

welcome to
WESTERN

Community Snapshot

October 2017



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COUNCILMEMBER • DISTRICT 4

LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT
HERB WESSON
LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCILMEMBER, DISTRICT 10



Chris H. from the Vape Shop (125 N. Western Ave) meets with Alejandro from the LA-Más team.

Introduction

Welcome to Western: Enhancing the Vibrancy and Walkability of Western Avenue

Welcome to Western is a year-long street enhancement project that engages the users of Western Ave – pedestrians, community members, small business owners, customers, transit riders, schools, institutions, and organizations – between Melrose and 3rd Street. LA-Más will be facilitating a community-driven process that will result in physical streetscape improvements that upgrade the pedestrian experience and benefit the small businesses on Western Avenue. Through robust business and community outreach, *Welcome to Western* will engage diverse Western Ave constituents in a participatory planning process, and better connect the local economy to the surrounding community.

Welcome to Western is a Great Streets project sponsored by Mayor Eric Garcetti and made possible by Councilmember David Ryu and Council President Herb Wesson in partnership with LA-Más and the Koreatown Youth & Community Center (KYCC).

This Community Snapshot Report is intended to establish a framework and lay the foundation for the future of the *Welcome to Western* project. It will include a brief community profile (providing history and context), business profile (highlighting canvassing outcomes), built environment profile (assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the physical streetscape), and next steps. This report is intended to begin identifying the assets, challenges, and opportunities that this commercial corridor presents.

Future community engagement efforts, including ongoing conversations with community members and an inclusive design process, will build upon this initial Community Snapshot report so that the *Welcome to Western* team can help reimagine and realize a Western Avenue that reflects the needs and wants of the community.

