs east/west through West Athens. The campus of Los Angeles Southwest College is located between Westmont and West Athens on Imperial Highway.

### Thank You

#### ***Pedestrian Plan Community Advisory Committee Members:***

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Special thanks to the residents of Westmont/West Athens who took time to participate in outreach events, community data collection efforts, and share ideas on how to improve walking in the community. This plan is dedicated to your vision.

## Demographics

Understanding the demographics of a community helps decision-makers plan for and target appropriate pedestrian projects and programs. Factors such as income, poverty level, and education can help to paint a picture of the current struggles or opportunities within a community. The Westmont/West Athens median household income is slightly more than half the County average at \$29,429. The community also has a significantly higher poverty rate than the County average, with more than half of children living in poverty. Significantly fewer Westmont/West Athens residents have a high school degree or less than in the County as a whole.

The community is relatively young compared to the County, and 33 percent of households contain a child under 18. A fifth of households are run by a single parent. About half of Westmont/West Athens residents identify as Hispanic or Latino, and slightly less than half as Black or African American. A significantly smaller percent of residents is foreign born, with more households with at least some difficulty with English as compared to the County average (Table 6-1).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> American Community Survey, 5-year 2010-2014

**Table 6-1: Westmont/West Athens Demographics**

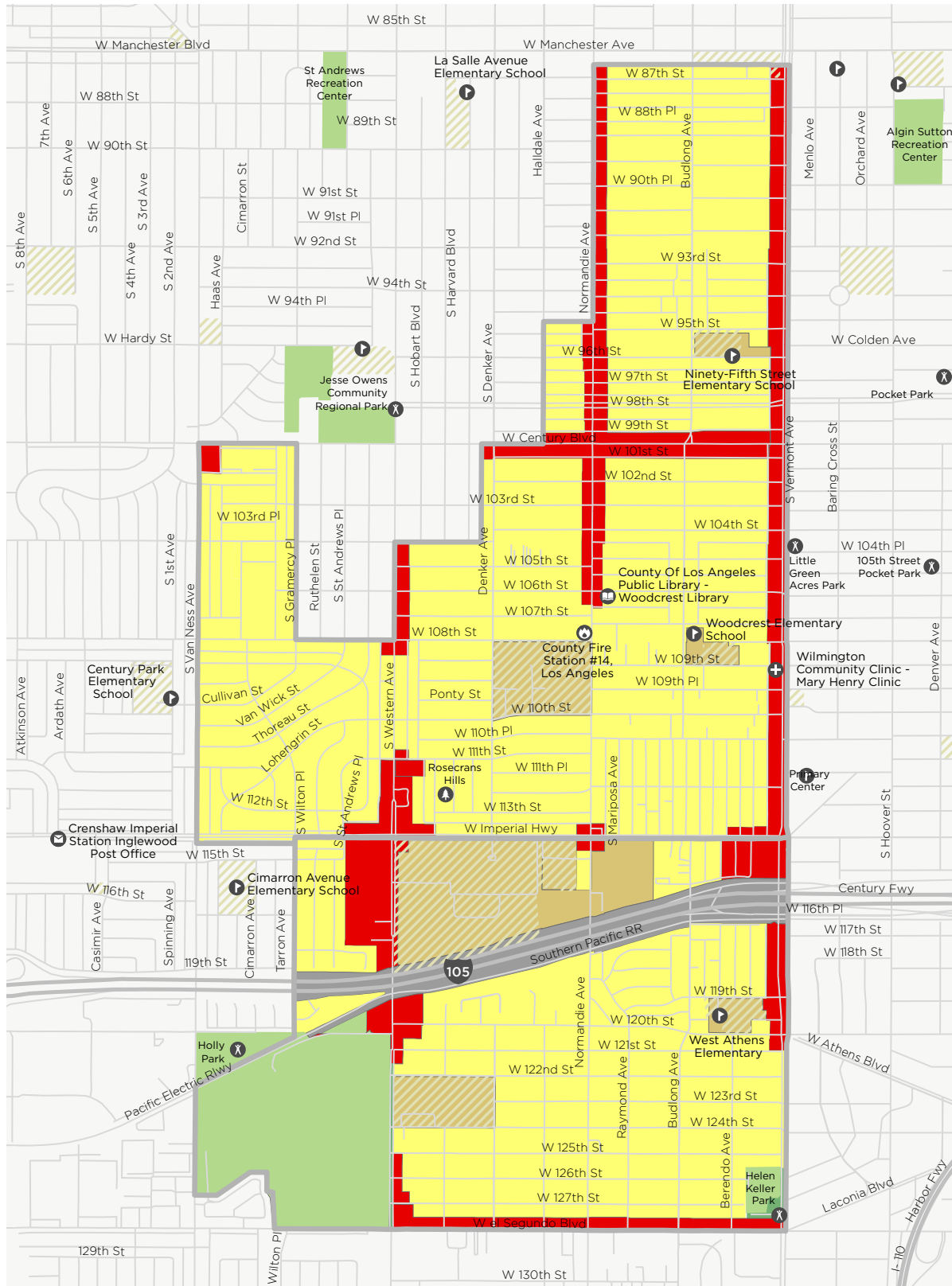
	Percent in Westmont/ West Athens	Percent in Los Angeles County
<b>Education</b>		
Less than high school diploma	30.5	21.4
High school graduate, GED or alternative	28.3	20.5
Some college or associate's degree	31.1	26.5
Bachelor's degree or higher	10.2	26.5
<b>Poverty</b>		
Persons in Poverty	33.0	18.7
Children in Poverty	53.5	29.5
<b>Age</b>		
Under 18 Years	29.1	23.2
18-64 Years	62.0	64.9
65 and Older	8.9	11.9
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
Hispanic or Latino	50.6	48.4
White (Non-Hispanic)	1.2	26.6
American Indian and Alaska Native	.4	0.7
Asian	.5	15.0
Black or African American(Non-Hispanic)	46.0	8.7
Other	1.7	1.3

Source: American Community Survey, 5-year 2010-2014

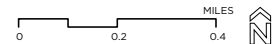
## Land Use

Land use and urban design policies impact residents' health and physical activity levels. As one of the densest communities in Los Angeles County- the majority (64 percent) of land use in Westmont/West Athens is designated as residential, while only 30 percent is commercial. Figure 6-1 shows land uses in Westmont/West Athens. In Westmont/West Athens, a diversity of uses like convenience stores, retail shops, restaurants, schools, churches and park space are within walking distance (one-quarter mile) of the residential areas.

Figure 6-1: Westmont/West Athens Zoning Map



DATA SOURCE: WEST ATHENS/WESTMONT COMMUNITY PLAN, DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING, 2011



**LAND USE**

**DESTINATIONS**

- SCHOOL
- LIBRARY
- POST OFFICE
- HOSPITAL
- FIRE STATION
- PARK/RECREATION

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

- ROAD NETWORK

**LAND USES**

- PARKS/OPEN SPACE
- RESIDENTIAL
- PUBLIC/QUASI PUBLIC USE
- COMMERCIAL

### Park Access

The County's General Plan includes a goal to provide four acres of local parkland per 1,000 residents. Currently Westmont/West Athens has just 0.2 acres of park space per 1,000 people, and 74 percent of residents do not live within a half mile walk of a park (Figure 6-2).

Westmont/West Athens' single park, Helen Keller Park, is almost seven acres and provides recreational and open space amenities in the south-eastern portion of the community. However, two new parks are planned for development. A pocket park is planned for a vacant

lot at Normandie Avenue and 95th Street.

Community members envision this park will be an active space that is buffered from adjacent streets. At Woodcrest Library, an activity plaza is in development. Additionally, Algie Sutton Park, Holly Park, and Jessie Owens Park in adjacent communities are located within walking distance of Westmont/West Athens.

Figure 6-2: Westmont/West Athens Park Access



**PARK ACCESS**

**DESTINATIONS**

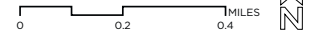
- SCHOOL
- COLLEGE
- LIBRARY
- PARK/RECREATION
- GOVERNMENT OFFICE
- HEALTHCARE
- EMERGENCY SERVICES
- POST OFFICE

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

- ROAD NETWORK
- TRAFFIC SIGNAL

**PARK ACCESS**

- ONE-HALF MILE BUFFER





## Health

Understanding which health issues and behaviors are prevalent in Westmont/West Athens can help decision-makers target appropriate pedestrian interventions.<sup>1</sup> For both Westmont/West Athens and Los Angeles County, heart disease and cancer are the two leading causes of death. Both of these diseases are highly correlated with diet, physical activity, exposure to toxins (tobacco and pollution), and stress. Life expectancy at birth for Westmont/West Athens residents is 72.4 years, nearly eight years less than the County average of 80.3 years. Homicide is a public health issue for young adult men (ages 17-25) in Westmont/West Athens in particular.<sup>2</sup> Homicide is the second leading cause of premature death in the South Bay region of the County.<sup>3</sup>

Ten percent of adults self-reported psychological stress in Westmont/West Athens, which is slightly higher than the County average of eight percent. Westmont/West Athens is ranked in the bottom

half of unincorporated communities for adult and child obesity rates. Adult obesity is almost 42 percent higher than in the county as a whole. Overweight and children are also more prevalent in Westmont/West Athens than in the county. In fact, Westmont / West Athens has one of the highest rates of overweight and obese teens in the state.<sup>4</sup> Childhood asthma rates in Westmont/West Athens are 13.9 percent, which is close to the same levels as the County.

