WALKING WHILE WOMAN

Understanding Inequities in Safety and Ease among Los Angeles' Westlake Commuters

PREPARED BY:

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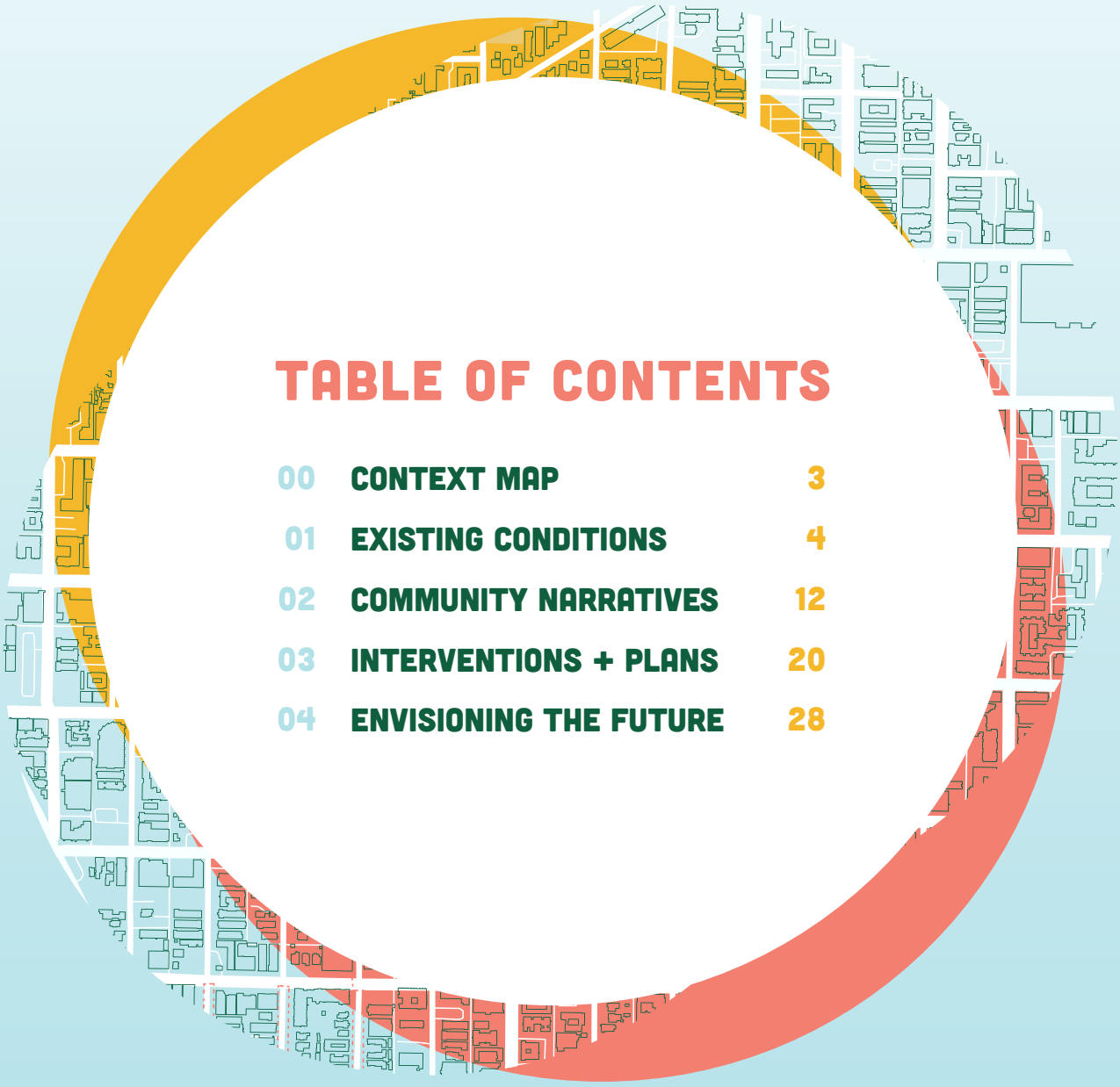

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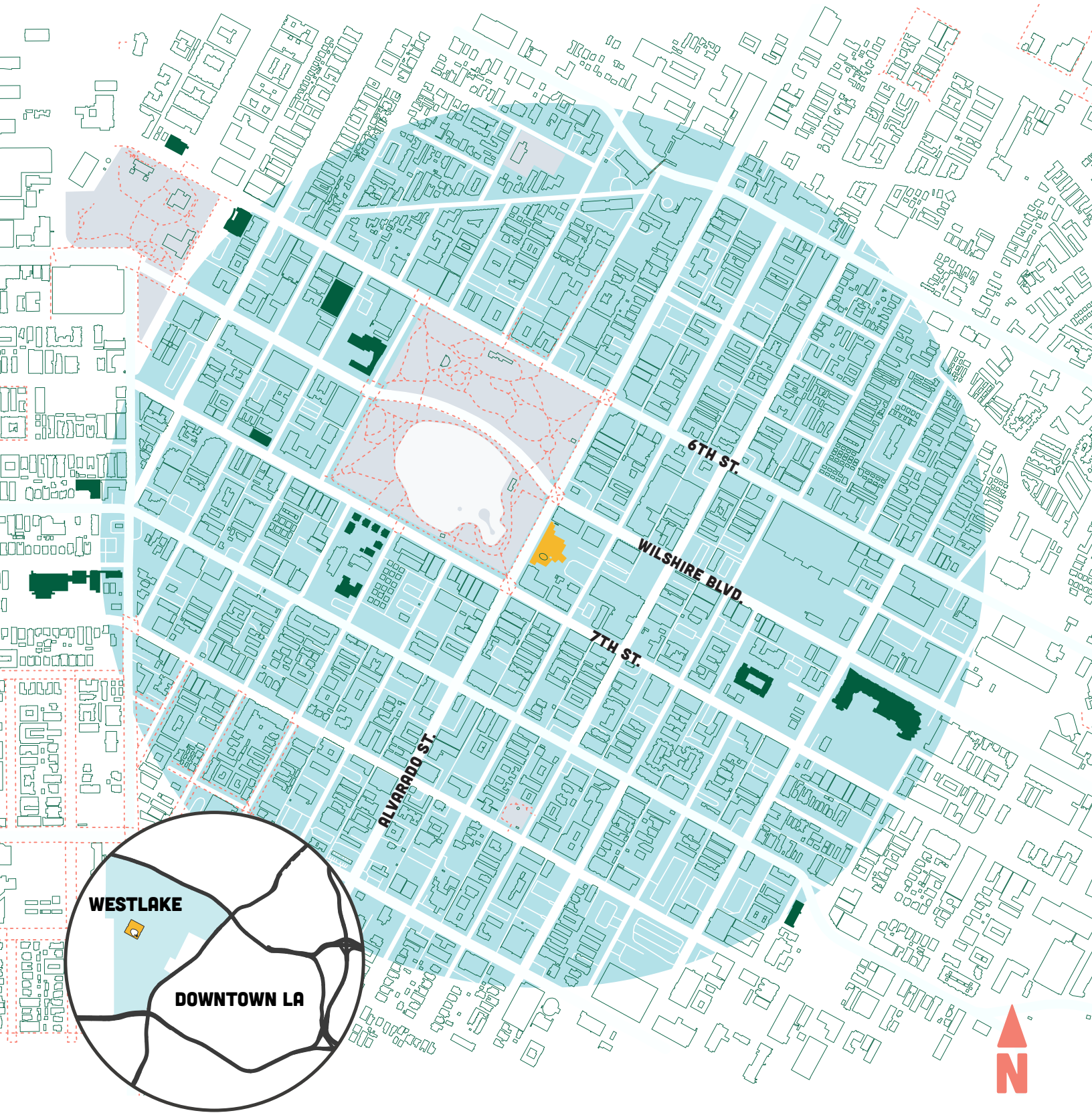
MACARTHUR PARK/WESTLAKE

MP/W Metro Station

K-12 School

1/2 mile radius from MP/W Metro

Walking Path



01 EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ANALYSIS

THE PLACE & THE PROBLEM

The MacArthur Park/Westlake (MP/W) Metro station sits in the center of Los Angeles' second densest neighborhood. The station, which opens to Alvarado Street, is flanked by an informal flea market; the sidewalks are lined with stalls of vendors selling hot food and merchandise. Westlake bustling and vibrant culture does not come without its challenges, however. According to the City's Vision Zero Action Plan, Westlake is the city's second most lethal neighborhood for pedestrians, with a disproportionate number of high-danger corridors. When combining the high speed streets and increased risk of injury and death with active neighborhood sidewalks, complex issues arise for how to make space for everyone. Further, not all residents experience these challenges in the same way. The densely packed sidewalks, filled with vendors, make traversing the sidewalk particularly challenging for pedestrians with small children, strollers or bulky belongings. These folks are most likely to be women of color or unhoused residents. Thus, our most vulnerable citizens are more likely to face a dilemma: lose time (and miss transit connections) navigating bottle-necked sidewalks or to risk danger by circumnavigating the obstacles and stepping into busy roadways. In this brief, we explore the question:

How we might redesign the area around MacArthur Park/ Westlake metro station to ensure all people can navigate the space with safety and ease, particularly those most likely to prioritize safety over efficiency: women and caregivers.

WESTLAKE[1]

118,000
RESIDENTS

72%
HISPANIC/LATINO

25%
UNDER 18

BLUE LINES INDICATE STREETS ON LA'S HIGH INJURY NETWORK

THE OVERVIEW & THE GOALS

Our goal is to understand how accessibility and safety along the corridor disparately affect Angelenos of different genders and races in order to inform a street redesign that reduces risk of injury or death and ensures safety and ease for all pedestrians.

To establish our understanding of the area, we started our project with three sub-questions:

1.) **Who is stepping off of pedestrian ways into car-traffic areas?**
2.) **What is causing people to step off the sidewalk**
3.) **What is the time-toll for those who choose not to bypass the congested pedestrian ways?**

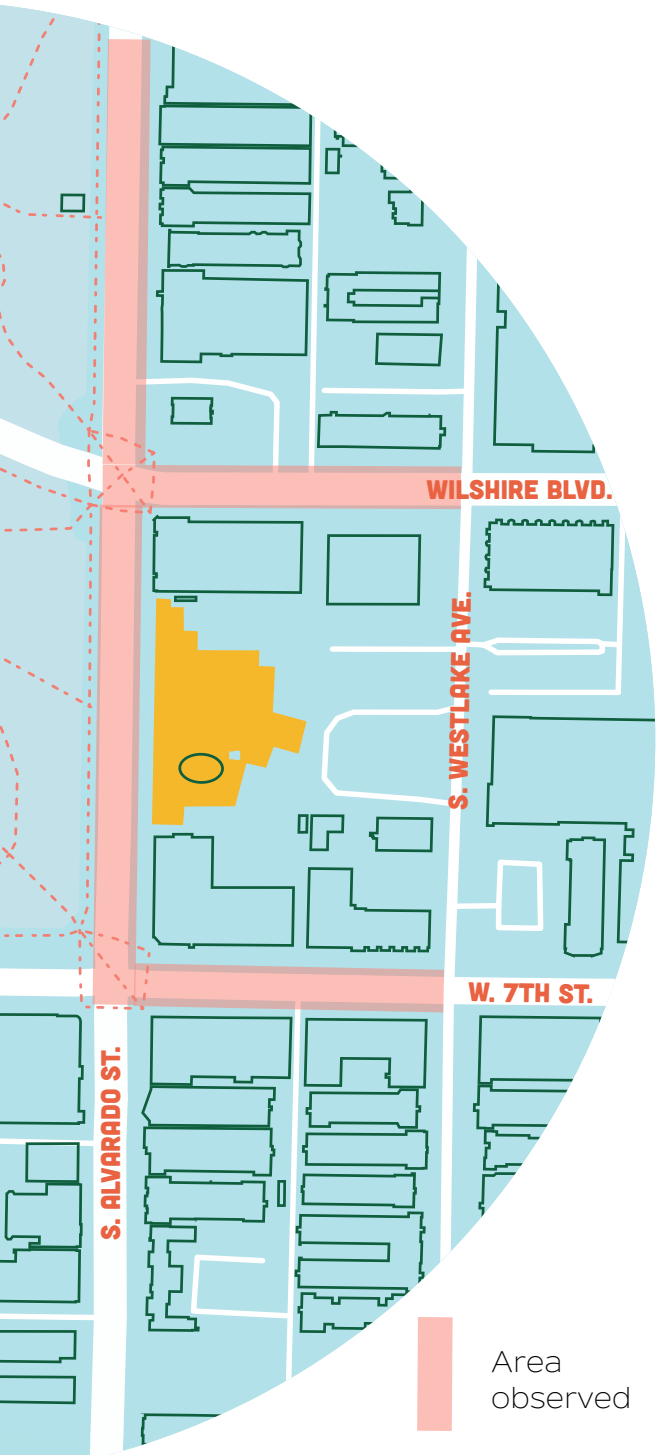
We share our results in the following pages.