Western Ave: By the Numbers

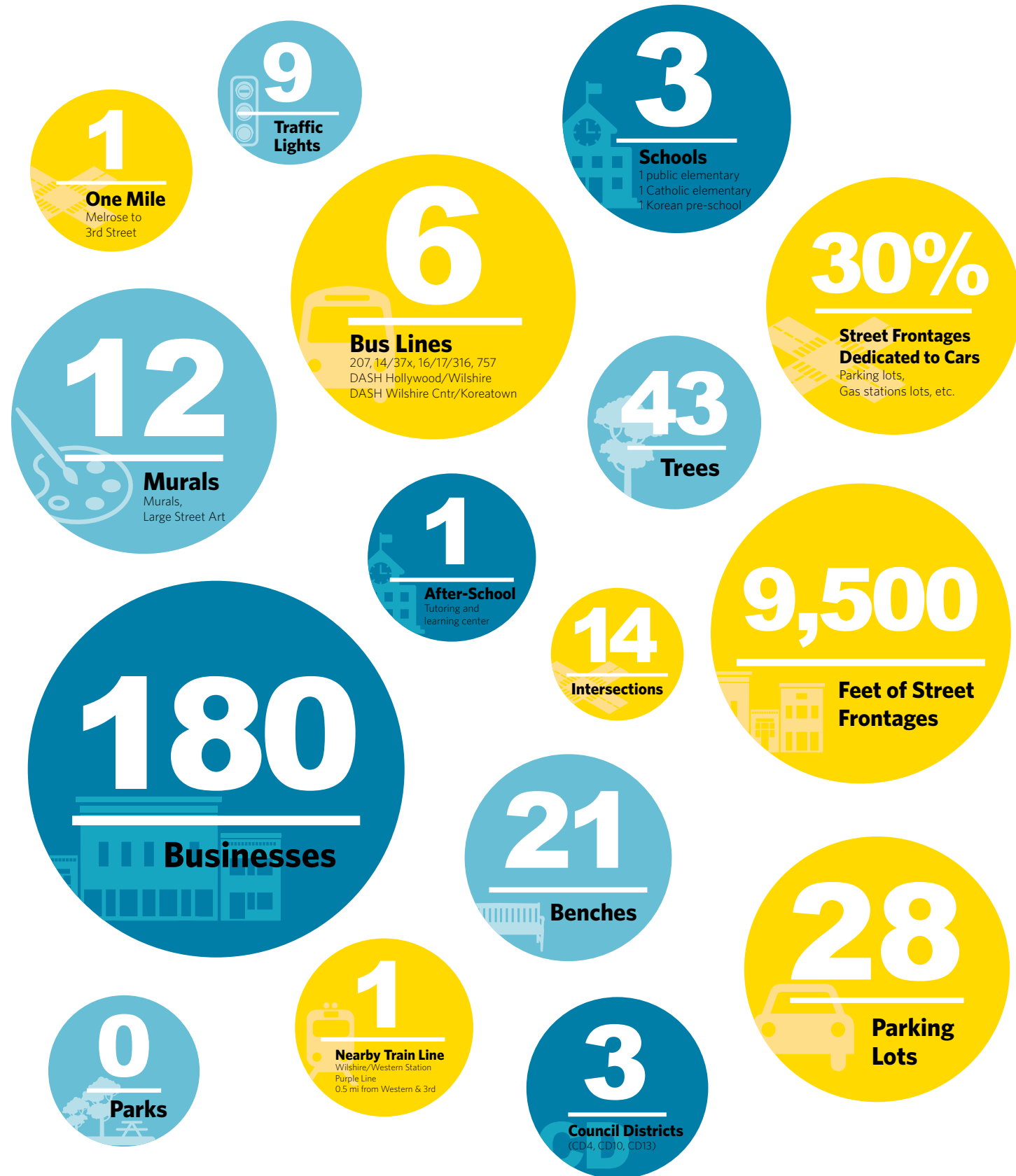


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1. Community Profile

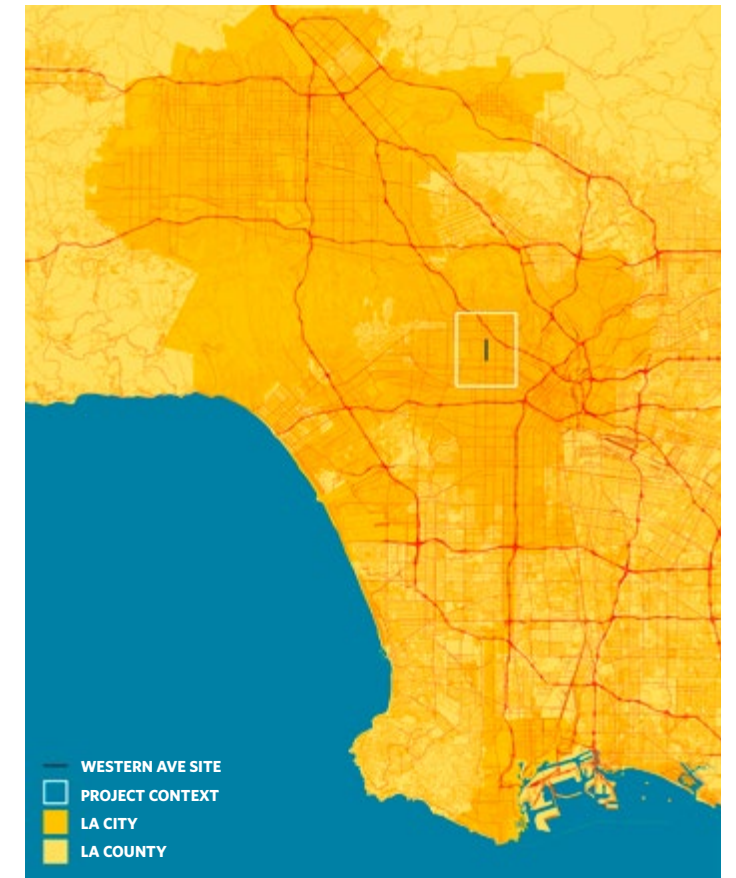


Alejandro from the LA-Más team meets with Martha M. from Shiseido Ethical Drugs (254 N. Western Ave.)

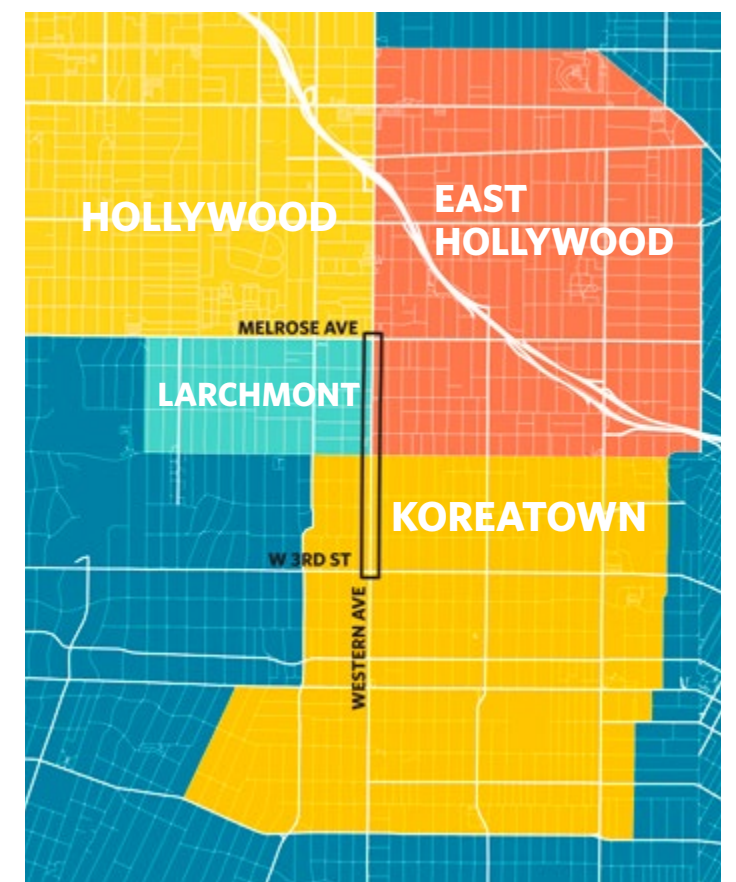
Introduction

Western Avenue is one of Los Angeles' longest north-south streets, extending 29 miles in total and crossing almost the entire length of Central Los Angeles, from the 101 Freeway down to San Pedro.