Only 19.8 percent of Westmont/West Athens adults walk the recommended length of 150 minutes per week, compared with 34.1 percent of adults countywide. Youth in Westmont/West Athens actually have a slightly higher level of regular physical activity (21 percent) compared with the County as a whole (18.9 percent).<sup>5</sup> Approximately 6.6 percent adults in Westmont/West Athens have a disability.

1 This plan uses health data at the zip code level when necessary. Westmont/West Athens is in zip code 90044 and 90047.

2 Mortality in Los Angeles County 2012 Leading Causes of Death and Premature Death with Trends for 2003-2012. County of Los Angeles Dept. of Public Health.

3 Mortality in Los Angeles County 2012: Leading Causes of Death and Premature Death with Trends for 2003-2012. (2012). Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/dca/data/documents/mortalityrpt12.pdf>.

4 Adults with a body mass index greater than or equal to 30.0 are considered obese. Children 2-11 whose combination of weight, sex, and age ranks higher than the CDC's 2001 95th percentile are considered obese, as are children 12-17 who ranked higher than the CDC's 2010 85th percentile for body mass index. Source: California Health Interview Survey, Neighborhood Edition, 2014.

5 Regular physical activity for children between 5 and 17 is defined as "at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily in the past week, excluding physical education." Source: California Health Interview Survey, Neighborhood Edition, 2014. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that adults do at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity activity "for substantial health benefits." Source: CDC, 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.

All factors combined, Westmont/West Athens qualifies as a disadvantaged community on common state-wide indicators, which considers median household income, participation in the National School Lunch Program, pollution burden,

and other health determinants.<sup>1</sup> Based on these indicators, Westmont/West Athens may receive funding prioritization from the Caltrans Active Transportation Program and potentially other funding sources.

<sup>1</sup> These indicators include CalEnviroScreen 2.0, National School Lunch Program Free and Reduced Lunch Program participation, median household income, and the Health Disadvantage Index, produced by the Public Health Alliance of Southern California.

**Table 6-2: Westmont/West Athens Causes of Death**

(Selected) Causes of Death Death rate (per 100,000 population)	Percent in Westmont/ West Athens	Percent in Los Angeles County
Heart Disease	26.7	26.9
Cancer	23.4	24.2

**Table 6-3: Westmont/West Athens Health Indicators**

	Percent in Westmont/ West Athens	Percent in Los Angeles County
Serious Psychological Distress (Adults age 18 years +)	10.2	8.0
<b>Obesity</b>		
Children overweight for age (2-11)	15	12.4
Teens overweight or obese (12-17)	48.3	37.9
Adult obesity	36.7	25.9
<b>Physical Activity</b>		
Regular physical activity (ages 5-17)	21.0	18.9
Walked at least 150 minutes (age 18+)	19.8	34.1
<b>Respiratory Illness</b>		
Children ages 0-17 years ever diagnosed with asthma	13.9	13.1
Adults (18 years plus) ever diagnosed with asthma	10.9	12.6
<b>Disability</b>		
With a Disability, under age 65	6.6	6.0

Sources: California Health Interview Survey, Neighborhood Edition, 2014; American Community Survey, 5-year estimate 2010-2014

## PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

### Levels of Walking & Driving

One major objective of any pedestrian investment is to increase the attractiveness and usefulness of walking. To understand current levels of walking in Westmont/West Athens, the county looked at statistics relating to car ownership, commuting households, and conducted a walk audit.

Number of vehicles in a household may impact reliance on transit use or ones' decision to walk for their commute. Both West Athens (30.4 percent) and Westmont (38.9 percent) have higher proportions of commuters who do not have access to a car, or only have access to one car in their household than the county as a whole (26.7 percent). Westmont commuters in particular may be significantly reliant on other modes of travel.

Where residents and visitors are travelling is critical in efforts to understand local mobility patterns. Westmont/West Athens residents commute by walking far less than the Los Angeles County average (1.0 percent in Westmont and 0.2 percent in West Athens vs. 2.9 percent

countywide), however the number of Westmont/West Athens commuters who take public transit to work is higher than the County average (15 percent in Westmont, 11 percent in West Athens, and only seven percent in Los Angeles County). It is likely that a majority of these transit riders walk to numerous bus stops or rail stations in their community (see map in Appendix C).<sup>1</sup> Overall, more people commute in Westmont by walking and by public transit, while more people in West Athens carpool than in Westmont (16 percent versus nine percent).

Pedestrian counts were conducted at 16 locations in Westmont/West Athens for two two-week periods from April 27 to May 10, 2016 and May 13 to May 26, 2016, to help measure trends in facility use, put collision data in context, and to note pedestrian behaviors. Volumes were counted using an automatic machine and a summary of the data may be found in Table 6-4.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on Metro 2016 Quality of Life Report, 86 percent of bus riders and 68 percent of rail riders in Los Angeles County access transit by walking.

From the analysis, peak pedestrian activity tends to occur in the afternoon hours during weekdays. Locations on east-west corridors encounter less volumes and pedestrian to vehicle traffic ratios compared to north-south corridors. This

is particularly true for volumes on El Segundo Boulevard and Century Boulevard. More details can be found in Appendix C.

**Table 6-4: Westmont/West Athens Pedestrian Counts Summary**

Location	Pedestrian Average Daily Traffic	Peak Day of Week
Normandie Avenue, north of 108th Street	198	Tuesday
Normandie Avenue, north of 107th Street	336	Thursday
Vermont Avenue, south of Manchester Street	1196	Saturday
Vermont Avenue, south of 88th Street	978	Wednesday
Vermont Avenue, south of 104th Street	499	Monday
Vermont Avenue, north of 104th Street	351	Monday
Normandie Avenue, north of 97th Street (East)	262	Sunday
Normandie Avenue, north of 97th Street (west)	996	Saturday
Imperial Highway, west of New Hampshire	183	Sunday
Imperial Highway, west of Vermont Avenue	779	Tuesday
120th Street, east of Western Avenue	459	Wednesday
Century Boulevard, west of Normandie Avenue	126	Thursday
Century Boulevard, east of Denker Avenue	67	Monday
El Segundo Boulevard, west of Budlong Avenue	67	Thursday
El Segundo Boulevard, east of Budlong Avenue	212	Monday
Western Avenue, south of 106th Street	807	Friday

Source: LA County, 10/2016 – 11/2016



### TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

This section examines traffic volumes and speeds along five major streets - Century Boulevard, Imperial Highway, El Segundo Boulevard, Western Avenue, and Vermont Avenue – and one minor street, Normandie Avenue, that run through Westmont/West Athens.

### TRAFFIC VOLUMES

The Westmont/West Athens area experiences heavy traffic congestion due to its proximity to I-105 and I-110 freeways. The streets mentioned above carry most of the traffic that runs through the communities. All of the corridors have two-way left turn lanes in the center of the roadway, except for Vermont Avenue, which has a landscaped median in the center which limits left turns.

High traffic volumes, coupled with low motorist compliance at unsignalized pedestrian crossings, varying slopes and narrow sidewalks increase the risk of pedestrian related incidents, especially during peak morning and afternoon commute hours.

### TRAFFIC SPEEDS

Throughout Westmont/West Athens, the posted vehicle speed is generally 25 to 35 mph, with speed limits on major streets ranging from 45 mph (Century Boulevard), 40 mph (El Segundo Boulevard, Imperial Highway, and Western Ave), and 35 mph (Vermont Avenue). Field observations recorded higher prevailing speeds in many locations along major streets.