[1] Department of City Planning in Los Angeles, Demographic Profile Westlake

WHAT IS CAUSING COMMUTERS TO STEP OFF?

Observed by Michael Donovan

Pedestrians moving through the Westlake/MacArthur Park area are constanly having to manuever around obstacles on the sidewalk. Working off the previous team observations and the data from the City's Vision Zero Action Plan highilighting the area as being prone to traffic related incidents, I wanted to discover exactly what obstacles and obstructions were interferring with pedestrian travel around the area. By understanding the existing conditions, we can better inform our proposals at improving persons' travel along the corridor, tackling both ease and safety.



METHODOLOGY

For my observations I walked along Alvarado St, Wilshire Blvd, and 7th St, documenting obstacles along the sidewalk. I chose these three streets becuase this is where most of the foot traffic was occuring and because of their close proximity to MacArthur Park Station, MacArthur Park, and other Metro lines. This area also had the most obstacles. I used only my phone to document my observations. As I walked through the corridor I observed how these obstacles interferred with pedestrians path of travel as well as my own. The total time took approximately 25 minutes.

RESULTS

I observed the following obstacles: vendors with tent and umbrella poles portruding onto the sidewalk, customers in front of the vendors, trash cans, portable bathrooms, tarps, bus stop benches, and light poles. To my surprise, I didn't see any uneven pavement. Pedestrians at times had to step off the sidewalk to avoid such obstacles, particularly at two bottleneck points at opposite ends along Alvarado St. between Wilshire Blvd. and W. 7th St. Such obstacles drastically narrowed the sidewalk, with individuals forming a single-file line to pass through certain segments. Pedestrians with large items were impacted the most, as they would sometimes have to wait until the lanes cleared to move through. The only area with adequate open space was in front of MacArthur Park Station before approaching the escalators.

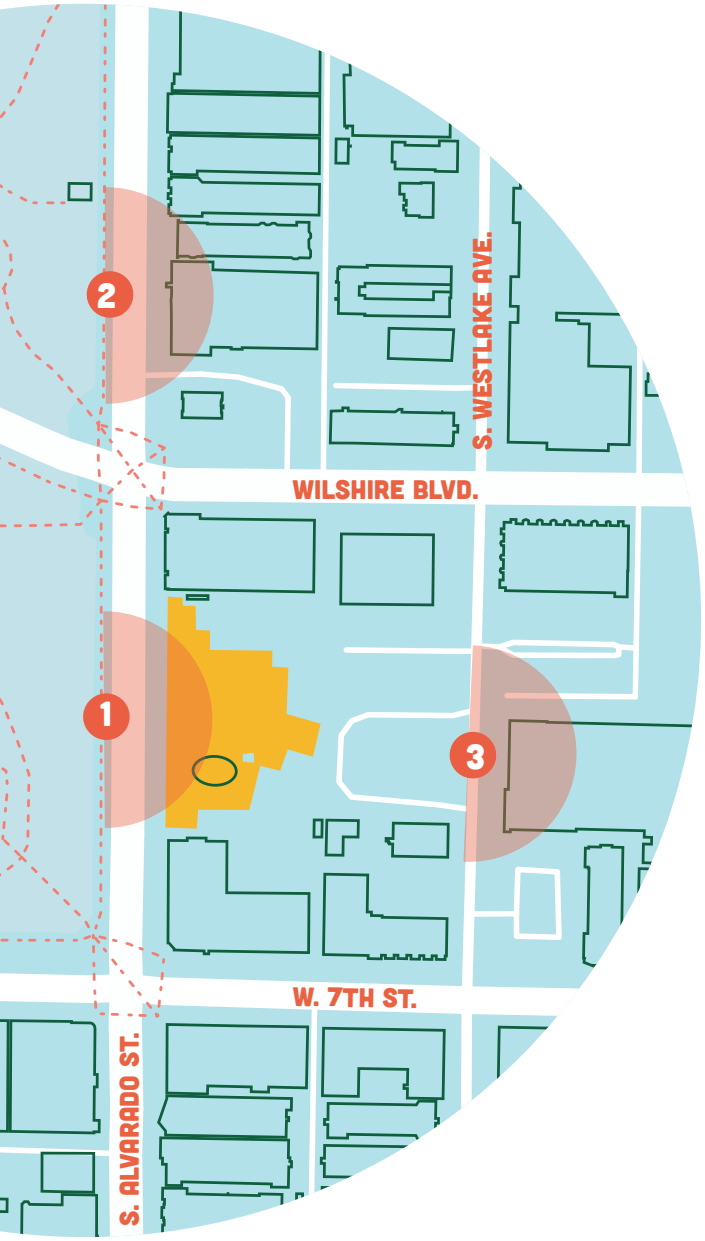
The map to the left highlights the observation area. The map on the following page shows the obstacles observed in the study area.

RESULTS: WHAT IS CAUSING COMMUTERS TO STEP OFF?

A Map of Obstacles

WHO IS STEPPING OFF THE SIDEWALK?

Observed by Lilith Winkler-Schor



SITE SELECTION

	MARKET	METRO
SITE 1	X	X
SITE 2	X	
SITE 3		X

The area surrounding MP/W is heavily congested. Commuters, vendors, shoppers, and unhoused people all competing for the safety of the sidewalks and comfort of shade. Meanwhile, fast cars and big buses navigate the six lanes for traffic. In a neighborhood disproportionately impacted by pedestrian injury and fatalities, I wondered who is being put most at risk, and how this affects our understanding of creating a more navigable area.

METHODOLOGY

For my observations, I sat at three separate locations, marked on the map, for approximately 15 minutes each. I selected sites for either a heavy concentration of vendors, proximity to a transit station (metro or bus), or both, in order to determine whether one factor or the other correlated with more spatial conflict. At each site, I documented each person that entered the street from the sidewalk, as well as their race, gender, and direction of movement (parallel to the sidewalk or crossing the street).

RESULTS

Indeed, pedestrians were stepping of the street in great numbers. In the short time I observed, a total of 59 people into the roadway, opening themselves up to increased risk of a traffic-related injury or fatality. People seemed to step off for various reasons, with about half (31) stepping off to cross the street at a more convenient location than the cross walks. The other 28 people stayed close the sidewalk's edge, walking either parallel to the sidewalk, or hovering at the edge to chat or sweep their vendor stalls.

Additionally, the difference across gender and race became quickly apparent. Of the 59 "street steppers,"only 14 were women, and none had children with them. Of the 14 women,

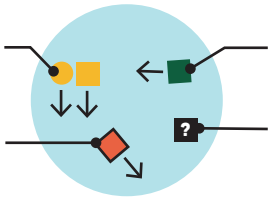
WHO IS LEAVING THE SIDEWALK?

Results from three observation sites

HOW TO READ THE DIAGRAMS:

White woman (circle) and **White man** (square) cross street together

Hispanic/**Latino man** **bikes**/scooters* across the street at an angle

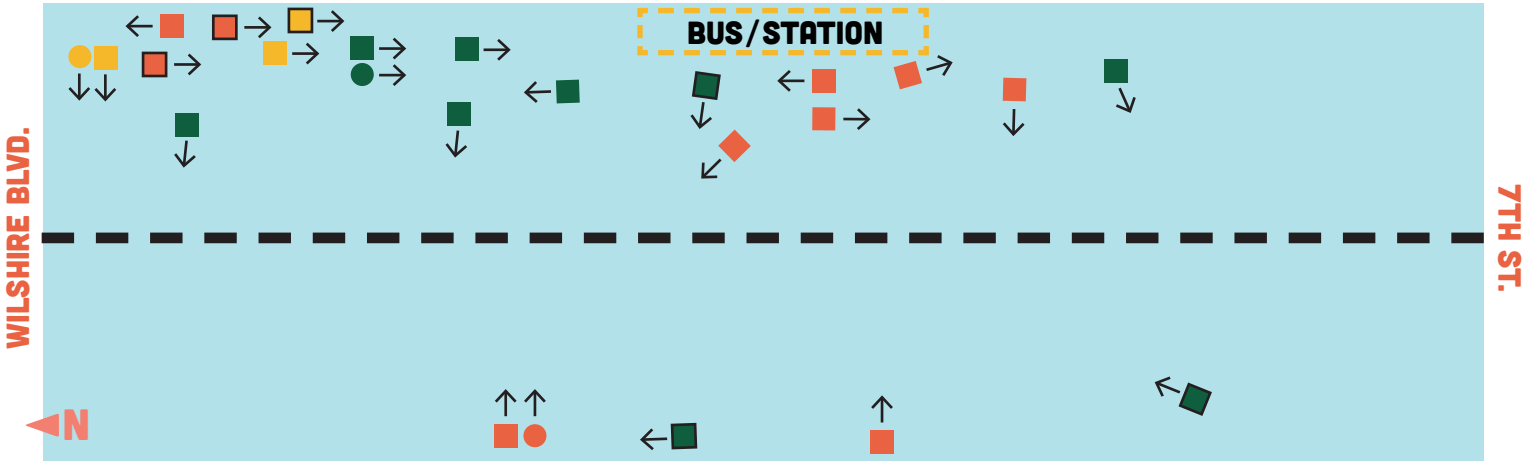


Black man travels parallel to sidewalk in street

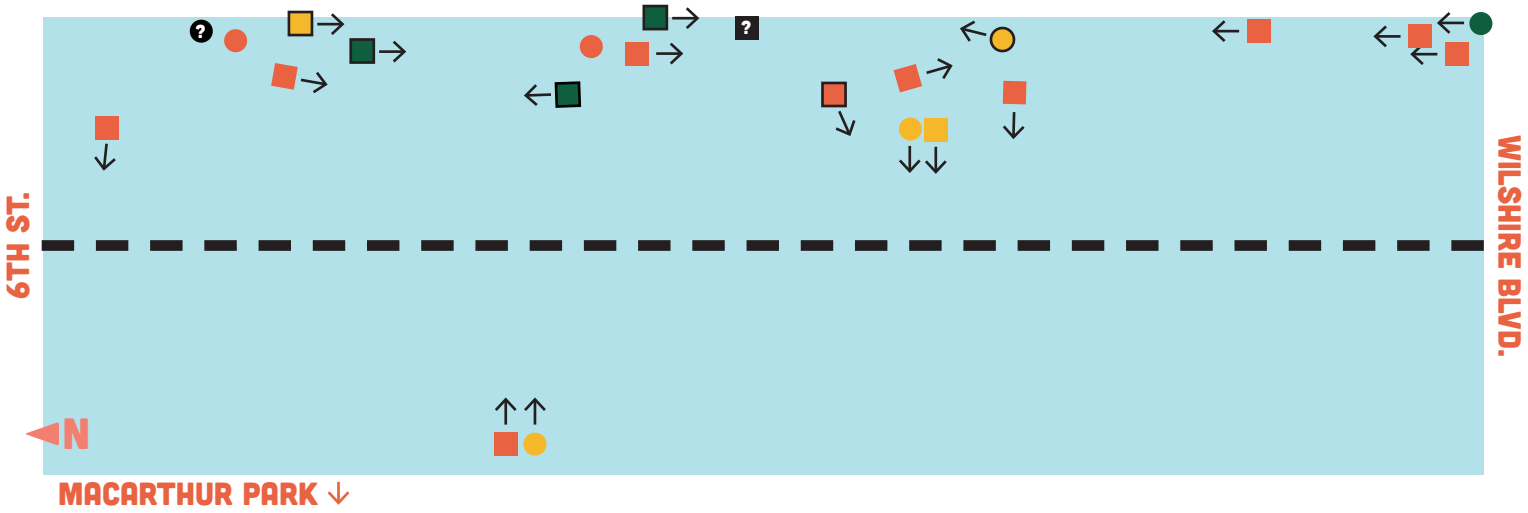
Man stands in street; **race unknown**

*Only those biking/scootering against traffic indicated

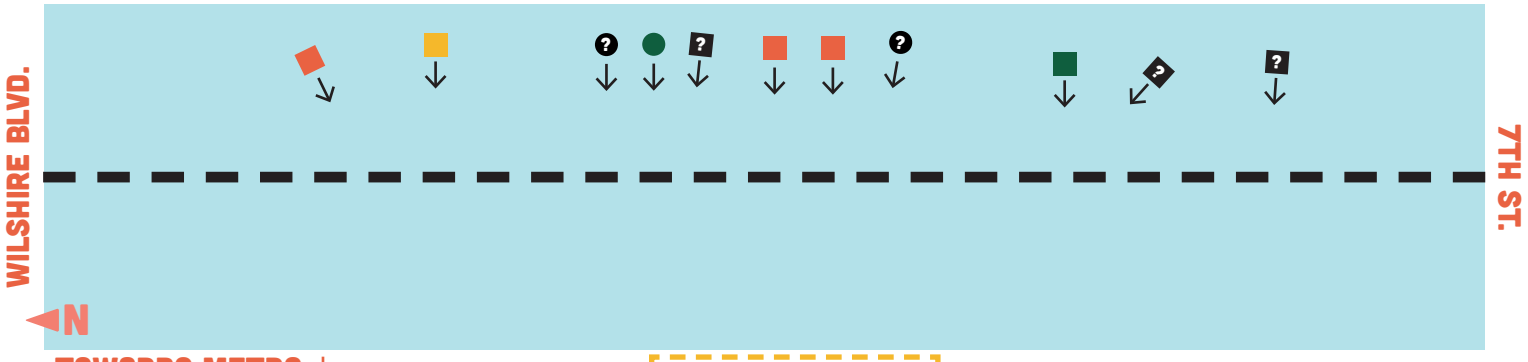
SITE 1: ALVARADO ST.



SITE 2: ALVARADO ST.



SITE 3: WESTLAKE AVE.



BUS/STATION

RESULTS: WHO IS STEPPING OFF THE SIDEWALK?

Understanding who is putting themselves at risk and how

only seven crossed the street compared to 24 men. No woman crossed Alvarado street by themselves; the four women that did were accompanied by a man. This suggests that women are more likely to avoid crossing busy streets by themselves, likely taking safer and more time-intensive routes to get to their locations.

When looking at race, white travelers were disproportionately represented in "street stepping" purely due to the low number of white people in the area. Similarly, white women were almost just as likely as white men to walk in the street, aligning with previous research that shows white women have higher senses of perceived safety than women of color.

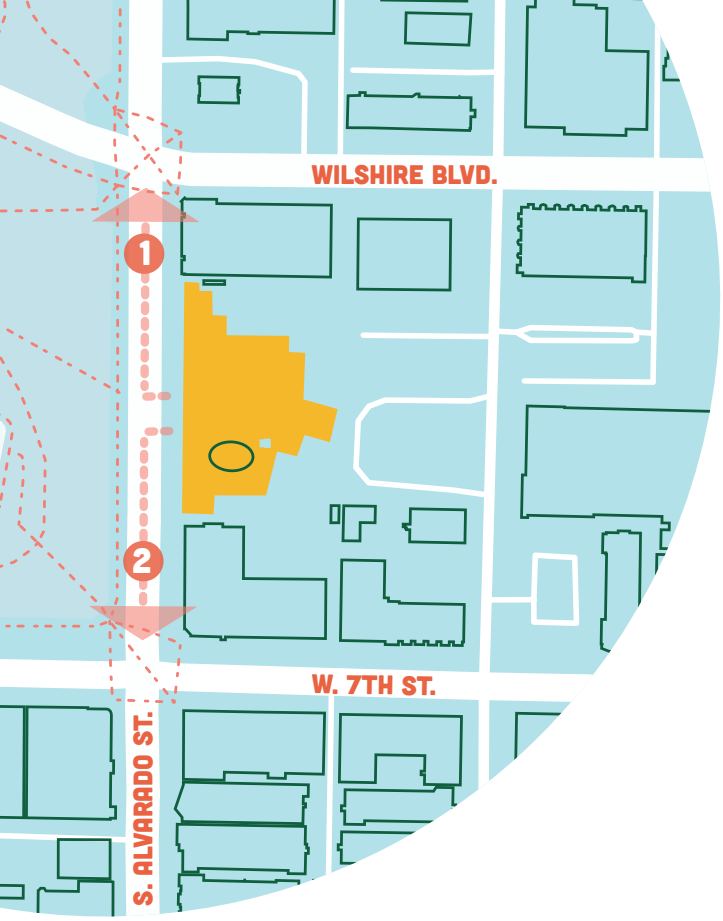
SITE TOTALS

	MALE	FEMALE
HISPANIC /LATINO	22	3
BLACK	13	3
WHITE	6	5
UNKNOWN	4	3
TOTAL	45	14

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

	PARALLEL	CROSSING
SITE 1	15	10
SITE 2	18	7
SITE 3	0	11
TOTAL	31	28

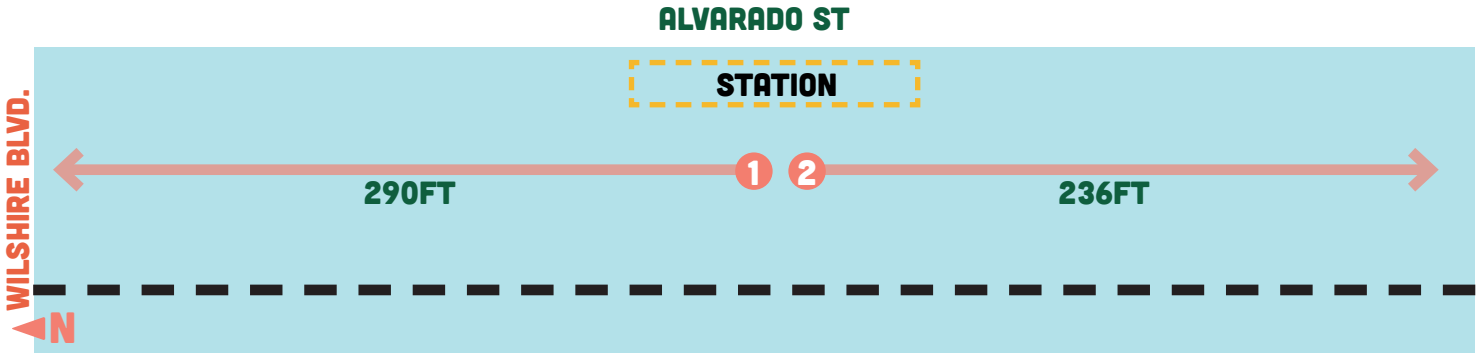
	OBSERVATION SITE 1		OBSERVATION SITE 2		OBSERVATION SITE 3	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
HISPANIC /LATINO	10	1	10	2	2	0
BLACK	9	1	3	1	1	1
WHITE	3	1	2	3	1	1
UNKNOWN	0	0	1	1	3	2
TOTAL	22	3	16	7	7	4



WHAT IS THE TIME TOLL OF CONGESTED SIDEWALKS?

Observed by Dilia Ortega

The streets surrounding the MacArthur Park/ Westlake Metro station are bursting with activity. Pedestrians, vendors, transit riders, and so many others compete for sidewalk space. With the abundance of obstructed sidewalks and narrow walking paths, people are impacted in various ways. Building on existing literature drawing connections between time poverty and women's mobility, I was interested in observing the time toll of walking along Alvarado St.



METHODOLOGY

For my observations, I positioned myself outside of the Macarthur Park/ Westlake Station on Alvarado Street. I walked behind pedestrians, timing how long it took them to walk 290 ft. from the station to Wilshire Blvd and 236ft from the station to 7th St. To understand impacts on different populations, I chose to differentiate between people presenting as able-bodied males traveling alone and people traveling with dependents on strollers. I timed a total 20 people, 10 heading northeast towards Wilshire Blvd and 10 people walking southwest towards 7th St. Half of the people I observed presented as males and the other half were caregivers.

RESULTS

As existing literature notes, my observations highlight the disparate time toll that impacts women's mobility. Though not an intentional choice, all the people traveling with dependents that I timed were female-presenting. On average, it took men about 69 seconds to travel from the Metro station to Wilshire St., while it took women 119 seconds. Heading southwest towards 7th St., it took men an average of 53 seconds while it took women 71.8 seconds.

RESULTS: WHO EXPERIENCES A LONGER TIME TOLL?

Observing how long it takes for people to walk along Alvardo St.

TIME IT TOOK FOR PEOPLE TO WALK (IN SECONDS)

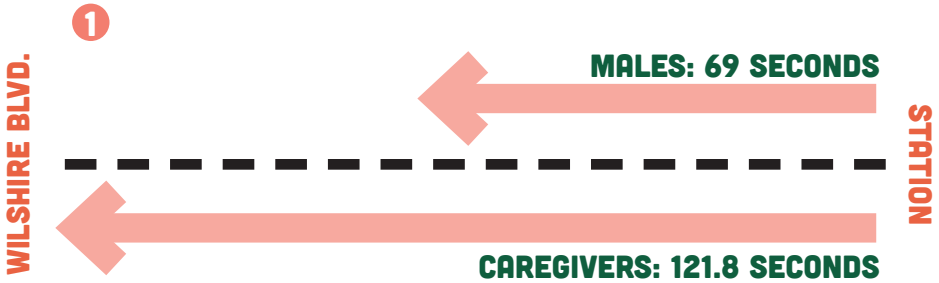
1 STATION TO WILSHIRE BLVD

MALE	CAREGIVER
58	132
82	121
75	122
62	118
68	116
AVERAGE 69	121.8

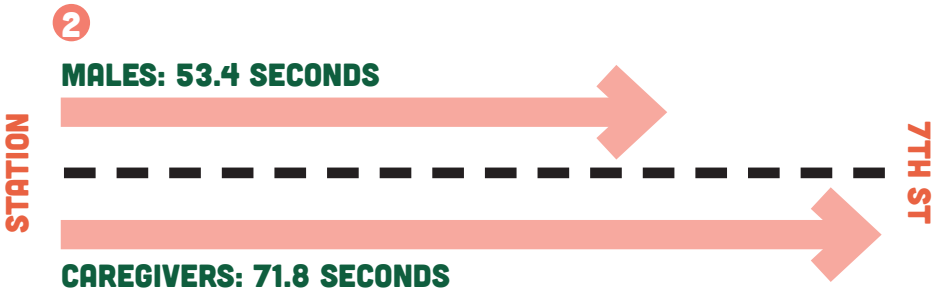
2 STATION TO 7TH ST

MALE	CAREGIVER
53	75
51	62
58	73
54	68
51	81
53.4	71.8

DISPARATE TIME TOLLS ON MOBILITY:



IT TAKES CAREGIVERS ALMOST TWICE AS LONG TO WALK THE SAME DISTANCE AS SINGLE MEN.