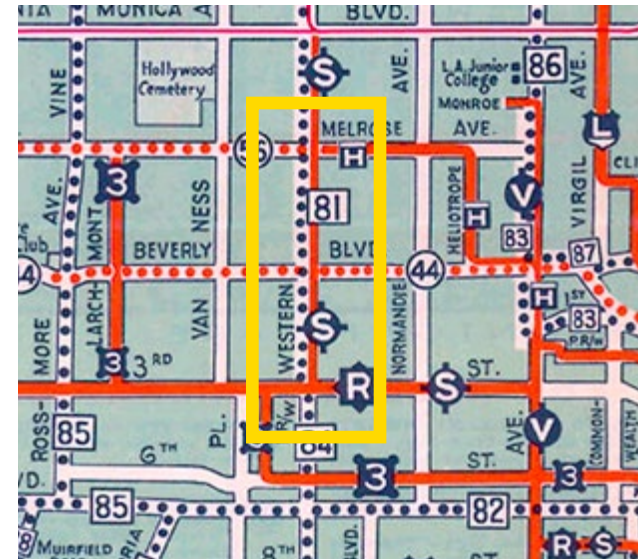
The *Welcome to Western* project focuses on Western Avenue between Melrose Avenue and West 3rd Street. This one-mile segment of Western Ave is generally located in mid-city, but stands at the intersection of the Koreatown, Larchmont, Hollywood, and East Hollywood neighborhoods. This stretch of Western Ave is zoned for commercial uses and is surrounded by residential lots to the east and west.



Los Angeles City Map, highlighting Western Ave.



Welcome to Western project area, Western Ave from Melrose to 3rd St.



1934 Route Map for the LA Streetcar, showing Western Ave connected to surrounding districts via three separate lines.



View of Western Ave between 1st St and 2nd St, ca. October 1924, featuring a fire station (building still stands today), Wilshire Fireproof Storage Company, heating contractor, movers and packers of furniture, shipping, etc. (Source: California Historical Society Collection at USC)



View of Western Ave looking north from 1st St, ca. 1924, featuring the small original See's Candy store (building still stands today) and other shops including the Chandler & Cleveland Agency, Nash automobile sales, Hercules Gasoline, Ramona Inn Spanish Cafe, and a tailor. (Source: California Historical Society Collection at USC)

Context

Historical Context

Western Ave first officially became part of Los Angeles in 1909, and the surrounding area began to develop as a streetcar suburb in the first few decades of the twentieth century. By the 1920s, Western Ave had developed into a commercial corridor that was a walkable “main street” that provided a range of goods and services serving the surrounding community. At that time, the streetcar system connected Western Ave to Downtown and the thriving Hollywood and Wilshire districts.

Following the dismantling of the streetcar system and other large-scale urban shifts, the area experienced a period of disinvestment around the middle of the century, followed by a large influx of Korean immigrants moving into the area now known as Koreatown in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1992, the Rodney King riots significantly impacted most of Central LA, leading to major damage to many Korean-owned businesses and a movement of many Korean residents away from Koreatown, but also a catalyzing of the city to begin major infrastructural and policy changes.

Fun Fact: The Sees family opened the first See's Candies shop and kitchen at 135 N. Western Avenue in November 1921 (see photo to the left.) The building still stands today and is now a Tom N Toms Coffee shop.



Political Boundaries

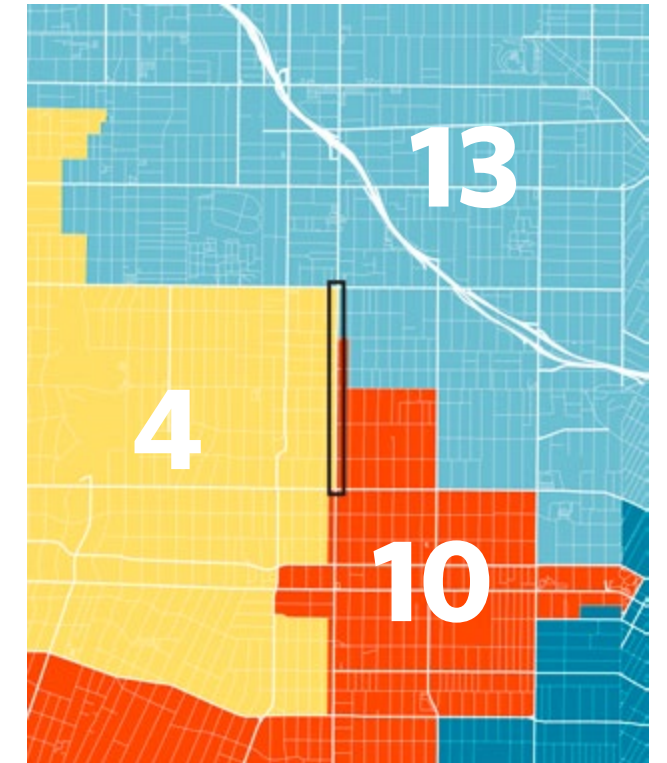
The entire western side of Western Ave is a part of Councilmember David Ryu's district, Council District Four (CD4). Along the eastern side of Western Ave, the two northernmost blocks (from Melrose to Maplewood) is a part of Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell's district, CD13. The southern section (from Maplewood to 3rd St) of the eastern side of Western Ave is a part of Council President Herb Wesson's district (CD10).

Given the overlap of several Council Districts, it has been previously difficult to mobilize a concerted effort for public investment along this stretch of Western Ave. Each Council District has a different constituency, resulting in varied priorities. This project reflects a partnership that connects Council Districts and reverses the sentiment that Western Ave is a corridor relegated to the margins.