### Barriers to Walking

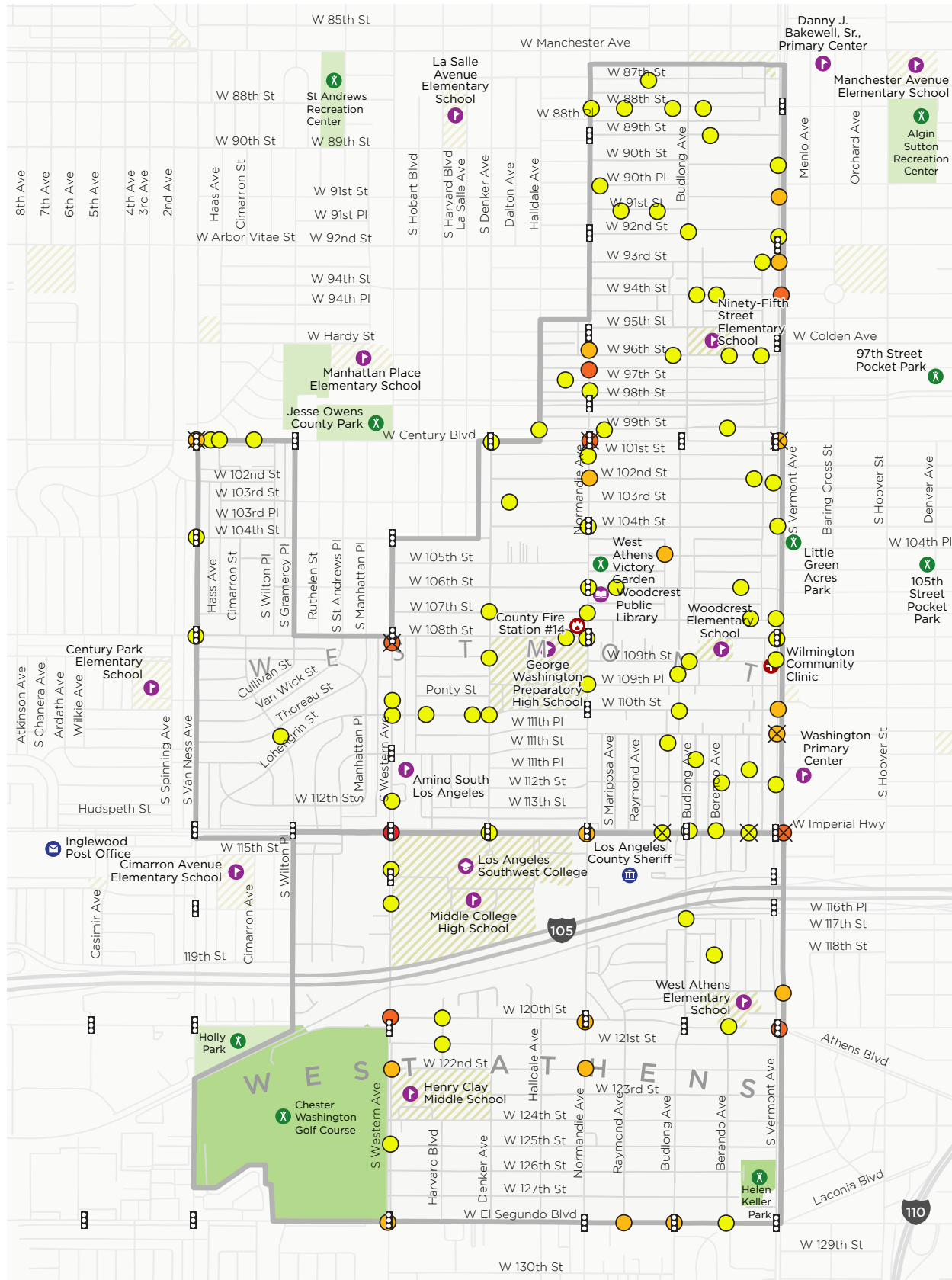
This section examines past pedestrian collisions to understand factors that lead to accidents,<sup>1</sup> in addition to reported nuisances and crime that can act potential barriers to walking in Westmont/West Athens.

### COLLISIONS

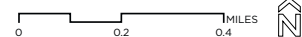
Between 2009 and 2013, there were 147 total pedestrian-involved collisions between 2009 and 2013 in Westmont/West Athens. The highest concentration of these collisions occurred on Vermont Avenue (40), Normandie Avenue (17), and Imperial Highway and Western Avenue (12 each) (Figure 6-3).

<sup>1</sup> California Highway Patrol, Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS), 2009-2013

Figure 6-3: Map of pedestrian-involved collisions in Westmont/West Athens (2009-2013)



DATA SOURCE: STATEWIDE INTEGRATED TRAFFIC RECORDS SYSTEM (SWITRS) 2009-2013 DATA



### PEDESTRIAN-INVOLVED COLLISIONS

#### DESTINATIONS

- SCHOOL
- COLLEGE
- LIBRARY
- PARK/RECREATION
- GOVERNMENT OFFICE
- HEALTHCARE
- EMERGENCY SERVICES
- POST OFFICE

#### INFRASTRUCTURE

- ROAD NETWORK
- TRAFFIC SIGNAL

#### COLLISIONS

- LOCATION WITH FATALITY
- 1
- 2
- 3-4
- 5-7
- 8-10

The highest percent of pedestrian-involved collisions occurred during daylight hours (42 percent). The number of pedestrian-involved collisions during dawn and dusk (6 to 9 am and 5 to 8 pm) and commuting hours (7 to 9am and 4 to 6pm) are also relatively high (38 percent and 30 percent respectively). The largest proportion of those involved in collisions (35 percent) were under 18 years old. Age groups 18-24 (16 percent) and 25-34 (19 percent) also had relatively high pedestrian-involved collision rates. The majority of collisions involved either a severe or visible injury (54 percent), and nine were fatalities.

The largest number of these collisions (52 percent) involved pedestrians who did not follow traffic rules and were found to be at fault for the collision (e.g., crossing mid-block outside of a crosswalk). The second largest percentage involved a motorist that did not yield to a pedestrian who had the legal right of way (30 percent). About 27 percent of the Westmont/West Athens pedestrian-involved collisions were classified as ‘Hit and Run.’

## NUISANCE ACTIVITIES

Nuisances—unwanted, undesirable or illegal uses, can impact the real and perceived safety, comfort and attractiveness of the pedestrian environment (Figure 6-4). In Westmont/West Athens,<sup>1</sup> these activities include:

- ▶ **Alcohol retail outlets.** Living within close proximity to a liquor store is associated with negative health outcomes, increased crime and nuisance activities.<sup>2</sup> Approximately 73.8 percent of Westmont/West Athens residents live within a quarter mile walking distance of a liquor store.

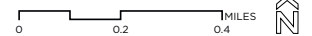
1 Note: Graffiti, vandalism, and illegal dumping are documented through community requests through the County’s online and mobile 311 service. Mapping these requests provides general guidance on the location and prevalence of these issues; however, lower rates of English proficiency, and low civic participation due to distrust of government may result in lower service requests from the Walnut Park community.

2 A study conducted in Los Angeles found that each new liquor store in a neighborhood resulted in an additional three or more assaults per year. Source: The risk of assaultive violence and alcohol availability in Los Angeles County. (March, 1995). American Journal of Public Health. Retrieved on August 25, 2016 from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1614881/>. Other studies have demonstrated an association between alcohol retail outlets in Los Angeles County and alcohol-related vehicle crashes. Source: Alcohol outlet density and motor vehicle crashes in Los Angeles County cities. (July, 1994). Journal Study of Alcohol. Retrieved on August 25, 2016 from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/7934052>.

Figure 6-4: Map showing nuisance activities in Westmont/West Athens



DATA SOURCE: THE WORKS SERVICE REQUESTS, LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT



**PUBLIC NUISANCES**

**DESTINATIONS**

- SCHOOL
- COLLEGE
- LIBRARY
- PARK/RECREATION
- GOVERNMENT OFFICE

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

- ROAD NETWORK
- TRAFFIC SIGNAL

**NUISANCES**

- DUMPING
- LIQUOR STORE

- HEALTHCARE
- EMERGENCY SERVICES
- POST OFFICE



- ▶ **Illegal dumping.** Illegal dumping creates a negative visual impact that affects the perception of safety and can discourage walking. Illegal dumping incidents are reported throughout Westmont/West Athens but there are high concentrations along Budlong and 108th.