02 COMMUNITY NARRATIVES

Community Engagement Plan and Results

ACTIVITY ONE | WALKING AUDIT | EXPERIENCING

This group activity will involve participants walking along Alvarado Street to analyze the existing conditions as it relates to obstructions along the public sidewalk. This activity will have the goal of having participants understand how vulnerable an individual can be to traffic related accidents while commuting through the area due to the different kinds of obstructions along the sidewalk. Participants will also be informed about how particular groups of people can be affected differently from one another. Lastly, the group will be asked to propose any changes they would like to see along the sidewalks to improve pedestrian safety and experience.

ACTIVITY TWO | WORLD CAFE | EXPERTING

This activity will involve participatory mapping, evaluating, and visioning for the neighborhood through four quick activity stations community members can engage with as they walk along Alvarado Street or emerge from the Metro Station. The goal of the activity is to provide community members the opportunity to highlight their lived experiences in a way that is visual and quick. This activity will ask community members to draw an ideal street, select preferred amenities from an inspiration board, and identify streets they feel safe walking through and corridors they avoid. Community members can choose to engage with all four stations if they like, but they are not required to.

ACTIVITY THREE | STREET SMARTS | TESTING

Once the engagement team has worked with residents and commuters to learn how they experience the Westlake/MacArthur Park Metro area and what their ideal street would be, the engagement team will plan an implementation day, during which the area will get a temporary make-over using some of the interventions that the World Cafe surfaced. The engagement team will set up a table near the metro station where people can record their response to “how did your commute change today?”. These responses will be used to consider the successes and opportunities for growth of the redesign elements.

ACTIVITY ONE: WALKING AUDIT | EXPERIENCING

Designed by Michael Donovan

SUMMARY

This group activity will involve participants walking along Alvarado Street to analyze the existing conditions as it relates to obstructions along the public sidewalk. This activity will have the goal of having participants understand how vulnerable an individual can be to traffic related accidents while commuting through the area due to obstructions along the sidewalk. Participants will also be informed about how particular groups of people can be affected differently from one another. Lastly, the group will be asked to propose any changes they would like to see along the sidewalks to improve pedestrian safety and experience.

LOCATION + FORMAT

Given the outdoor nature of the activity, we will look to have about 6 participants to allow for easier facilitation. We would like to have a mix of individuals, at least one mother with a child, one elderly person, one person that identifies as a male, one person that identifies as female, and one young adult. The desired location for the event will be held at Esperanza Elementary School, which is about a 7 minute walk from the MacArthur Park Station. This location will make the meeting accessible for the participants, be in close proximity to the study area, and allow them to be in a familiar place that will bring comfort and ease. The activity will begin with a discussion, followed by a walking tour to Alvarado Street in front of MacArthur Park Station that will cross through the park, and lastly end back at Esperanza Elementary School for final closing thoughts and discussion.

MATERIALS:

Participants will be given a notepad and pencil to document their analysis along the tour and group facilitators will have a computer and whiteboard to list obstacles, areas of improvement, and suggestions.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

The group will be asked to meet at Esperanza Elementary School at noon on a Saturday. Applicants will be given a piece of paper and asked to indicate their age and gender. We will then lead a discussion about the existing conditions of the site and the crowded nature of the sidewalks. The discussion will allow the participants to first understand the traffic hazards that exist, think about the existing conditions, and pay more attention to any obstacles we may encounter along the walk. This discussion should take about 30 minutes. After our discussion, participants will be led to Alvarado Street in front of MacArthur Park Station and walk around and across MacArthur Park, keeping an eye out

for various obstacles along the path. One female, one male, one elderly, and one mother with a child will be asked to walk from one end of the street to another so group members can time the walks. One group member will time these participants as they navigate the space. The remaining group members will lead the remaining participants on the walk and keep note of the various types of obstructions and the instances when participants had to step off the sidewalk to avoid obstacles. Once the walk is complete, the group will head back to Esperanza Elementary School for a final discussion on their experiences of the walk. The walk around the area should take roughly 30 to 40 minutes. Once back at the school, participants will be asked to write down the various obstacles they encountered, when and if they had to step off the sidewalk, and their overall experience with the walk. The discussion will then shift to asking the participants if any improvements need to be made and if so, what kinds of improvements they would like to see. The participants will write their suggestions on a piece of paper and the group facilitators will go around asking participants to share their thoughts. This last part of the activity should take another 30 minutes.

HOW TO PROCESS + SHARE DATA:

Processing the data will require group members to log the kinds of obstacles observed, indicating on a map where participants had to step off the sidewalk, and a chart showing the time of how long it took for certain individuals to walk from point A to point B. Most of the data collected will be from group members making note of things along the walk and then the feedback received after the walk will be used to determine what kinds of improvements community members would like to see. If participants choose to give their age and gender they identify as, then we can further utilize that data to see if there were any significant differences between participants.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

Give participants the space and time to give feedback, don't discourage anyones ideas. Don't put too much pressure on participants to produce improvements, maybe areas we deem needing improvement may not need it according to the community.

ACTIVITY TWO: WORLD CAFE | EXPERTING

Designed by Dilia Ortega

SUMMARY

This activity will involve participatory mapping, evaluating, and visioning for the neighborhood through four quick activity stations community members can engage with as they walk along Alvarado Street or emerge from the Metro Station. The goal of the activity is to provide community members the opportunity to highlight their lived experiences in a way that is visual and quick. This activity will ask community members to draw an ideal street, select preferred amenities from an inspiration board, and identify streets they feel safe walking through and corridors they avoid. Community members can choose to engage with all four stations if they like, but they are not required to.

LOCATION + FORMAT

Stations will be set up outside of the Westlake/ Macarthur Park Metro station, by Alvarado Street, under a canopy. Three posters will be set up on stands and a table will be set up with information and clipboards for people to use.

MATERIALS:

1. 24" x 36" maps of focus area (2)
2. Clipboards (3)
3. Blank sheets of paper (25)
4. Markers
5. Happy/ sad face sticker pack
6. Dot sticker pack
7. Star sticker pack
8. 24" x 36" inspiration board
9. Display easels (3)
10. Canopy
11. Table
12. Tape

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

Set up canopy outside of the Westlake/ Macarthur Park Station. On one side of the canopy, place the three posters on the stands, ensuring the two maps are next to each other. One group member will staff the maps section, where one map will direct participants to put a happy face next to streets they enjoy walking through and the other map will place sad faces next to streets they avoid. The group member will ask participants to place a star near their stickers if they identify with any of these categories: caregiver, disabled, or if they identify as a woman or trans/ gender-non conforming individual. The second group member will staff the inspiration board with amenities.

Amenities can include pictures of lighting, crosswalk scrambles, widened sidewalks, or street art. They will hand participants three dot-stickers, asking them to place them next to the three amenities they think will help reduce pedestrian vulnerability. Next to the stands, the third team member will set up the table with clipboards, blank papers, and markers. They will instruct participants to draw their ideal street. As participants complete drawings, tape them on the table or hang around the canopy.

HOW TO PROCESS + SHARE DATA:

The maps indicating street preferences will help the project team identify streets to prioritize interventions for. Elements from streets with the most happy faces can potentially be replicated in streets people avoid the most. Additionally, the use of stars will help the team understand if there is a correlation between perceptions of safety and certain vulnerable populations. Moreover, the inspiration boards with the most stickers at the end of the engagement activity coupled with the ideal street drawings will guide the design team when it comes to identifying amenities and potential interventions.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

Encourage participation and emphasize the activities are quick.

ACTIVITY THREE: STREET SMARTS | TESTING

Designed by Lilith Winkler-Schor

SUMMARY

Once the engagement team has worked with residents and commuters to learn how they experience the MacArthur Park/Westlake Metro area and what their ideal street would be, the engagement team will plan an implementation day, during which the area will get 3-4 temporary changes using some of the interventions that the World Cafe surfaced. The engagement team will set up a table near the metro station where people can record their response to "how did your commute change today?". These responses will be used to consider the successes and opportunities for growth of the redesign elements.

LOCATION + FORMAT

Using the feedback from the previous sessions, the engagement team will pick 3-4 sites within the 1000 foot radius of the metro station to create temporary changes to the physcial landscape. These changes could include a temporary widing of the sidewalk by turning a traffic lane into a protected vendor space, creating a walking path on the outside of the vendor space, or adding more buffers such as planters to the sidewalk. At the metro station, the team will set up a table with a microphone and audio recorder. A bilingual staff member will sit at the table and ask passing residents to share how their commute changed due to the changes.

MATERIALS:

- Barricades
- Street paint
- Traffic cones
- Planters
- Miscellanous building supplies based on selected interventions
- Stencils for temporary signage
- Table
- Chairs
- Microphone
- Posterboard with written prompt
- Audio recorder
- Photographer

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

Ahead of Event

1. Review the feedback from the Walking Audit and World Cafe to determine 3-4 interventions
2. Create intervention building plans and supply list
3. Contact LA DOT for intervention approvals
4. Purchase supplies
5. Recruit volunteers for day of

Day of Event

1. Arrive early in the morning and set up barricades
2. Break volunteers into teams to install temporary interventions
3. Set up table near metro station with microphone, poster board, and audio recorder
4. Recruit respondents during day
5. Clean up interventions

HOW TO PROCESS + SHARE DATA:

Once the event is complete, the engagement team will review the recorded responses to "how did your commute change today?" Working with a qualitative researcher, the team will code the responses to determine how the improvements changed people's experience of navigating the corridor, including what seemed to be beneficial and what didn't work or needs additional improvement. Upon completing the qualitative coding, the data should be shared with the team, documented within a visually interesting report, and shared with key stakeholders at LA DOT, elected officials, and other key stakeholders.

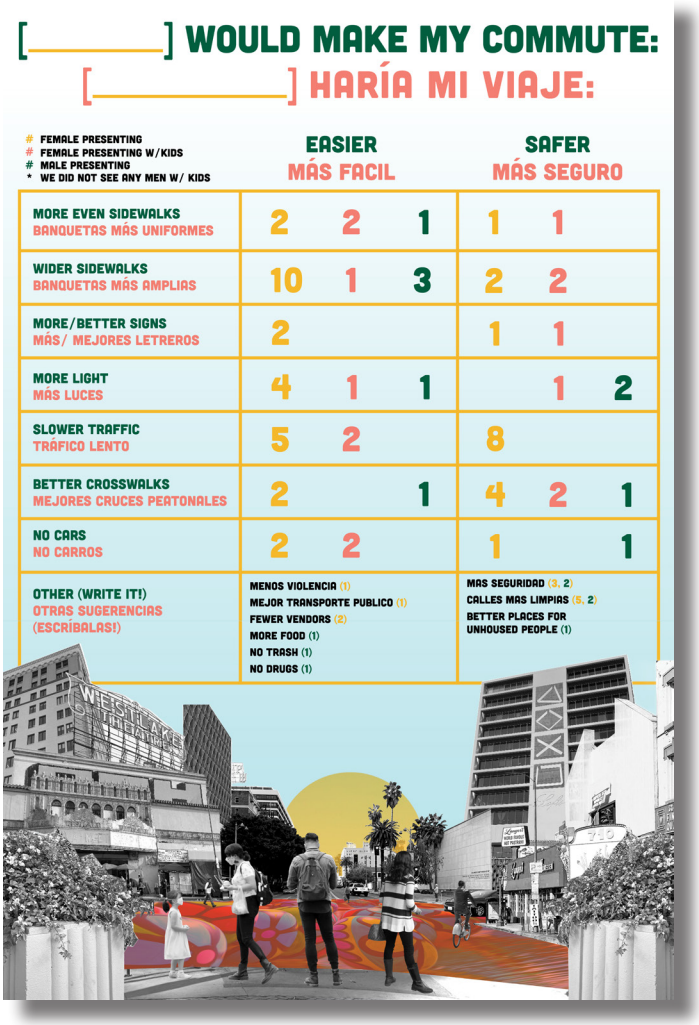
TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

1. Detail project build plans before hand to ensure the right supplies and that interventions will be accurate and successfully testing the idea behind them.
2. Get approval for interventions far ahead of time, and find your champion in City Hall.
3. Proactively recruit people to respond by being open, friendly, and having a visually interesting table. Recruit people in English and Spanish.
4. Document everything! Take photos of people navigating the newly designed space. Observe their facial expressions and reactions
5. Remove installations thoroughly so you don't anger City partners or create more obstacles for pedestrians.