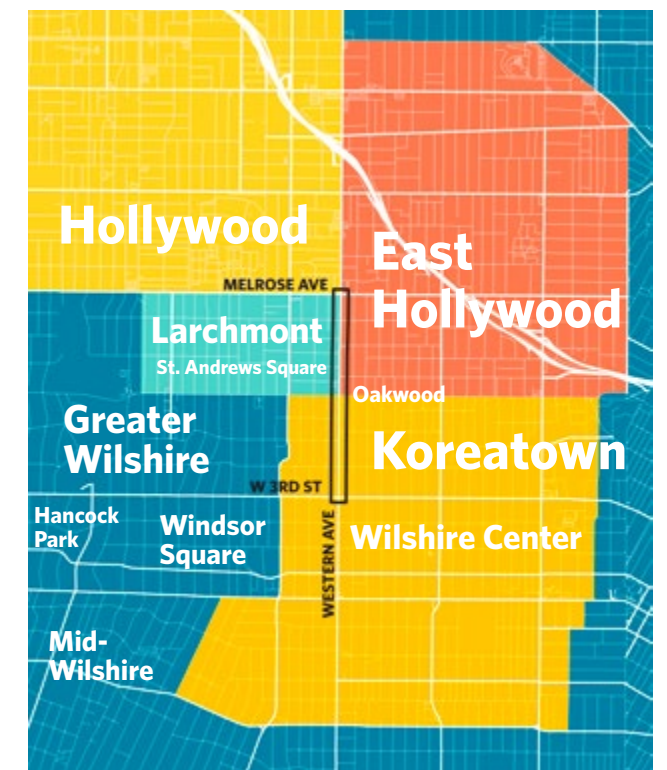
Neighborhood Politics

Similar to political boundaries, Western Ave is also on the edge of several neighborhoods, specifically Koreatown, Larchmont, Hollywood, and East Hollywood. Each of these neighborhoods has distinctly different racial and income demographics. Although this corridor is represented by both the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council and Wilshire Center Koreatown Neighborhood Council, neighborhood clarity remains a debate. On Nextdoor, an online neighborhood discussion platform, the project area is divided between the following five neighborhoods: St. Andrews Square; Koreatown/Southeast Hollywood; Southeast Hollywood West; Melrose Heights; and East Hollywood Wilton. In addition to all of the neighborhoods listed above, parts of the project area are sometimes referred to as part of Oakwood, mid-City, Greater Wilshire, and mid-Wilshire.

One of the goals for this project is to help contribute to a more clearly defined identity for Western Ave that resonates with and connects all these adjacent neighborhoods.



Map of Council Districts around Western Ave. CD4: David Ryu, CD10: Herb Wesson, CD13: Mitch O'Farrell



Map of Neighborhoods around Western Ave., featuring Koreatown, Larchmont, Hollywood, East Hollywood, and more.

Context (cont.) & CAC

Demographics

The community surrounding Western Ave is ethnically, racially, and economically diverse. According to the US Census ACS data 5-year estimates from 2012, the neighborhood surrounding Western Ave is approximately 45% Hispanic, 36% Asian, 14% White, and 3% Black. Many languages are spoken in the area, namely English, Korean, and Spanish.

The Council District political boundaries roughly correspond to patterns in racial and income divides. The western half of Western Ave, in CD4, houses a more white and affluent community. The northeast section of Western, in CD13, houses a predominantly Hispanic community. The southeast section of Western, in CD10, houses a predominantly Asian community. To the west of Western Ave are low-density residential blocks that feature relatively high average sales prices and easier access to the active commercial corridor of Larchmont Boulevard. To the east of Western Ave are residential blocks with lower average sale prices.¹

The 2016 population within a 1 mile ring around this project area (using base address of 100 No. Western Ave) is about 94,000.² The area is relatively high-density and is surrounded by some of the highest density neighborhoods in the city: Koreatown is ranked #1 high-density neighborhood in LA, East Hollywood is #3, Hollywood is #7, and Larchmont is #25.³

Sources:

1. Lilly O'Brien-Kovari. "Let A Hundred Merchants Bloom: How Local Economic Activity can be addressed through the LA Great Streets Initiative." Report for UCLA Master of Urban & Regional Planning. June 2015.
2. Great Streets 2016 Market Summary, made by CD4, using STDB and VEDC
3. Los Angeles Times, Mapping L.A. <<http://maps.latimes.com>>

Community Advisory Council (CAC)

The Community Advisory Council (CAC) was formed by *Welcome to Western* project partners in September 2017 and is a group of Western Ave stakeholders that have expressed interest in supporting the project. Specifically, CAC members will continue receiving regular updates about the project as it progresses and support the success of the project by providing direction and suggestions about how City resources should be invested. The CAC members will keep all project partners accountable and ensure that Western Ave constituents are engaged in all aspects of the process.

The CAC includes representatives from community-serving organizations such as YMCA, Korean Community Services, KYCC, Korean Churches for Community Development (KCCD), religious centers such as the Oriental Mission Church, Koreasah Buddhist Temple, and Wilshire Presbyterian, civic institutions such as Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council and Wilshire Center Neighborhood Council, representatives from local schools and afterschool programs, and representatives from Council Districts 4 and 10. LA-Más is actively working to build stronger relationships with more community-serving organizations and business associations, local movers and shakers, and any other stakeholders that are interested in shaping the future of Western Ave.