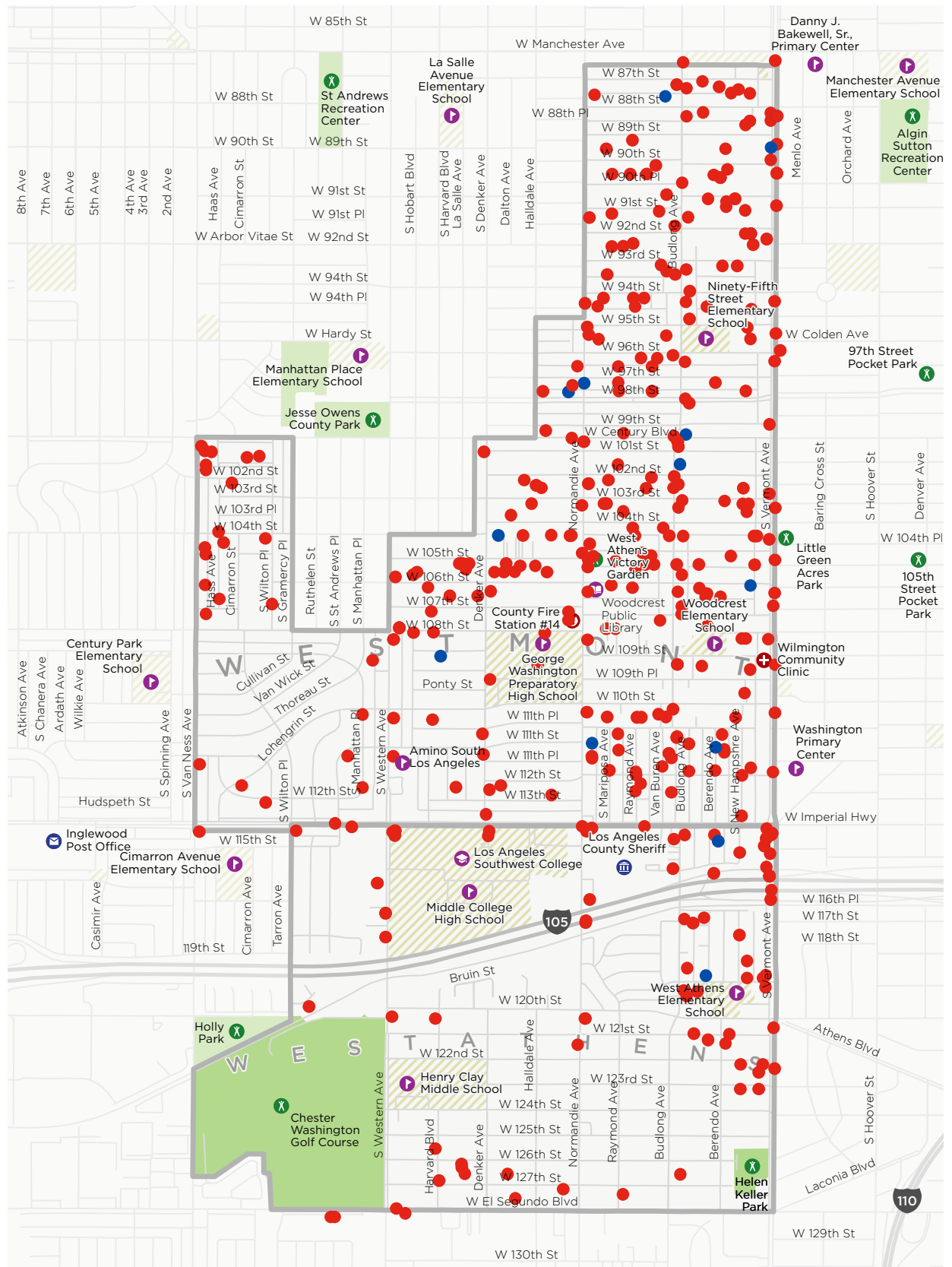
## CRIME

Crime and safety are connected with health in several ways. Because fear of crime may impact participation in healthy activities and increase depression, addressing and reducing crime may promote health benefits. Of 209 communities in Los Angeles County, Westmont/West Athens is ranked 13th for violent crimes per capita and 92nd in property crimes (Table 6-5). Forty percent of violent crimes are robberies and over half (55 percent) are aggravated assault. Both violent and non-violent crimes appear to become more concentrated in the north and east portion of the community (Figure 6-5).

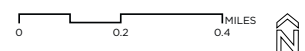
**Table 6-5: Crime Statistics for Westmont/West Athens, CDP January 2016-July 2016**

Type of Crime	Number	Percentages
Violent Crimes	272	43.8
Property Crimes	349	56.2
Crimes Per 10,000 People	197.3	

Figure 6-5: Map showing violent crime in Westmont/West Athens (January – June 2016)



DATA SOURCE: LA TIMES MAPPING LA, AUGUST 2016



**CRIME**

**DESTINATIONS**

- SCHOOL
- COLLEGE
- LIBRARY
- PARK/RECREATION
- HEALTHCARE
- EMERGENCY SERVICES
- POST OFFICE
- GOVERNMENT OFFICE

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

- ROAD NETWORK

**CRIME**

- HOMICIDE
- VIOLENT CRIME

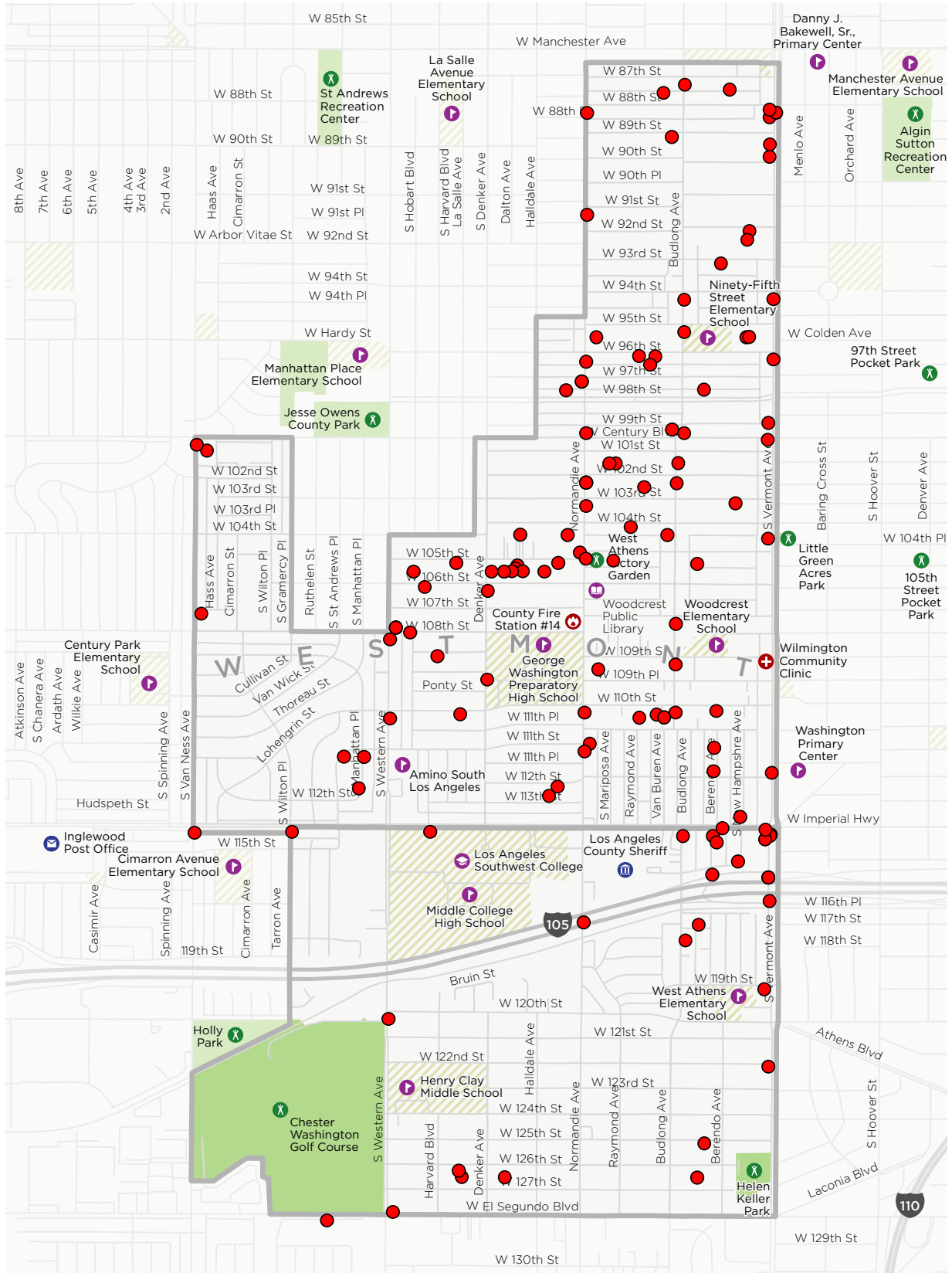
### GANG ACTIVITY

In 2016, there were 112 documented instances of gang-related crime in the community (Figure 6-6). Los Angeles County leads the nation in gang crime, with more than 1,000 gangs and 80,000 gang members countywide; and approximately 90 percent of Los Angeles students are exposed to chronic gang violence and suffer from increased levels of stress.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Best and Promising Practices to Address Violence and Personal Safety in Safe Routes to School Programs. Urban Peace Institute. 2015.