ENGAGEMENT IN ACTION

What we learned from on the ground engagement

To better understand what would provide residents, particularly women of color, easier and safer paths of travel through the MacArthur Park/Westlake area, we designed a poster in English and Spanish to capture people's preferences towards particular improvements. We offered seven choices, including an area to write in additional options. Three of the top preferences were provided options, while one, cleaner streets, came from participants



Above: tabulated results from our MacArthur Park station engagement activity. We had 23 participants total, and each was given two choices for "easier" and two for "safer".

Right: Dilia and Lilith posing with the final results.

We found that participant's top preferences were:

- **Wider sidewalks**
- **Slower traffic**
- **Better crosswalks**
- **Cleaner streets**

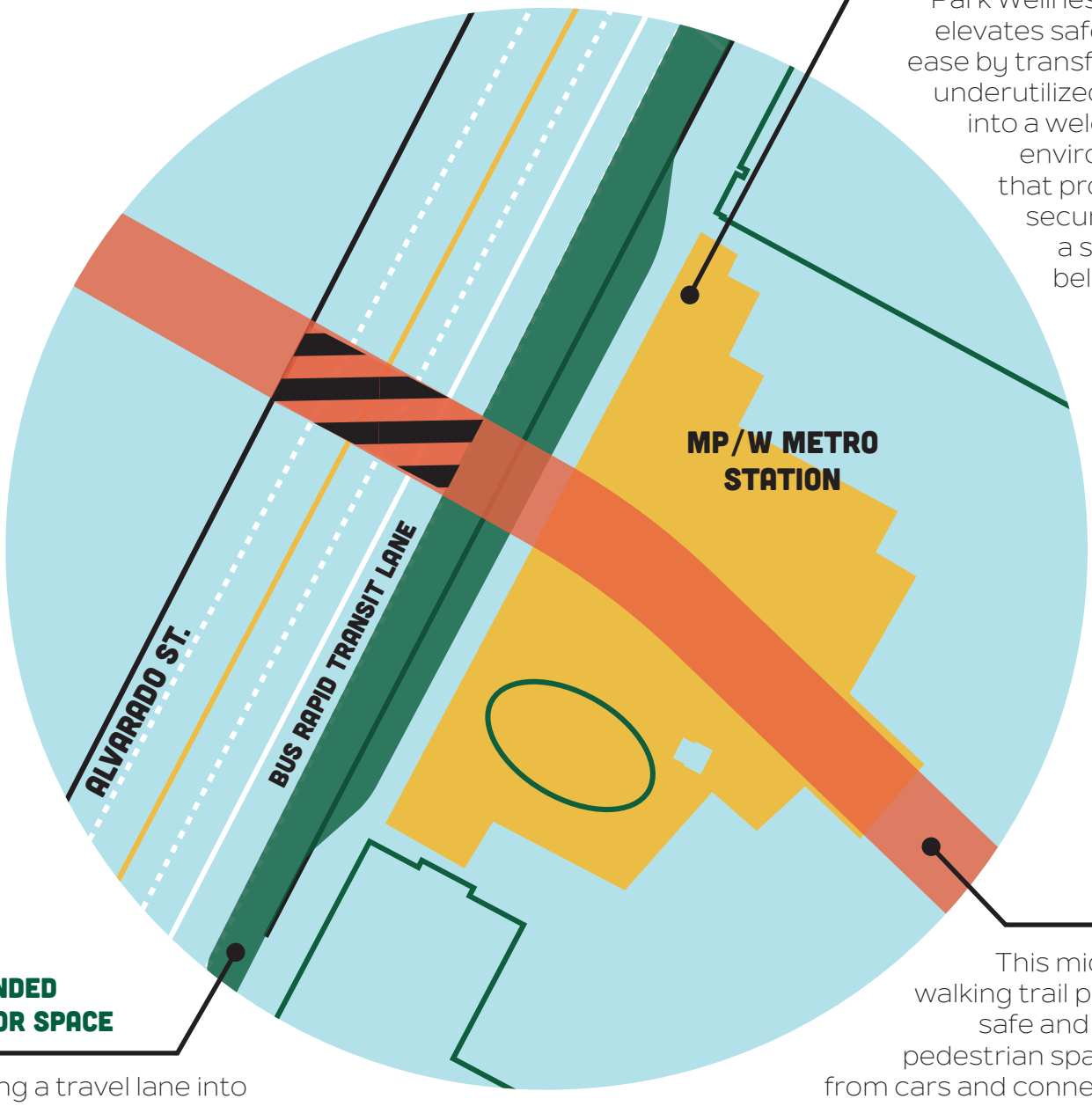
While several of the top choices, such as wider sidewalks, better crosswalks, and cleaner streets were popular among men and women, the preference for slower traffic (or no cars altogether) was disproportionately favored by women with and without children present.

03 PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS

Ideas to increased pedestrian safety and ease

WELLNESS PLAZA

The MacArthur Park Wellness Plaza elevates safety and ease by transforming underutilized space into a welcoming environment that promotes security and a sense of belonging.



SAFE TRAVEL TRAIL

This mid-block walking trail provides safe and central pedestrian space free from cars and connects key transit hubs with K-12 schools and youth-centric amenities. Increasing travel ease, this path also can reduces travel burden on caregivers and offer more efficient travel options

EXPANDED VENDOR SPACE

Turning a travel lane into expanded vendor space increases the amount of sidewalk space available for pedestrians, especially those with strollers, while also reducing car speeds by reducing and narrowing lanes

HOW CAN WE REDUCE CAR-PEDESTRIAN CONFLICT?

Many people on Alvarado Street in front of MacArthur Park Station find themselves faced with obstacles as they navigate their way through the various vendors and their customers, trash cans, portable bathrooms, and light poles. We found that 31 people stepped into Alvarado St. to travel parallel to the sidewalk, indicating a need for more space for pedestrians to travel. These obstacles and narrow sidewalks impact individuals' commute times, discourages people from traveling through the space such as families and people with disabled devices, and triggers individuals to step off the sidewalk at times—bringing them in danger with oncoming traffic. With the high rate of traffic related incidents along Alvarado St. these obstacles and obstructions negatively impact commuters and expose them to potential dangers. Women and caregivers are constantly having to choose safety over ease.

INTERVENTION 1: SIDEWALK WIDENING

Many people on Alvarado Street in front of MP/W Station find themselves faced with obstacles as they navigate their way through the various vendors and customers, trash cans, portable bathrooms, and bus benches. We found that 31 people stepped into Alvarado St. to travel parallel to the sidewalk, indicating a need for more space for pedestrians to travel. These obstacles and narrow sidewalks impact individuals' commute times, discourages people from traveling through the space such as caregivers and people with assistive devices, and triggers individuals to step off the sidewalk at times—bringing them in danger with oncoming traffic. With the high rate of traffic related incidents along Alvarado Street these obstacles and obstructions negatively impact commuters and expose them to potential dangers.

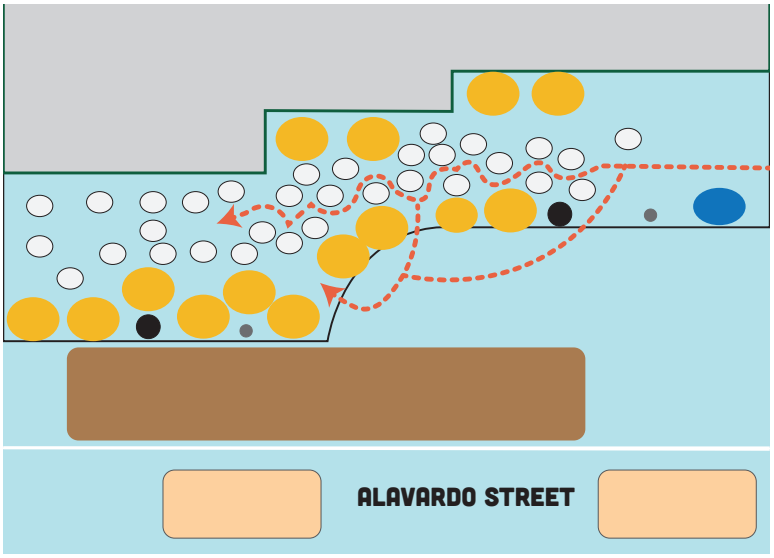
The first proposed intervention looks to extend the sidewalks along Alvarado St. by eight (8) feet for a total width of 21 feet. This will provide a safer and easier commute for caregivers, women, and people with assistive devices, and also provide a designated area for street vendors to operate in.

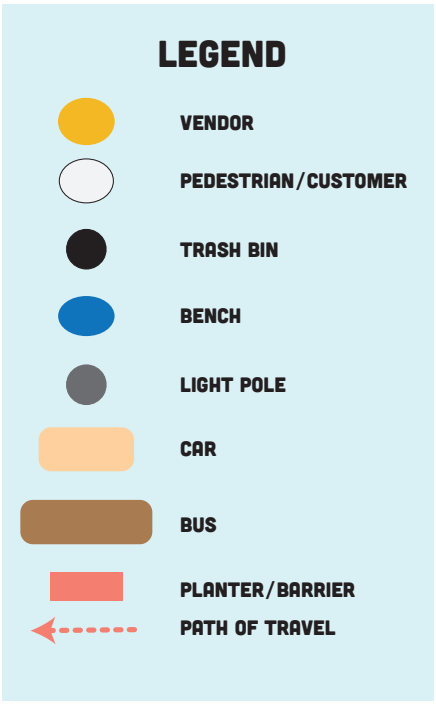
Data has shown that the area around MP/W Station is prone to traffic accidents.With larger sidewalk, less individuals will have to step into traffic to move around obstacles. Vendors and items such as trash cans, poles, bus shelters/benches, and portable bathrooms can utilize the extra space, providing more commuting space for others. New trees will be planted and cement planters will be provided parallel to the expanded sidewalk to provide a barrier between the sidewalk and the existing bus lane. The expanded sidewalk along with the retained bus lane will narrow the street and in tandem with the second intervention, provide a traffic calming effect to further slow traffic and provide a safer pedestrian oriented street.