Avital (LA-Más) enjoying a meal with members of the Koreasah Buddhist Temple.

2. Business Profile

Overview of Small Businesses

The Western Ave business corridor has a wide range of business types and users. There is a mix of small storefronts, strip malls, large retail buildings set back from the street by private parking lots in front, religious institutions with entrances through back parking lots, auto-centric businesses (car dealers, body shops), two elementary schools with no frontage on Western Ave, and a post office. There does not appear to be any cohesive approach to building design and corridor planning. All street parking is metered (1 hour maximum).

The northern section of the project area (from Melrose to Maplewood) is dominated by furniture stores with large warehouse commercial spaces, although furniture stores are also prevalent throughout the length of the corridor. Many of these furniture stores have been on Western Ave for decades, but the industry has been experiencing a decline due to the popularity of online shopping and the rising rents for large commercial spaces. As a result, many furniture stores on Western Ave have closed or moved elsewhere, leaving behind large vacant properties.

Western Ave also has many diverse eating and drinking establishments, including Korean barbecue and snacks, Thai street food, Japanese Shabu Shabu, specialty coffee shops and bakeries, fast food, and bar food. These businesses range in size, from “hole-in-the-wall” to surprisingly large. These businesses are spread throughout the corridor and not necessarily concentrated in any particular area.

There are also many independent retailers and professionals on Western Ave offering unique products and services such as custom embroidered hats, wedding planning and accessories, interior design, graphic design and printing, packaging and shipping, clothing and shoes, specialty grocery stores, herbal supplements, educational materials and books, hair and nail salons, electronics, household goods, consignment, game rooms, etc. Many of these businesses have unassuming storefronts and may go unnoticed when driving by. Yet, taking the time to walk on Western Ave and explore the shops and restaurants reveals an incredibly eclectic business corridor that can satisfy many consumer needs at a relatively wide range of price points.

Andrew X., Owner of China Harbin Deer Antler Trading Co (186 S. Western Ave)

Findings from Business Interviews

Canvassing Process

LA-Más and KYCC worked together to interview as many businesses (employees and business owners) as possible along the Western Ave corridor. We discovered that approximately half of the businesses had Korean-speaking employees and/or business owners. Myung “Andy” Kim, Small Business Counselor at KYCC, was primarily responsible for communicating with these Korean-speaking business owners and employees, and he was able to speak with about 50 businesses. LA-Más team members spoke to about 60 businesses.

In general, it was challenging to reach the business owners as many of them are either in and out of the store, don't work in the store, live outside the US, or are based in corporate headquarters (chain stores). Many employees expressed they were unable to speak on behalf of the business owner and were, therefore, reluctant to participate. In general, younger business owners were the most responsive and often provided suggestions about how to address some of the issues they identified on Western Ave. Furthermore, the vast majority of store owners do not own their buildings.



We asked business representatives the following questions:

- Are you the business owner or an employee?
- Are you the property owner?
- What type of products or services do you provide?
- What are your hours of operation?
- What are the peak hours or days?
- How long have you been doing business in the neighborhood?
- What are some good and bad things about having your business along Western Ave?
- What type of improvements would you like to see along the sidewalk and street?
- Who is your target clientele?
- Who frequents the business most often?
- Would you be interested in having your storefront painted for free?
- Would you be interested in having a tree planted in front of your location?
- Would you be interested in learning more about small business resources?
- Would you be interested in joining a committee to plan improvements on Western?



Business Findings

Location

Many business owners said that they like being situated on Western Avenue because it is a widely recognized and central street in LA, close to public transit and highways, close to the heart of Koreatown and several schools, has diverse residents and customers, and is well-known as the furniture district. One long-time employee also said that she likes how community members look out for each other. Many business owners mentioned the desire to have Western Ave become as bustling as 6th Street in Koreatown and the inability to afford to have their business there due to the high rent cost.

Traffic Patterns

The volume of traffic was also a draw, but some business owners expressed that they expected there to be much more foot traffic. Traffic is also a setback because cars often speed by too quickly to notice small businesses and speeding cars also cause collisions. Furthermore, there are not nearly enough crosswalks, thus cutting off connection between both sides of the street. Many of the long-time business owners said that there used to be lots of traffic, but it's been much more quiet the past few years.

Cleanliness

The majority of business representatives identified sidewalk cleanliness and graffiti abatement as a top priority for Western Avenue. Business owners and employees reported that they sweep the sidewalk and pick up trash in front of their business each morning. They attributed this problem to four trends:

- 1) There are not enough trash cans on the corridor;
- 2) There are many homeless people that sit or sleep along Western and leave behind debris, and
- 3) There are street vendors that do business on the sidewalk at night;
- 4) There are rival gangs that are responsible for tagging on businesses

Changing Economy

Most of the older businesses are sustained by loyal and regular customers that frequent the business and provide referrals. The newer businesses do not have that advantage and are finding it challenging to attract new customers. However, many long-time businesses said that business has been steadily declining. They attribute this to the rise in online purchasing (especially for furniture), and the lack of disposable income of potential customers. Many of the high-end retail stores acknowledge that they are above the price range of many of the local residents.