Figure 6-6: Map showing crime related to gang activity in Westmont/West Athens (January – June 2016)




DATA SOURCE: LA TIMES MAPPING LA, AUGUST 2016



**GANG ACTIVITY**

**DESTINATIONS**

-  SCHOOL
-  COLLEGE
-  LIBRARY
-  PARK/RECREATION
-  HEALTHCARE
-  EMERGENCY SERVICES
-  POST OFFICE
-  GOVERNMENT OFFICE

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

-  ROAD NETWORK

**GANG ACTIVITY**

-  GANG-RELATED CRIME



## EXISTING PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

This section examines current pedestrian facilities and deficiencies in Westmont/West Athens. A variety of deficiencies are recorded in the following maps (Figure 6-7 and Figure 6-8), including sidewalks, crosswalks, curbs and corners, traffic signals, and lighting conditions.

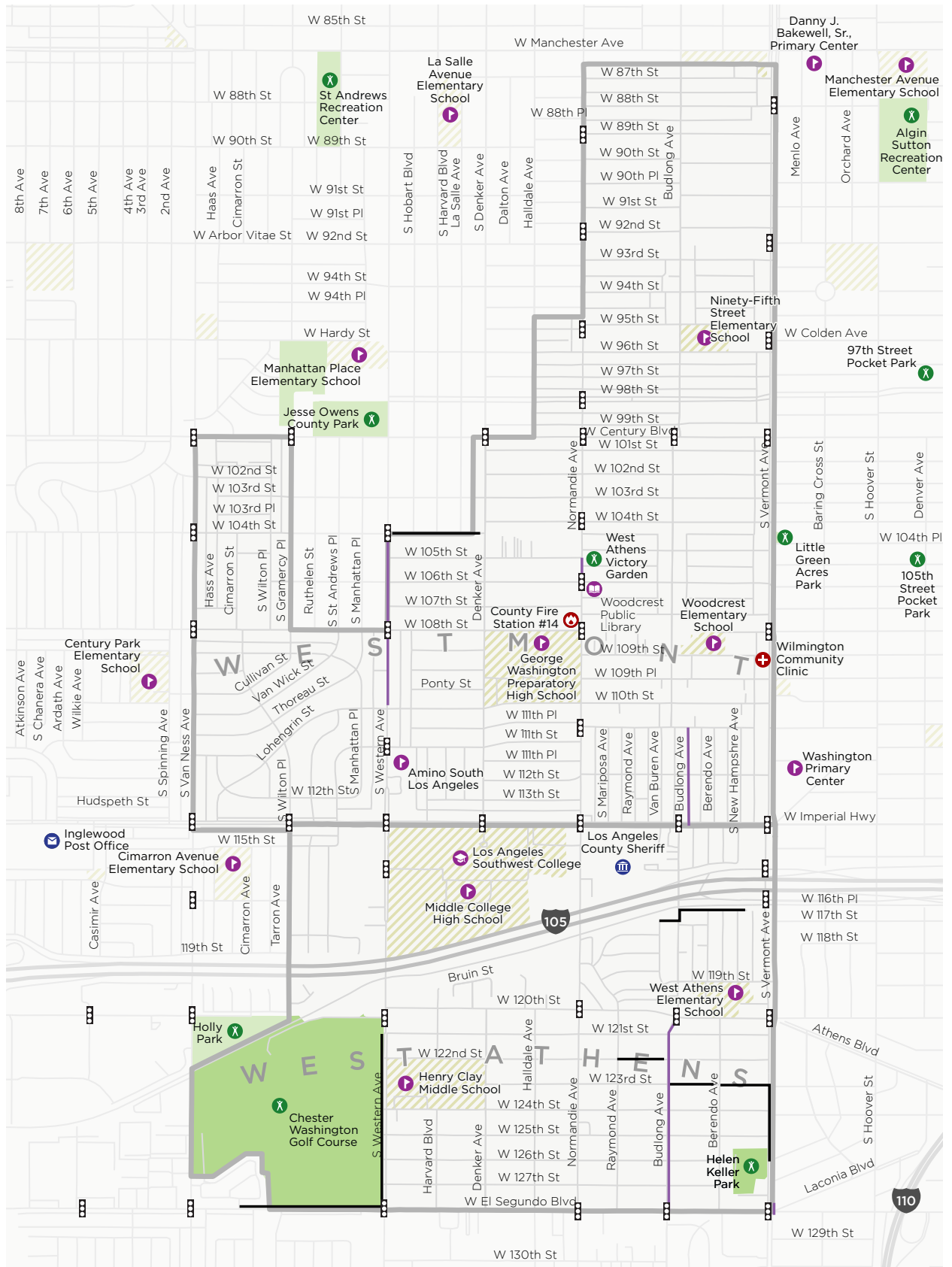
### Sidewalks

Residential streets within Westmont/West Athens generally have four to five feet of sidewalk available for pedestrian use, while major and minor streets generally have six-foot sidewalks. In many instances, sidewalks on highways have pedestrian clear zones of less than six feet due to obstructions like hydrants, bus stops, utilities and benches.

Maintenance is an issue on both residential streets and major corridors – streets such as Vermont Avenue where tree roots occasionally push through the sidewalk, causing the pavement tiles to buckle. This creates a safety issue that can be unnavigable for wheelchair users. Some segments of Western Avenue and Vermont Avenue are missing sidewalks on one side of the road.

Overall, the roadways in the Westmont/West Athens area have varying slopes, large trees in the sidewalks, and narrow sidewalks (i.e., less than four feet width). For example, the pedestrian infrastructure along Normandie Avenue and Century Boulevard share all of these limitations. It is also common for drivers entering or exiting commercial driveways to not yield to pedestrians. Consolidating commercial driveway entrances along commercial roadways can create less points of conflict between pedestrians and motorists.

Figure 6-7: Map of sidewalk deficiencies in Westmont/West Athens



**SIDEWALK DEFICIENCIES NOTED DURING WALK AUDIT**

- | DESTINATIONS |                    | INFRASTRUCTURE | SIDEWALK DEFICIENCIES |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
|              | SCHOOL             |                | MISSING SIDEWALK      |
|              | COLLEGE            |                | POOR LIGHTING         |
|              | LIBRARY            |                |                       |
|              | PARK/RECREATION    |                |                       |
|              | HEALTHCARE         |                |                       |
|              | POST OFFICE        |                |                       |
|              | GOVERNMENT OFFICE  |                |                       |
|              | EMERGENCY SERVICES |                |                       |

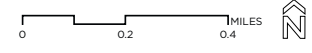


Figure 6-8: Map of crosswalk deficiencies in Westmont/West Athens



**INTERSECTION DEFICIENCIES NOTED DURING WALK AUDIT**

**DESTINATIONS**

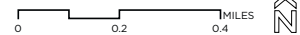
- SCHOOL
- COLLEGE
- LIBRARY
- PARK/RECREATION - BUILDING
- HEALTHCARE
- EMERGENCY SERVICES
- POST OFFICE
- GOVERNMENT OFFICE

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

- ROAD NETWORK
- TRAFFIC SIGNAL

**INTERSECTION DEFICIENCIES**

- FADED CROSSWALK STRIPING
- LINE-OF-SIGHT RESTRICTED
- MISSING CROSSWALK
- NON-ADA/DAMAGED CURB RAMPS



### Crosswalks

Marked crosswalks exist at select locations in Westmont/West Athens, typically at intersections along major streets. Many of these crosswalks are in poor condition and have faded striping, restricted sight lines, unmarked, missing pedestrian signage, and/or do not have ADA accommodations or have damaged curb ramps. In residential areas, on-street parking shortens the ability for cars to see pedestrians crossing at numerous unmarked crosswalks.

Many intersections in Westmont/West Athens are missing crosswalks on some or all legs. This creates inconveniences for pedestrians, causing many to travel greater distances to get across the street safely.

The project team also observed multiple motorists that failed to yield to pedestrians at several un-signalized pedestrian crossings (i.e., crossings without stop lights) along five major corridors: Century Boulevard, Imperial Highway, El Segundo Boulevard, Western Avenue, and Vermont Avenue (Figure 6-9).



*Un-signalized crosswalk at the intersection of Vermont Avenue and 94th Street, where the project team observed motorists not yielding to pedestrians*

### Curbs, Corners and Turning Radius

Westmont/West Athens provides mostly diagonal curb ramps at street corners throughout the community. Similar to other urban environments turning radii of 15 feet is typical in Westmont/West Athens. However, there are locations where turning radii are larger -for example, the curb radii



at the west corners of 112th and Normandie are much larger due to 112th's curved road alignment. The large radius assists cars making right turns by allowing cars to have faster turning speeds. These higher speeds are dangerous for pedestrians by reducing visibility of pedestrians, and increasing the severity of impact if there were to be a collision. Larger curb radii also set back the curb ramp, thus requiring greater right-of-way and increasing a pedestrian's crossing distance.

### **Traffic Signals**

Most major intersections in Westmont/West Athens are controlled by traffic signals. Pedestrian movement at intersections is controlled by pedestrian signal heads.<sup>1</sup> Pedestrian signal heads are typically installed at signalized intersections with high pedestrian crossing volumes, near high activity civic centers, transit stops and/or at school crossings. Typically, pedestrians trigger the walk phase of signal by pressing a push button.