EXISTING AND FUTURE WALKING PATHS

A Diagram of Walked Paths

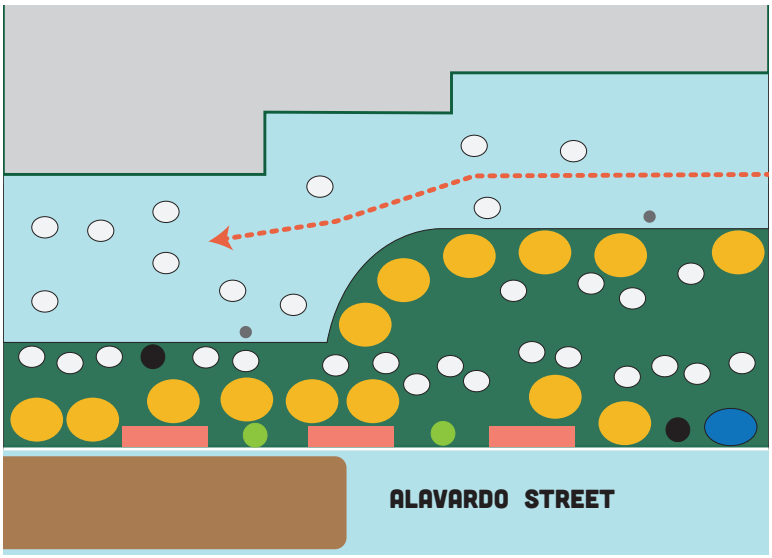
BEFORE





The existing conditions along Alavarado Street make for a very congested public right of way with obstacles such as vendors, customers, trash bins, and light poles making it difficult for women, caregivers, and people with assistive devices to navigate. Two particular locations between Wilshire Blvd and 7th Street create a bottleneck, as shown above, that forces pedestrians to step out onto the street and into traffic.

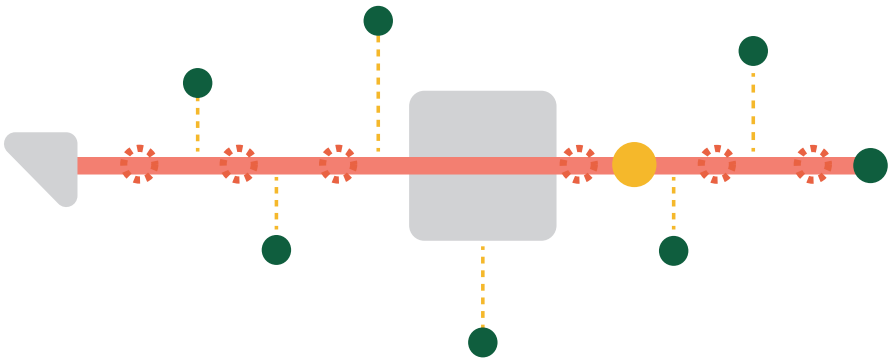
AFTER



The proposed intervention of widening the sidewalk by 8 feet, as shown to the left, will alleviate the congestion and allow for pedestrians and in particular women, caregivers, and disabled people, to navigate the space with ease and comfort.

HOW CAN WE REDUCE THE TIME BURDEN OF PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ON WOMEN AND CAREGIVERS?

Mapping those who stepped off the sidewalk highlighted two key findings: 1.) roughly equal numbers of people are exiting the designated walking areas to cross the street as they are to avoid sidewalk congestion and 2.) women were far less likely to use risky areas to increase travel efficiency, and 3.) no travelers with children crossed mid-block. Moreover, all women who crossed Alvarado Street at an undesignated crosswalk traveled with a man. Three women, including two elderly women, crossed mid-block along the much quieter Westlake Avenue, which had only a handful of cars drive by during the observation period. Lastly, White women were more likely than women of color to cross the street at undesignated areas. These travel patterns indicate that alongside less congested sidewalks, pedestrians want and need more safe ways to cross the street, particularly mid-block, in areas that connect transit stops with other key amenities, such as the park. Furthermore, this data suggests that women of color and caregivers are less willing to risk safety for travel efficiency, increasing the time burden of commuting. The difference between women's crossing behavior at Westlake Avenue versus Alvarado Street also indicates that women would likely opt to cross the road mid-block if conditions were safer.



INTERVENTION 2: MACARTHUR SAFE TRAVEL TRAIL

The MacArthur Safe Travel Trail would implement a mile-long mid-block walk and bikeway running across our study area to break up the longer stretches of north/west travel. This trail, located roughly at the halfway point of the 700 and 600 blocks, would start just south of Lafayette Park, running through MacArthur Park, MP/W Metro Station, and ending at John Liechty Middle School on Valencia Street. This route would connect eleven K-12 schools, the Lafayette Library, several youth-oriented programs such as HOLA and Art Division, to the Safe Travel Trail. The current mapped route crosses through alleys and parking lots, making it highly feasible to physically implement.

MACARTHUR SAFE TRAVEL TRAIL

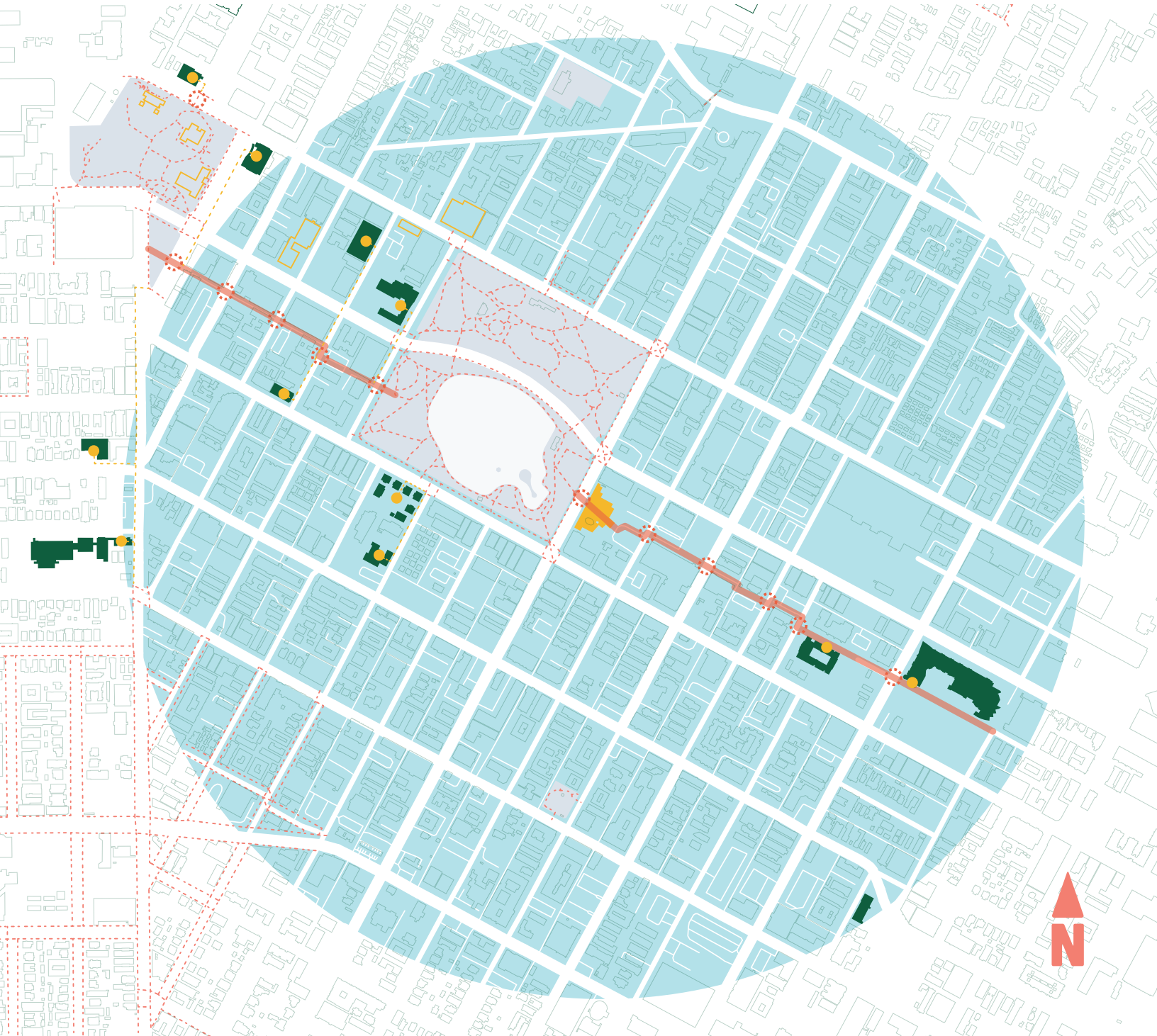
0.5 mile radius from MP/W Metro

EXISTING CONDITIONS

- MP/W metro station
- K-12 school
- Youth/social service
- Walking path

PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS

- Safe Travel Trail
- Safe to School route extensions
- Flashing mid-block crosswalk

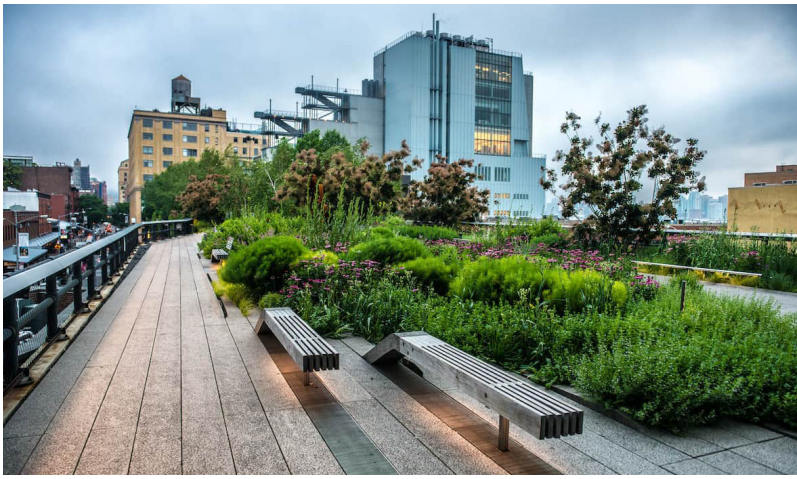


Alongside the designated mid-block travel, this trail would include traffic slowing measures like speed table crosswalks with flashing crosswalk lights. This would afford more travel efficiency to all pedestrian and bicyclists, while specifically increasing travel efficiency and ease to women and caregivers. Additionally, this youth-friendly travel way can unburden caregivers from transporting children to school, activities, and services.

PRECEDENTS:

Bradley Plaza Green Alley in the Pacoima neighborhood of Los Angeles is a project from Pacoima Beautiful and the Trust for Public Land. Their project perfectly visualize's how Los Angeles' alley ways can become climate-friendly connective cooridors for save pedestrian and bike travel.

Atlanta's Beltline project incorporates community art to enliven urban underpasses along the trail-to-rails project. Similarly, this project will incorpotate murals and artwork to make car-free alley ways lively and inviting.



The New York Highline offers a space for resbit among the urban environment. The Save Travel Trail will incorporate wildflower gardens and pathway seating to make this trail double as a connective urban space.

HOW CAN WE MAKE TRAVEL SAFER?

The MacArthur Park/ Westlake region is home to busy sidewalks, bustling with street vending and pedestrian activity. However, the density of people, litter, and informal commerce can create obstructions and mar the pedestrian experience. Our observations highlight multiple obstacles along Alvarado St., that women are less likely to step off the sidewalks, and that caregivers traveling with dependents experience a longer time toll as they exit from the Metro station. Additionally, during our engagement activity, almost half of our participants voiced that cleaner streets would make their commute easier and would make them feel safer. Most were feminine presenting. This intervention aims to improve perceptions of the MacArthur Park Station by incorporating wellness as a strategy to improve the experience for women and caregivers.

INTERVENTION 3: MACARTHUR PARK WELLNESS PLAZA

This intervention aims transform the area outside of the Macarthur Park Metro station along Alvarado Street to foster wellness in an area that has been characterized as dirty and unsafe. This definition of wellness aims to ensure racial and gender inclusivity through: safety, programming, culture, and opportunities for leisure.