Parking

Parking came up many times as one of the key issues for businesses on Western. The entire street is served by 1 hour metered parking, which business owners say is not enough time for shopping and is a deterrent to customers. Even businesses in strip malls with parking lots mentioned that parking was too limited. There were even some cars parked on sidewalks.

Vacancies

There are a high number of vacancies along the corridor. One furniture store owner that owns his building said that developers and real estate agents are making offers on many of the buildings on Western and many owners are seriously considering selling.

Business Findings (cont.)

Safety

Many business employees noted that they do not feel safe at night on Western because it is dark and robberies are a prevalent issue. Some business owners also commented that prostitution on Western Avenue also deters customers. Several people also noted that the sidewalks are in need of repair, as there are many trip hazards.

Visibility

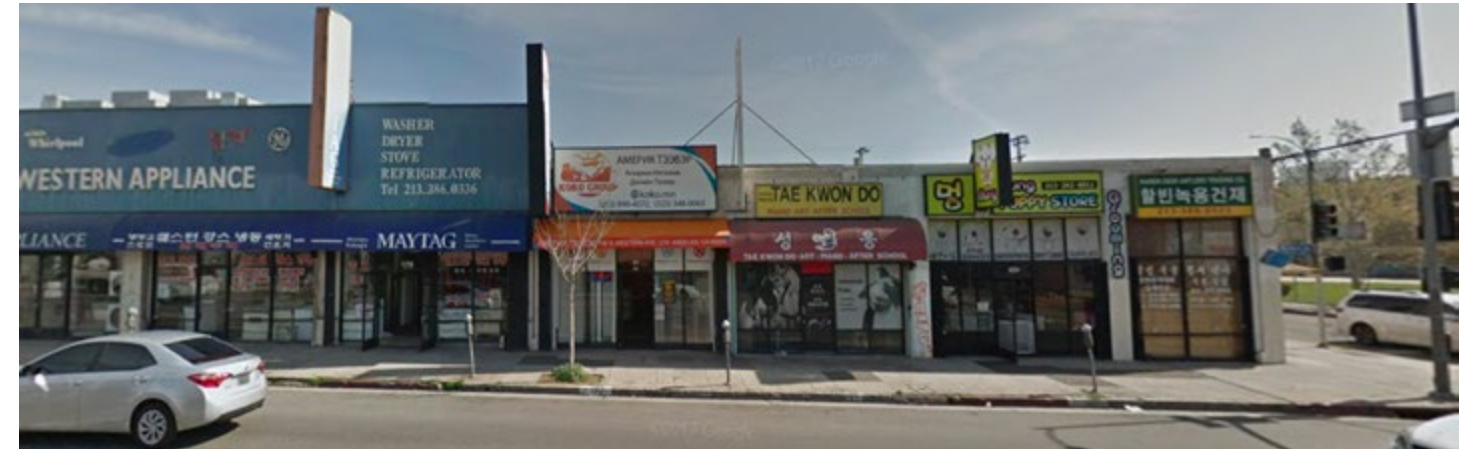
Several businesses near bus stops mentioned that their entrance is obscured by the bus stop. Additionally, several business do not have clear and visible signage that communicates what type of products they offer.

Desired Amenities

Some businesses expressed that they would welcome more benches, shading (trees), and trash cans, although some were concerned that the amenities would not be well maintained and encourage loitering.

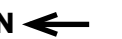
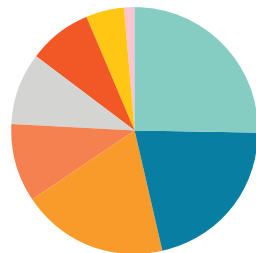
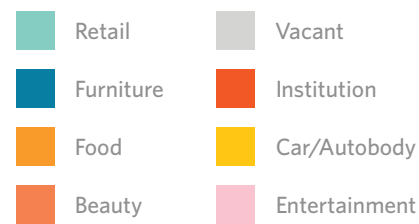
Hourly Snapshot

Several business owners commented on the fact that Western Avenue is very different place, with different uses and visitors, during the day and night. From 10am-7pm, most retail stores are open and the majority of customers are driving in from all over the city to find particular products and services. From 6pm until 2am, the restaurants and bars are open and food trucks and carts arrive to serve the local residents.



Business Map

Business By Type



Hearing from Western Ave's Business Owners

Andrew X.
China Harbin Deer
Antler Trading Co.



We've been in the neighborhood for more than 25 years. We love this location. Old Koreans know our store.

Alex C.
Box-Land



I like being in the heart of Koreatown because it's very diverse... I expected Western to be busier. There is car traffic but no foot traffic...

Brian R.
Roman Deco
Furnishings



The street is very different during the day and at night. During the daytime, the businesses are open and there are shoppers from all over. At night, the street is for food trucks and local residents.

Sarkis C.
West Bev
Vision



The sidewalk is very bumpy and people trip; we need better sidewalks.

Western is a great location – everyone in LA knows Western. I think Western has a lot of potential for local businesses, and will always be that way.



Chris N.
The Cellphone Spot

I like that the community looks out for each other. Sometimes we even pay for our old-time customers' parking meters... but it's scary at night.

There have been several accidents and two deaths on Western and Oakwood (in front of KFC.)