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<sup>1</sup> A signal head is an assembly of one or more signal faces together with the associated signal housings. A pedestrian signal head is a signal head, which contains the symbols WALKING PERSON (symbolizing WALK) and UPRAISED HAND (symbolizing DONT WALK), that is installed to direct pedestrian traffic at a traffic control signal.

### **Lighting**

Lighting at crosswalks and intersections is adequate throughout Westmont/West Athens (as is required by State regulations), however many community members have expressed dissatisfaction with lighting along sidewalks. Poor lighting along sidewalks can increase fear about the perception of personal safety, and discourage pedestrian activity. Community members have identified a particular need for pedestrian-scale lighting on Western Avenue and Budlong Avenue.

### **Tree Canopy**

According to the Public Health Alliance's Health Disadvantage Index, Westmont/West Athens is ranked in the lowest 15th percentile for tree canopy coverage. The northern and eastern portion of Westmont/West Athens has the least tree canopy coverage relative to population, with over 80 percent of the census-weighted population lacking canopy coverage. Tree canopy coverage in the southern and eastern portion is at approximately 50 percent.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Outreach efforts in Westmont/West Athens focused on addressing community concerns and prioritizing select projects through County programs and Public Works projects. Community engagement in the community involved formation of a Community Advisory Committee, community workshops, walk audits, participation in planned community events, and a survey.

Additional details, such as summaries of outreach efforts before Step by Step, outreach materials, full survey results, and detailed walk audit summaries can be found in Appendix A.

### **Community Workshops and Walk Audits**

A community workshop was held in Westmont/West Athens on October 6, 2016 in Helen Keller Park to introduce the project to community members. The workshop asked participants to identify issues impacting walkability, and provide input on appropriate pedestrian infrastructure to address these issues. The workshops included a bilingual presentation and three activities 1) facilitated group discussion, 2) prioritization voting on pedestrian facilities, and 3) prioritization voting on locations most important to focus pedestrian improvements. Twenty-one workshop

participants identified the following pedestrian issues in Westmont/West Athens: high speed traffic, crosswalks in poor conditions, dangerous pedestrian crossings near schools, and the need for more and brighter streetlights, more policing, and more shade.

Participants prioritized the following pedestrian improvements:

- ▶ Pedestrian lighting
- ▶ Traffic calming
- ▶ Continental crosswalks

Participants prioritized the following areas for targeted pedestrian improvements in Westmont/West Athens:

- ▶ Intersection of Imperial Highway and Vermont Avenue
- ▶ Southern Pacific Rail Corridor
- ▶ Intersection of 116th Street and Vermont Avenue

A second workshop took place on Saturday January 16th. Fourteen Westmont/West Athens residents and community gardeners gathered



*Community members identify key issues and opportunities at a workshop in Westmont/West Athens*

at Encanto Court Senior Housing to learn more about the Pedestrian plan project and provide input on the future of walkability. After a brief presentation about the project, participants engaged in an exercise which included dot activities, that recorded their views on both current barriers and future opportunities for walking in the community.

Additionally, two walk audits were held in Westmont/West Athens on February 25, 2017 and March 11, 2017. Participants were asked to document broken or cracked sidewalks, missing or non-ADA compliant curb ramps, poles or utility boxes blocking the sidewalk, and other issues that may discourage walking, such as graffiti or illegal dumping. Each participant completed a worksheet as they walked and were encouraged to take photos for visual reference.

### **Survey Results**

A community survey was conducted in Westmont/West Athens both on paper and

online through SurveyMonkey. Most survey respondents were female (64 percent). Twenty-three percent of respondents indicated that they usually drive alone to work/school, while 20 percent walk. Respondents indicated that when they choose to walk, it is primarily due to not owning a vehicle and/or for fitness, and they typically walk to a grocery/convenience store, family member or friend's house, transit stop, and/or park.

The most commonly identified challenges faced while walking in Westmont/West Athens were obstacles on sidewalks, fear of theft or robbery, fear of physical violence, and lack of street lights. Respondents indicated that they would feel safer walking with additional street lighting, more community policing, and more marked street crossings, and would walk more often with slower/safer drivers, more trees/shade along sidewalks, good lighting, and better accessibility.

## RECOMMENDED PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

This section discusses project recommendations for Westmont/West Athens' pedestrian network. In general, the recommended pedestrian facilities focus on improving safety, comfort, and accessibility for people walking or wheeling in Westmont/West Athens. Recommendations in Westmont/West Athens (Figure 6-9) are categorized as follows:

- ▶ **Future Corridor Study:** Improvements that need further study and are recommended along the length of the street, which may include pedestrian-scale lighting, shade trees, roadway reconfiguration or road diet, landscaping, and other facilities
- ▶ **Crossing Improvements:** Facilities that make crossing the street at intersections and mid-block easier, including continental crosswalks, advance yield lines, Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB), and pedestrian refuge islands
- ▶ **Sidewalk/Path Improvements:** Facilities that make walking down the street safer and more comfortable, including new or widened sidewalks and removing or reducing driveways

- ▶ **Increased Accessibility:** Installing ADA compliant curb ramps where currently missing to allow better access for pedestrians of all ages and abilities
- ▶ **Curb Extensions:** Facilities installed at corners of intersections at mid-block that can have multiple functions, including shortening crossing distances, creating better visibility for and of pedestrians, and calming traffic

Most recommendations are concentrated on the community's major roadways: Western Avenue, Vermont Avenue, Normandie Avenue, and Budlong Avenue. These corridors have a history of pedestrian-related collisions, high traffic volumes and speeds, and were identified as priorities during community outreach. These avenues will be a safer, more comfortable place to walk if pedestrian-oriented lighting, street trees, and other streetscape elements are installed after further study.

On Western Avenue, crossing improvements such as pedestrian refuge islands, RRFBs, and restriping existing crosswalks as continental crosswalks are recommended at a number of intersections to improve safety where crossing is

dangerous or difficult. Curb extensions at these crossings will also create better visibility and shorten crossing distances for people walking along Western Avenue. Sidewalk improvements, such as a removing driveway at the northeast corner of Western Avenue and Imperial Highway, and widening the sidewalk at the northeast corner of Western Avenue and LA Southwest College will improve safety and comfort of those walking.

Recommendations for many Vermont Avenue and Normandie Avenue crossings also include restriping existing crosswalks as continental crosswalks to improve visibility, along with installing advanced yield signs or HAWK signals to alert motorists that people may be walking. Curb extensions are also important to shorten the distance people must travel to cross Vermont Avenue.

Striping or restriping crosswalks as continental crosswalks is especially important at crossings along Budlong Avenue, which runs north-south near three elementary schools. At multiple intersections, relocating the stop bar for vehicles behind the pedestrian path is important to ensure

vehicles do not block intersections at Budlong Avenue and 102nd Street, 104th Street, and 127th Street.

At certain intersections along all of these corridors, such as Western Avenue and 104th Street, there are no curb ramps; new curb ramps that meet ADA standards should be installed to increase accessibility for all users. In fact, as future roadway projects are completed throughout Walnut Park, the Department of Public Works should update all existing curb ramps to meet ADA accessibility standards.

A variety of crossing and sidewalk improvements are also recommended along Imperial Highway, Century Boulevard, Van Ness Avenue, and Berendo Avenue. These recommendations, as well as estimated project costs, are detailed in Table 6-6, and are mapped in Figure 6-9. For an overview on pedestrian facility types, see Chapter 3 and for recommended updates to pedestrian facility maintenance procedures, see Chapter 8.