SAFETY THROUGH ACTIVATION

The Wellness Plaza aims to activate the underutilized space by drawing people and life to the area. The street furniture, amphitheater and layout of the space encourage rest, dance, and opportunities for gathering. With more eyes on the street, especially those of women and children, people will feel safer taking space.

PROGRAMMING THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

The Wellness Plaza celebrates the diversity of the region, including the large population of Central American/ Maya community that vends throughout. The learning trail highlights the Maya calendar, lending opportunities for children to learn about their ancestry. Additionally, this intervention recommends incorporating culture in the street furniture design, determined through a robust engagement process.

PLACEMAKING THROUGH CULTURE

The amphitheater and street furniture provide space for performance and art. This is a great opportunity to build on existing resources and partner with the Levitt Pavilion, which curates culturally relevant performances in MacArthur Park. Additionally, this space can be used for other informal community gathering or organizing spaces, continuing the legacy of protest at park.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT FOR LEISURE

This Plaza provides opportunity for rest as people wait for the bus, metro station, or simply need a break from the busy surroundings. For caregivers, places to sit and break from carrying a child or belongings are especially necessary. Trees and planters with native, sensory plants also foster the spirit of rest.

04 ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

Building a MacArthur/Westlake area free of traffic conflict

Westlake stands out as the second most perilous neighborhood for pedestrians in Los Angeles. Regrettably, individuals from communities of color and those with lower incomes bear a disproportionate burden of traffic-related accidents and fatalities.[1] Through our community mapping and engagement activities, we shed light on the distinct ways in which women, families, and individuals with disabilities prioritize safety over efficiency. The interventions we propose directly address the dilemma many pedestrians, particularly women and caregivers of color, face while commuting: increased risk of traffic violence or increased time poverty due to safety. Our research illustrated that women of color and caregivers were least likely to use risky short cuts during their travel in the MacArthur/Westlake area. Further, we found that caregivers spent twice as long on average navigating the space to get to their destination than their male counterparts. While these micro-choices may seem small, let's imagine what these interventions might mean for Gloria, a mother of two young children.

GLORIA CURRENT REALITY

Gloria lives in the Lafayette Park Apartments with her husband and two small children, Sofia (5) and Isabel (2). Sofia just started preschool at Esperanza Elementary, just a mere 1.3 miles away, or a 7-minute car ride. However, Gloria's husband uses their car, so she has to bring her daughters to school another way. The 30 minute walk is way too long with small children, so Gloria takes the bus down 6th street to cut out some of the walking time. While Gloria pushes Isabel in a stroller, she knows Sofia moves slowly when she carries her own backpack. Sofia also tends to get distracted by the flowers and street signs as they walk. Google tells Gloria that it's a 5 minute walk to the bus stop, but she knows she has to play it safe and schedule at least 10 minutes to walk the 0.2 miles to 6th Street. When they get off the bus, it takes their family another 12 minutes, double the usual 6 minutes, to walk the last 0.3 miles. Once Gloria drops Sofia off, she makes her way back to the Metro Station to take Isabel to her mother's house in Koreatown. Without Sofia walking alongside her, Gloria can maybe get to the metro station a little quicker, but with busy roads, it still takes her close to 15 minutes to walk the 0.3 miles, and another 15 to reach her mom's house. In one morning alone, Gloria will spend over 50 minutes in walking time to address her family's childcare needs. Gloria does this trip twice a day, five days a week. By the end of the week, traveling with children will have cost her an additional 260 minutes, the equivalent of about $75 at her minimum wage job. By the end of the year, her time toll is 13,520 minutes. **At the most modest estimates, Gloria loses 225 hours—equivalent to $3,800 in wages—annually just from her slowed walking pace when traveling with her children. While this is a severe toll, the risk of expediting that walk—whether by walking diagonally across the street at unmarked spots or stepping off the sidewalk circumnavigate around vendors along Alvarado Street—could be lethal.**

[1] Raifman, Matthew A., and Ernani F. Choma. 2022. "Disparities in Activity and Traffic Fatalities by Race/Ethnicity." American Journal of Preventive Medicine 63(2): 160–67.

GLORIA'S MORNING ROUTE

CURRENT ROUTE

Walking with children

Bussing with children

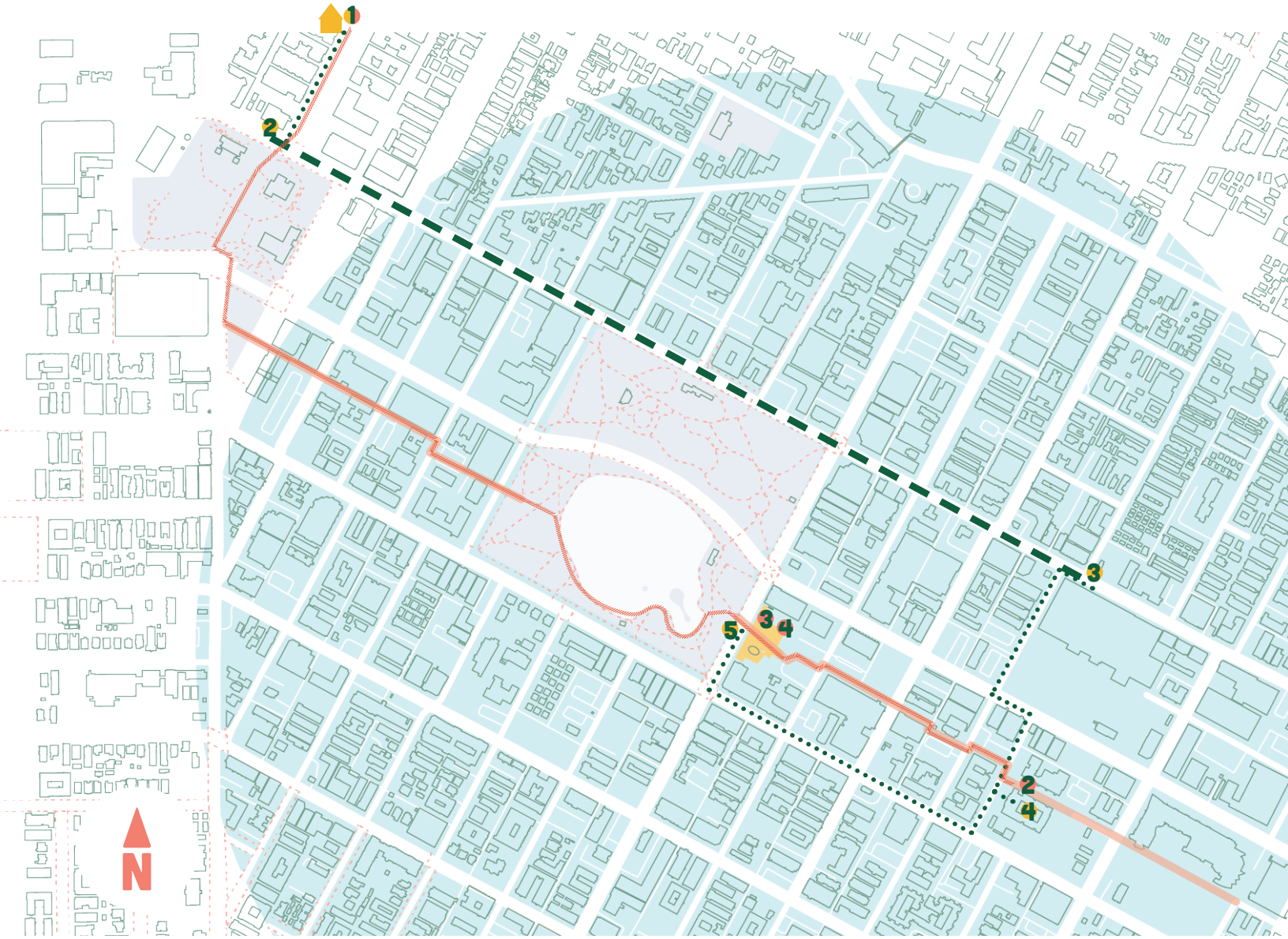
1. Leave home with Sofia & Isabel
2. Get on bus with Sofia & Isabel
3. Get off bus with Sofia & Isabel
4. Drop Sofia off at school
5. Head to the Metro with Isabel

0.5 mile radius from MP/W Metro

FUTURE ROUTE

Biking with children

1. Leave home with Sofia & Isabel
2. Drop Sofia off at school
3. Head to the Metro with Isabel
4. Gloria has enough time to buy something for breakfast, (she forgot to eat this morning)



A MORE EQUITABLE FUTURE FOR GLORIA

Our three streetscape and public space improvements strive to forge an equitable public realm that places people like Gloria and her family at the forefront, enabling them to experience safety and ease in their neighborhoods. Through these interventions we imagine that Gloria's commute, and life, can be transformed.

WIDENED SIDEWALKS

On the way back from dropping Sofia off at school, Gloria walks West along 7th Street and then up Alvarado Street to the MacArthur Park Metro Station to take the B (Red) Line and drop Isabel off at her grandmother's house in Koreatown. The widened sidewalks and slower vehicles allow Gloria and Isabel to walk up Alvarado Street with ease and safety. The sidewalk is wide, free of obstacles, and lined with trees lending shade. With a bustling crowd of street vendors in the designated vendor area, Gloria and Isabel can't help but stop and grab a snack and light refreshment from one of their favorite street vendors. Surrounded by their community and snacks in hand, Gloria and Isabel make their ease of a stroll to MacArthur Park Station.

THE MACARTHUR SAFE TRAVEL TRAIL

Gloria's bus commute doesn't totally align with the MacArthur Safe Travel Trail, but, in the first year Gloria is able to reclaims her 15 minutes getting to and from the metro station. Over that year, she realizes how much more relaxed she is when taking the Trail. Once or twice, she saw a parent riding a bike with a child-seat. She begins to wonder if she could do that. She talks to her husband about buying a bike. When Sofia enters first grade, rather than walk to the bus, Gloria puts helmets on her and her sister. She buckles Isabel into her child seat, and Isabel climbs on her bike. The three of them bike through Lafayette park and get on the Safe Travel Trail, riding all the way to school. Now, instead of a 28 minute bus trip with lots of slow walking, it takes them 12 minutes to bike to school. Instead of a 15 minute walk back to the Metro Station, it takes Gloria and Isabel 3 minutes on her bike. Once she gets to her mom's house less than 10 minutes later, she locks up her bike and hops on the bus to work. Gloria's new morning commute schedule went from over an hour total, to less than 25 minutes. Not only does she save money on bus fare, her commute is now quicker than if she were walking without children at all.