Art
Blipsy
Barcade

The neighbors are very friendly... but it's hard to find parking, and homeless people scare customers in the parking lot. We need more trash cans and cleaner streets.

E.Z.
LaB Coffee
and Roasters



There's no such thing as green space here.



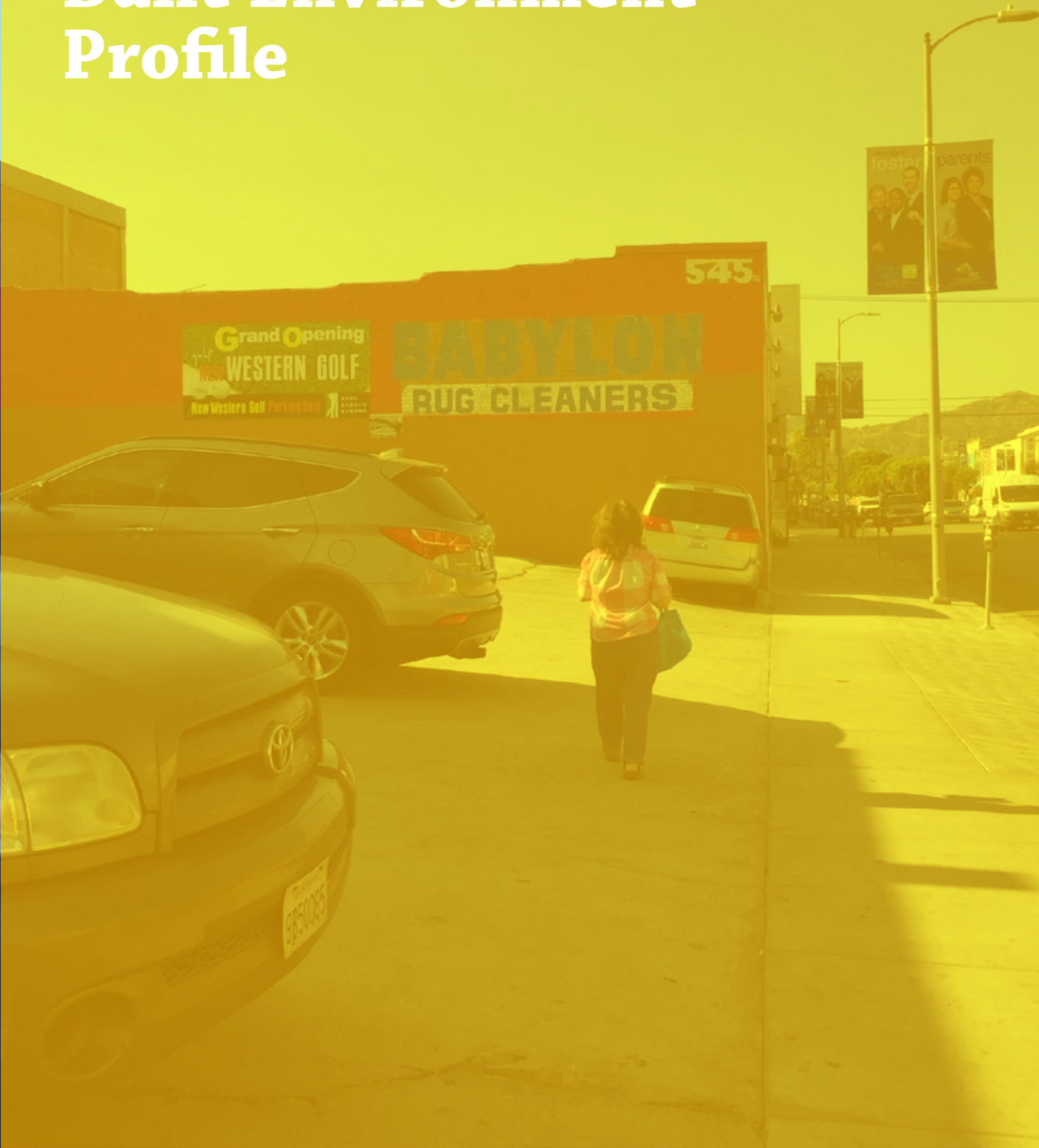
Victor C.
Home
Living
Furniture

Jaya
Elan Shoes
Salon



Jaya, employee of Elan Shoe Salon (163 S. Western Ave) meets with Avital from LA-Más

3. Built Environment Profile



Overview of Western Ave's Physical Profile

Western Ave between Melrose and 3rd St is a mile-long commercial corridor with a wide range of building types. There is a large majority of one and two-story buildings, but also some three-story structures and one seven-story building. The street features a number of murals and diverse examples of street art, as well as several architecturally and historically significant buildings, creating an eclectic built environment.

While there is economic activity along Western Ave, this activity is not yet well reflected in the streetscape. There is minimal seating and shading on the sidewalk, with very little green space or open public space for gathering or lingering. There are also issues with cleanliness and graffiti in certain stretches, which can decrease the sense of safety on the street. The area features relatively little pedestrian signage and lacks a cohesive visual identity. Overall, the area feels car-centric and not designed to provide a welcoming pedestrian experience.