**Table 6-6: Recommended pedestrian improvements and cost estimates in Westmont/West Athens**

Location	Corner/Leg	Project Description	Estimated Cost
<b>Western Avenue</b>			
Western Avenue / 104th Street	Northwest, northeast, and southeast corners	Install new ADA compliant curb ramps where currently nonexistent	\$24,000
Western Avenue / 106th Street	East and west legs	Stripe as continental school crosswalk	\$5,000
	North leg	Install RRFB	\$30,000
	North leg	Install pedestrian refuge island	\$30,000
	All corners	Install curb extensions	\$120,000
Western Avenue / 108th Street	Northwest corner	Install curb extension	\$30,000
Western Avenue / 110th Street	East and west legs	Stripe continental crosswalks	\$5,000
	South leg	Install RRFB	\$30,000
	South leg	Install pedestrian refuge island	\$30,000
	Southwest and southeast corners	Install curb extensions	\$60,000
Western Avenue / 111th Street	All legs	Restripe as continental crosswalk	\$10,000
	All corners	Install curb extensions	\$120,000
Western Avenue / Imperial Highway	All legs	Restripe as continental school crosswalk	\$22,000
	All corners	Install curb extensions	\$120,000
	Northeast corner	Remove one driveway	\$20,000
Western Avenue / 120th Street	All legs	Restripe as continental school crosswalks	\$10,000
Western Avenue / LA Southwest College (south of Imperial Highway)	North, west, and east legs	Stripe as continental school crosswalks	\$7,500
Western Avenue / LA Southwest College	Northeast corner	Widen sidewalk	\$15,000
Western Avenue / El Segundo Boulevard	North leg	Modify median to end before or at crosswalk line	\$10,000
	All legs	Restripe as continental crosswalks	\$10,000

Table 6-6: Recommended pedestrian improvements and cost estimates in Westmont/West Athens, continued

Location	Corner/Leg	Project Description	Estimated Cost
Western Avenue (104th Street to El Segundo Boulevard)	-	Corridor-wide streetscape enhancements that may include pedestrian-scale lighting, shade trees, roadway reconfiguration or road diet, landscaping, and other facilities	Ranges
<b>Normandie Avenue</b>			
Normandie Avenue / 87th Street	Northwest and southwest corners	Install ADA compliant curb ramps	\$16,000
Normandie Avenue / 94th Street	Southwest corner	Realign curb ramp to align with existing crosswalk	\$8,000
	Southwest and northeast corners	Install curb extensions	\$60,000
Normandie Avenue / 95th Street	Northwest mid-block	Install new ADA compliant curb ramp where nonexistent	\$8,000
	All corners	Install curb extensions	\$120,000
Normandie Avenue / 97th Street	North-south direction	Install advance yield lines	\$1,000
	North leg	Restripe as continental crosswalk	\$2,500
	North leg	Install HAWK signal	\$100,000
	Northwest and northeast corners	Install curb extensions	\$60,000
Normandie Avenue / Century Boulevard	All legs	Restripe as continental crosswalks	\$10,000
Normandie Avenue / 102nd Street	North-south direction	Install advance yield lines	\$1,000
	South leg	Restripe as continental crosswalk	\$2,500
	South leg	Install HAWK signal	\$100,000
	Southwest and southeast corners	Install curb extensions	\$60,000
Normandie Avenue / 107th Street	North-south direction	Install advance yield lines	\$1,000
	North leg of south jog	Restripe as continental crosswalk	\$2,500
	North leg of south jog	Install HAWK signal	\$100,000
	East leg	Relocate stop bar before beginning curb return	\$500
	Northeast corner and southwest midblock	Install curb extensions	\$60,000

Location	Corner/Leg	Project Description	Estimated Cost
Normandie Avenue / 108th Street	South and west legs	Restripe as continental school crosswalks	\$5,000
	Southeast corner and southeast mid-block	Install curb extensions	\$60,000
Normandie Avenue / 110th Street	All legs	Restripe as continental school crosswalks	\$10,000
Normandie Avenue / 112th Street	North and west legs	Stripe new continental crosswalks	\$5,000
	North leg	Install HAWK signal	\$100,000
	Northwest and southwest corners	Install curb extensions	\$60,000
Normandie Avenue / 121st Street	East leg	Relocate stop bar before beginning curb return	\$500
Normandie Avenue / 122nd Street	North-south direction	Install advance yield lines	\$1,000
	South leg	Restripe as continental school crosswalk	\$2,500
	South leg	Install HAWK signal	\$100,000
	Southwest and southeast corners	Install curb extensions	\$60,000
Normandie Avenue / 124th Street	North-south direction	Install advance yield lines	\$1,000
	North leg	Restripe as continental school crosswalk	\$2,500
	North leg	Install HAWK signal	\$100,000
	Northwest and northeast corners	Install curb extensions	\$60,000
Normandie Avenue (87th Street to El Segundo Boulevard)	-	Corridor-wide streetscape enhancements that may include pedestrian-scale lighting, shade trees, roadway reconfiguration or road diet, landscaping, and other facilities	Ranges
<b>Vermont Avenue</b>			
Vermont Avenue / 89th Street	South direction	Install advance yield lines	\$1,000
	West leg / median pedestrian path	Stripe continental crosswalk	\$2,500
	Southwest and northeast corners, northwest midblock	Install curb extensions	\$90,000
Vermont Avenue / 90th Street	North leg	Install HAWK signal	\$100,000

Table 6-6: Recommended pedestrian improvements and cost estimates in Westmont/West Athens, continued

Location	Corner/Leg	Project Description	Estimated Cost
Vermont Avenue / 92nd Street	Northeast and southeast corners, north and south midblock	Install curb extensions	\$120,000
Vermont Avenue / 94th Street	North leg	Install HAWK signal	\$100,000
Vermont Avenue / Colden Avenue	Northeast and southeast corners, north and south midblock	Install curb extensions	\$120,000
Vermont Avenue / 98th Street	North and south legs	Install HAWK signals	\$200,000
	All corners	Install curb extensions	\$120,000
Vermont Avenue / Century Boulevard	All legs	Restripe as continental crosswalks	\$10,000
	All corners	Install curb extensions	\$120,000
Vermont Avenue / 103rd Street	Northwest corner and northeast midblock	Install curb extension	\$60,000
	West leg	Relocate stop bar before beginning curb return	\$500
Vermont Avenue / 105th Street	Southwest corner and west midblock	Install curb extensions	\$60,000
Vermont Avenue / 108th Street	All legs	Restripe as continental crosswalks	\$10,000
Vermont Avenue / 110th Street	Southwest corner and west midblock	Install curb extensions	\$60,000
	South leg	Install HAWK signal	\$100,000
Vermont Avenue / 112th Street	Mid-block	Stripe continental crosswalk	\$2,500
	Northeast mid-block, both sides of median	Install new ADA compliant curb ramp where nonexistent	\$24,000
	Northwest corner and northeast midblock	Install curb extensions	\$60,000
Vermont/Athens Metro Station	Mid-block (Vermont Avenue)	Stripe continental crosswalk	\$2,500
Vermont Avenue / 116th Place	West leg	Restripe as continental crosswalk	\$2,500
Vermont Avenue / Imperial Highway	Southwest Corner	Remove one driveway	\$20,000
	All legs	Restripe as continental crosswalks	\$10,000
	Northeast corner	Install curb extension at refuge island	\$30,000
	All corners	Install curb extensions	\$120,000