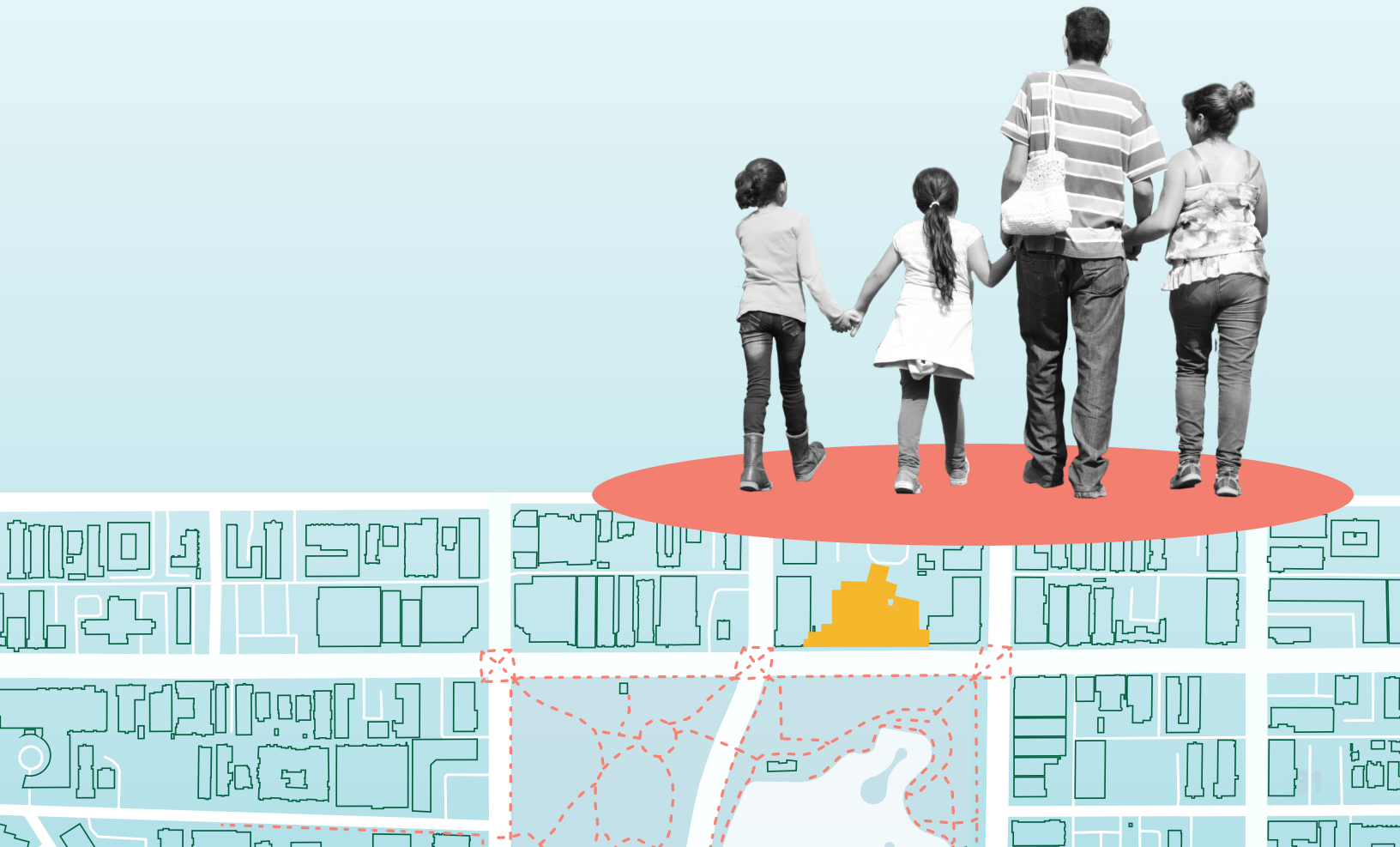
When Sofia heads off to Leichty Middle School, Gloria trusts her and Isabel, now 12 and 9, to ride safely to school by themselves. After school, the two girls use

the Trail to ride directly to their music classes at Heart of Los Angeles in Lafayette Park, which means that Gloria doesn't have to worry about working shorter hours or arranging additional childcare. After becoming full-time at her job, she's feeling more fulfilled in her work and less stressed about finances. She still loves the Trail though. Often, she'll invite her neighborhood friends to walk or bike over to the Wellness Plaza to watch a performance or get some fresh tamales.

MACARTHUR PARK WELLNESS PLAZA

The MacArthur Park Wellness plaza has transformed the ways Gloria and her family interact with the public realm. On most Sundays, you can catch Gloria, her husband, Sofia and Isabel catching a performance at the plaza. Sofia and Isabel have grown a deeper appreciation for their community and culture, as they've spent a lot of time learning about the Maya calendar and ancestry through the learning trail. As the girls get older, Gloria and her husband feel good about Sofia and Isabel going down the the plaza by themselves to meet up with their cousins and friends. Gloria's family has noticed an increase in their use of public transit, as they feel safer taking space at the MacArthur Park/ Westlake station.

On the next pages, explore how these three interventions will visual transformation of MacArthur/Westlake area into a more equitable neighborhood for all residents.



INTERVENTION 1:

WIDENED SIDEWALK OUTCOMES

Widening the sidewalk along Alvarado Street has numerous benefits which range from added greenery and shade to easier and safer travel for those most affected - caregivers, women, and people with assistive devices. The wider sidewalks together with the Safe Travel Trail will slow down vehicular traffic through the corridor and increase safety for pedestrians.

PROTECTIVE PLANTER BARRIERS

ADDED GREENERY

SAFER TRAVEL AND REDUCED CONGESTION

DEDICATED VENDOR SPACE

BEFORE: HARD-TO-NAVIGATE SIDEWALKS

AFTER: DESIGNATED VENDOR SPACE AND SAFE SIDEWALKS

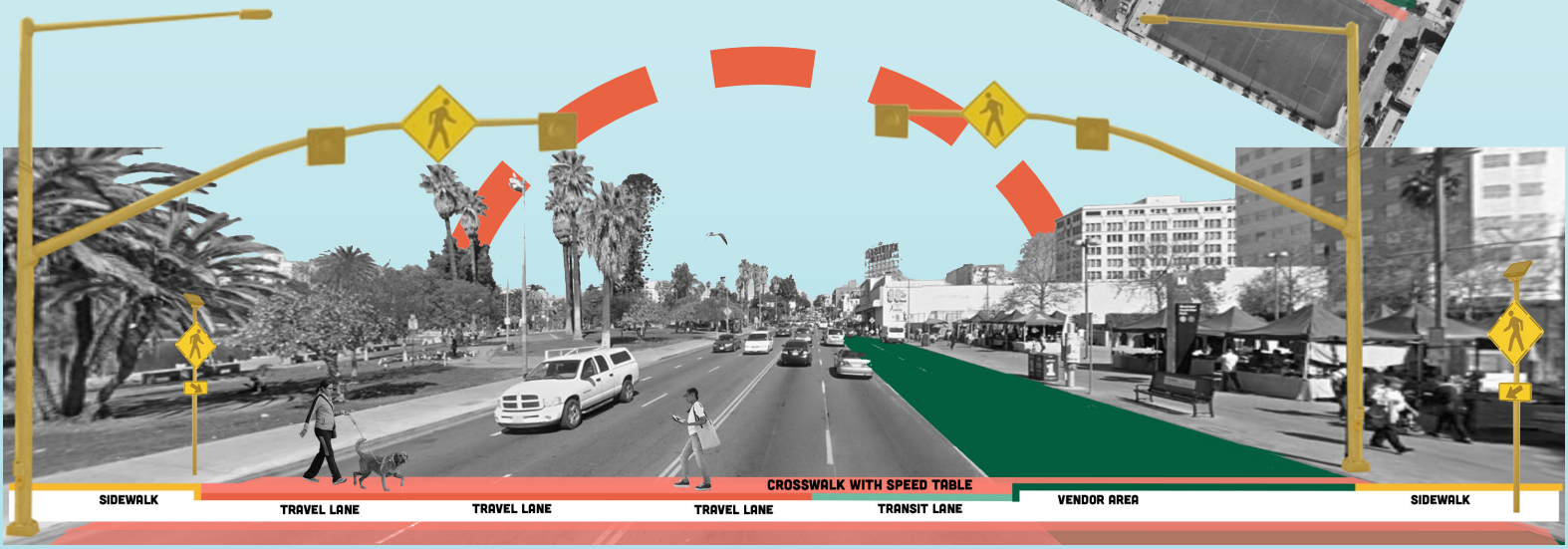
INTERVENTION 2:

THE MACARTHUR SAFE TRAVEL TRAIL

Women of color face the most transportation barriers, including time poverty and increased risk of traffic injury and death. Additionally, our research showed they are the most risk averse, using safer and slower routes. The MacArthur Safe Travel Trail offers an efficient, beautiful and pedestrian friendly way to travel between Westlake's transportation hubs, parks, schools, and social service amenities. Further, this route will allow women and caregivers to have both safety and ease in their daily lives.

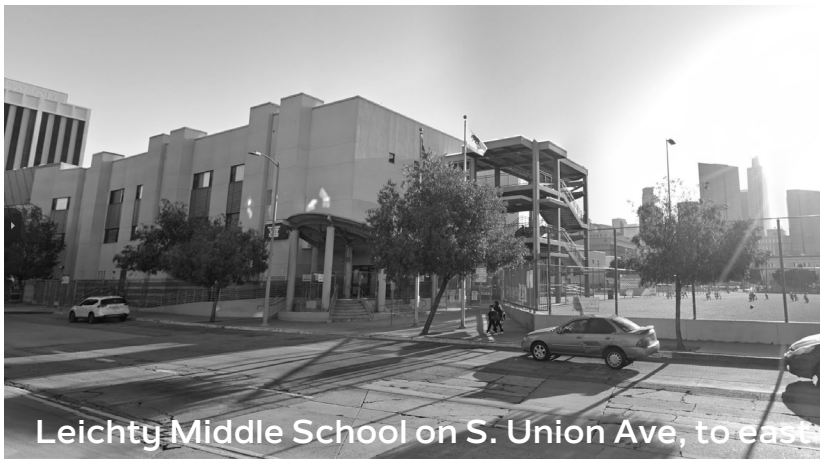
CREATING A SAFE AND EFFICIENT CAR-FREE TRAIL

Alongside a more time-efficient route, the trail includes safety amenties to slow cars where it intersects with traffic, such as raised crosswalks with flashing lights.

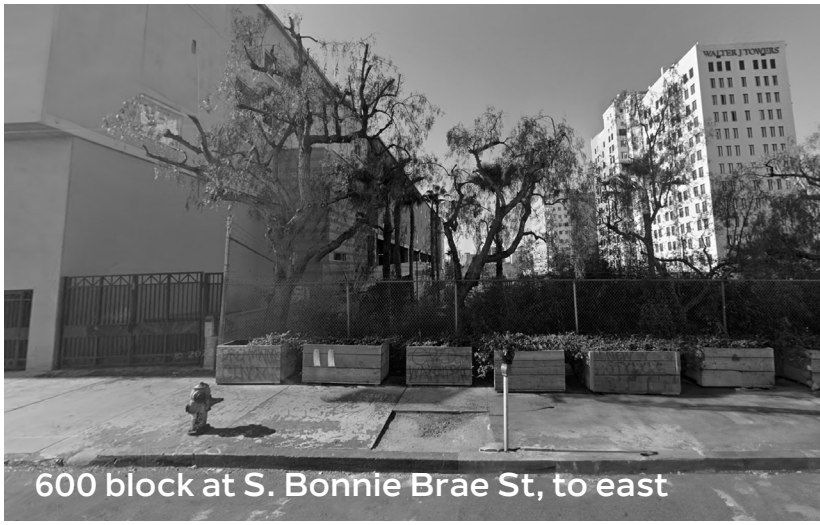


BEFORE: UNDERUTILIZED ALLEYS AND STREETS


600 block @ S. Union Ave, to east


Leichty Middle School on S. Union Ave, to east


600 block at S. Rampart Blvd, to west


600 block at S. Bonnie Brae St, to east


600 block at S. Rampart Blvd facing east

AFTER: THE MACARTHUR SAFE TRAVEL TRAIL

INTERVENTION 3:

MACARTHUR PARK WELLNESS PLAZA

SAFETY THROUGH ACTIVATION

PROGRAMMING
THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

WELLNESS

PLACEMAKING
THROUGH CULTURE

BUILT ENVIRONMENT
FOR LEISURE

BEFORE: UNDERUTILIZED AND SURVEILLED SPACE

AFTER: MACARTHUR PARK WELLNESS PLAZA

AMENITIES:

- AMPHITHEATER
- SEATING
- PLANTERS
- LEARNING TRAIL

The reimagined MacArthur Park Plaza celebrates women, caregivers, and the diverse cultures that make up the neighborhood by providing a space to feel safe, seen, and centered. The plaza rejects the existing hostile infrastructure and instead, fosters a spirit of joy, community, and care.