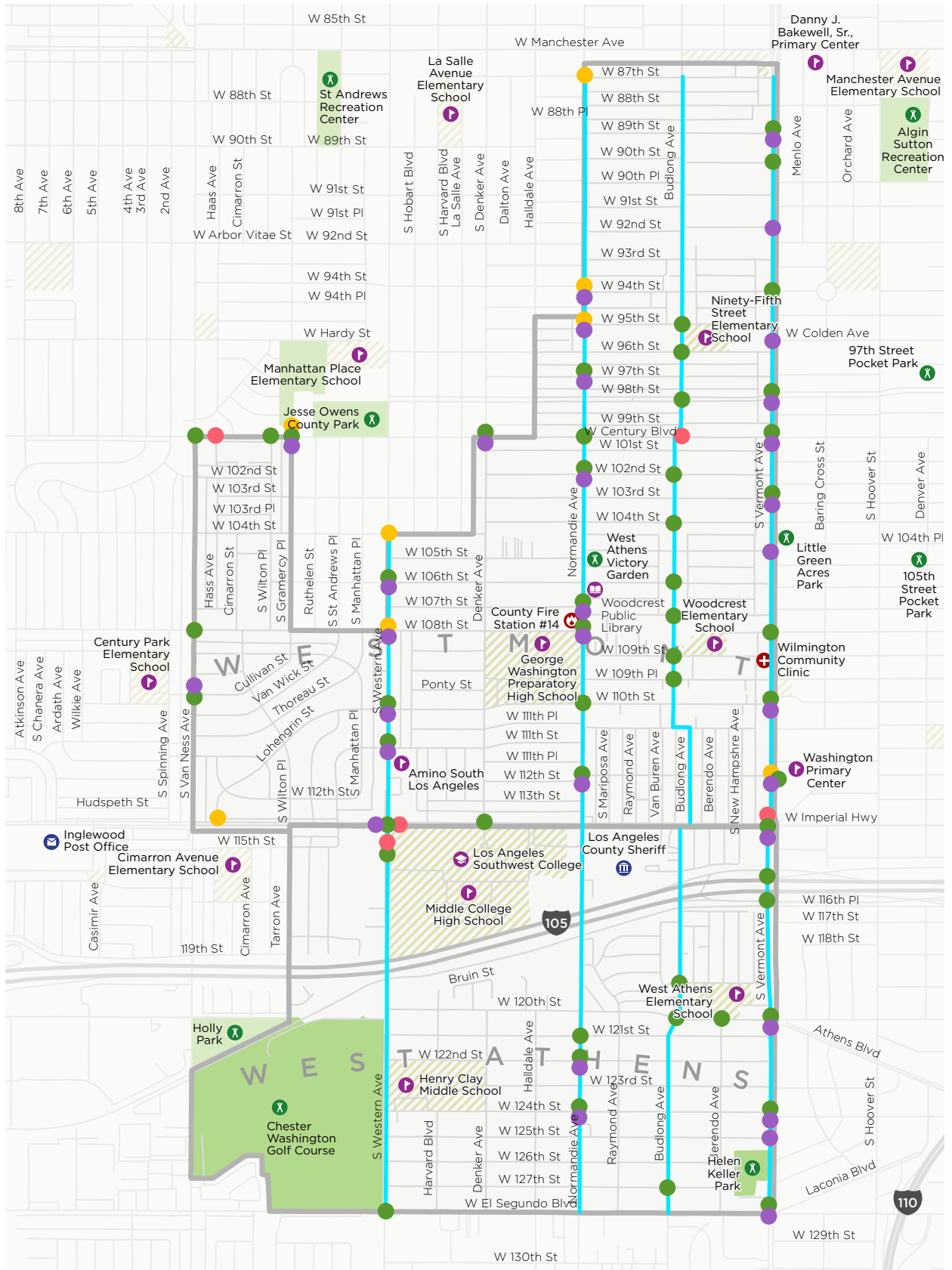
Location	Corner/Leg	Project Description	Estimated Cost
Vermont Avenue / 124th Street	South direction	Install advance yield lines	\$1,000
	Northwest and northeast corners	Install curb extensions	\$60,000
Vermont Avenue / 125th Street	Southwest midblock and southeast corner	Install curb extension	\$60,000
Vermont Avenue / El Segundo Boulevard	All corners	Install curb extensions	\$120,000
	All legs	Restripe as continental crosswalks	\$10,000
Vermont Avenue (87th Street to El Segundo Boulevard)	-	Corridor-wide streetscape enhancements that may include pedestrian-scale lighting, shade trees, roadway reconfiguration or road diet, landscaping, and other facilities	Ranges
<b>Imperial Highway</b>			
Imperial Highway / Denker Avenue	All legs	Restripe as continental school crosswalks	\$10,000
Imperial Highway / Haas Avenue	Frontage road intersection (west mid-block)	Install new ADA compliant curb ramp where nonexistent	\$8,000
<b>Budlong Avenue</b>			
Budlong Avenue / 95th Street	North, east, and south legs	Restripe as continental school crosswalks	\$7,500
	West leg	Stripe continental school crosswalk	\$2,500
Budlong Avenue / 96th Street	North, east, and south legs	Restripe as continental school crosswalks	\$7,500
	West leg	Stripe continental school crosswalk	\$2,500
Budlong Avenue / 98th Street	North and east legs	Restripe as continental crosswalks	\$5,000
	South and west legs	Stripe continental school crosswalks	\$5,000
Budlong Avenue / Century Boulevard	Northwest / Southeast corners	Remove two driveways	\$40,000
Budlong Avenue / 102nd Street	West leg	Relocate stop bar before beginning curb return	\$500
Budlong Avenue / 104th Street	West leg	Relocate stop bar before beginning curb return	\$500
Budlong Avenue / 106th Street	East and west legs	Restripe as continental school crosswalks	\$5,000
Budlong Avenue / 107th Street	North, south, and east legs	Restripe as continental school crosswalks	\$7,500
	West leg	Stripe continental school crosswalk	\$2,500

Table 6-6: Recommended pedestrian improvements and cost estimates in Westmont/West Athens, continued

Location	Corner/Leg	Project Description	Estimated Cost
Budlong Avenue / 109th Street	All legs	Restripe as continental school crosswalks	\$10,000
Budlong Avenue / 109th Place	East and west legs	Restripe as continental school crosswalks	\$5,000
Budlong Avenue / 119th Street	South leg	Restripe as continental crosswalk	\$2,500
Budlong Avenue / 120th Street	North, east, and south legs	Restripe as continental school crosswalks	\$7,500
Budlong Avenue / 127th Street	East and west legs	Relocate stop bar before beginning curb return	\$1,000
Budlong Avenue (87th Street to El Segundo Boulevard)	-	Corridor-wide streetscape enhancements that may include pedestrian-scale lighting, shade trees, roadway reconfiguration or road diet, landscaping, and other facilities	Ranges
<b>Century Boulevard</b>			
Century Boulevard / Wilton Place	Frontage road intersection (southeast corner to east midblock)	Stripe continental crosswalk	\$2,500
	Southwest corner	Extend median to reduce turn radii	\$10,000
Century Boulevard / Haas Avenue	Frontage road intersection (east of driveway)	Connect sidewalk path	\$10,000
Century Boulevard / Gramercy Place	Southeast corner, northeast midblock	Install new ADA compliant curb ramps where nonexistent	\$16,000
	East leg	Restripe as continental crosswalk	\$2,500
	Southeast corner, northeast midblock	Install curb extensions	\$60,000
Century Boulevard / Denker Avenue	All corners	Install curb extensions	\$120,000
	All legs	Restripe as continental crosswalks	\$10,000
<b>Van Ness Avenue</b>			
Van Ness Avenue / Cullivan Street	North, east, and west legs	Restripe as continental crosswalks	\$7,500
	North-south direction	Install advance yield lines	\$1,000
	Northeast and northwest corners	Install curb extension	\$60,000
Van Ness Avenue / 108th Street	East leg	Restripe as continental crosswalk	\$2,500
<b>Berendo Avenue</b>			
Berendo Avenue / 120th Street	West leg	Install HAWK signal	\$100,000



Figure 6-9: Recommended Pedestrian Facilities in Westmont/West Athens



**RECOMMENDED PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES**

**DESTINATIONS**

- SCHOOL
- COLLEGE
- LIBRARY
- PARK/RECREATION
- HEALTHCARE
- PARK

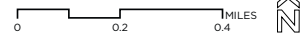
- EMERGENCY SERVICES
- POST OFFICE
- GOVERNMENT OFFICE

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

- ROAD NETWORK
- TRAFFIC SIGNAL

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- CROSSING IMPROVEMENTS
- INCREASED ACCESSIBILITY
- SIDEWALK/PATH IMPROVEMENTS
- CURB EXTENSIONS
- FUTURE CORRIDOR STUDY



## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND PROGRAMS

While location-specific facility recommendations help to improve the pedestrian experience, these alone are not enough to make long-term, widespread changes. Actions reinforce the recommended infrastructure projects and help standardize procedures across all agencies. Recommended countywide actions are listed in Chapter 2, while Table 6-7 below lists actions that will be particularly important for long-term improvements in the pedestrian environment in Westmont/West Athens.

Additionally, programs help support pedestrian infrastructure improvements through education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation. All recommended countywide programs can be found in Chapter 9, while programs that are most important for Westmont/West Athens are listed in Table 6-8.

**Table 6-7: Actions for Westmont/West Athens**

Action	Lead Departments	Timeframe
EH-2.1: Ensure the distance between signal-controlled intersections, marked crosswalks, or stop signs is never more than one-quarter mile on major and secondary streets wherever feasible and appropriate.	Department of Public Works Traffic & Lighting Division and Land Development Division	Ongoing starting in 2018
C-1.3: Require documentation of justification for excluding marked crosswalks at signalized intersections on any leg(s), and update intersection design standards to reduce unnecessary crossings.	Department of Public Works Traffic & Lighting Division	Ongoing starting in 2018
C-2.4: Prioritize requests related to illegal dumping when report indicates the material is impeding safe pedestrian travel.	Department of Public Works Waste Management Division	Ongoing starting in 2018
SC-1.1: Install pedestrian-scale lighting in prioritized areas such as commercial areas, parks and near public buildings, schools and hospitals; providing people walking with a sense of place and sense of safety related to both crime and traffic.	Department of Public Works Traffic & Lighting Division	Ongoing starting in 2018
SC-1.2: Work with local businesses to maintain active building frontages (include outdoor restaurant seating) to promote sidewalk vitality and “eyes on the street.”	Department of Public Works Program Development Division, Department of Regional Planning Code Enforcement, Community Development Commission and Department of Business and Consumer Affairs	Ongoing starting in 2018
SC-1.3: Strategically utilize traffic calming mechanisms like diverters to reduce cruising and prostitution activities.	Department of Public Works Road Design Division	Ongoing starting in 2018

**Table 6-8: Programs for Westmont/West Athens**

Program	Description	Benefits
Provide Safe Community Spaces	Create safe passages and gathering areas to encourage more pedestrian activity. This is particularly useful in areas with high rates of crime, violence, and nuisance activities.	Reduced conflict, increased safety, encouragement
Help Pedestrians Navigate	Provide pedestrian wayfinding, such as maps and signs, to make local destinations more accessible. Individuals will be able to more easily find their way to their destination, understand where they are with respect to other locations, and discover new places and services.	Increased participation, encouragement