Western Ave presents a number of promising opportunities for enhancing the public streetscape and making it a place where pedestrians feel welcome and encouraged to spend time. There

are several sections of wide sidewalk that could house additional seating and shading. The existing murals and street art could be expanded and highlighted. Cohesive pedestrian-facing signage could help highlight the area's history and current cultural identity while showcasing landmarks and nearby amenities. Improvements to the public realm along Western Ave can help it continue to serve the nearby existing community, while also growing to foster increased pedestrian and economic activity.

Most Salient Physical Assets

- Murals and street art
- Several architecturally & historically significant buildings
- Many institutions (educational, public, and religious institutions)
- Adjacent to numerous commercial districts and LA attractions
- Stretches of wide sidewalk
- Restaurants and diverse retail options to support sidewalk activity
- Active bus lines and numerous bus stops

Most Pressing Physical Needs

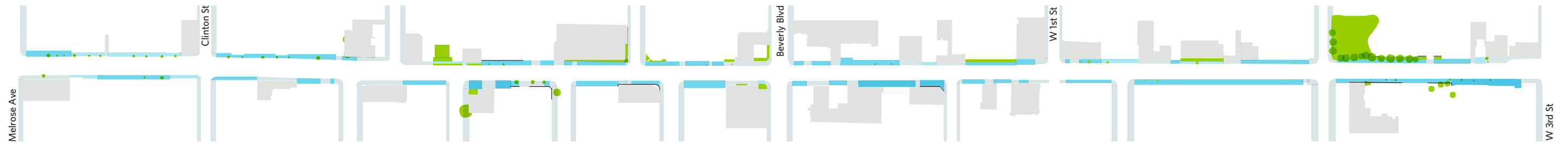
- Seating & shade
- Public and green space
- Cohesive visual identity
- Pedestrian-oriented wayfinding signage
- Maintenance and upkeep

The LA-Mas team produced this physical environment profile based on on-site observation and data collection, photographic studies, and mapping studies (using online research and self-collected information).

Sidewalk Experience

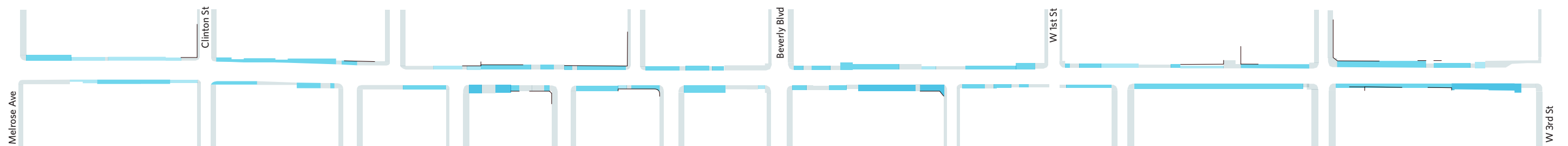
Map Key

- Parking Lot
- Green Space
- Tree
- Wall
- >15'
- 8-15'
- <8'
- Driveway



Combined Sidewalk Experience Map

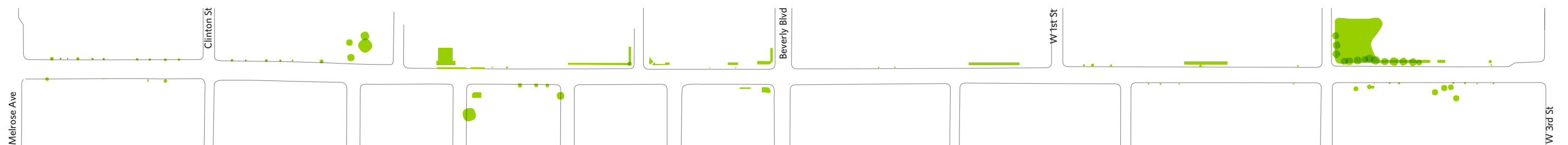
Sidewalk width, green space, and parking lots



Sidewalk Widths

Parking Lots

Car-centric spaces



Green Spaces and Trees



Sidewalk Experience (cont.)

Shading + Seating

The street has relatively little street furniture, featuring mostly un-shaded benches near the bus stops. With little tree cover, much of the sidewalk feels open and exposed to the sun. This means there is little in the public realm that would entice a pedestrian to want to linger; instead visitors are more likely to drive to a specific destination on Western and then leave after directly their visit.

Physical Corridor Identity

As a long commercial corridor at the junction of four separate neighborhoods (Koreatown, Larchmont, Hollywood, and East Hollywood), Western Ave does not currently present a distinct visual identity. The southern half of the project site is located in Koreatown, towards the west is the small residential neighborhood of Larchmont, and to the north are Hollywood and East Hollywood. This is reflected in the experience of walking along the corridor, as there is such a wide variety of different architectural styles, business frontages, and types of amenities.

Car-Centric Experience

On this stretch of Western Ave, the road has four 10' driving lanes and two 8' parking lanes (see diagram), with sidewalks averaging 6' wide with a 3' furnishing zone (sometimes including a tree well). For much of the stretch, the buildings on the street are 1-2 stories tall, and there is minimal tree cover. Given the short building height, wide street, prevalence of parking lots, and lack of tree cover, these factors combine to create a car-centric atmosphere in which pedestrians feel exposed. Elements that create a sense of enclosure (sometimes referred to as an "outdoor room") and that help make the street feel more designed at a human scale would help Western Ave feel more welcoming to pedestrians. Of about 9,500 feet of available street frontage, 2,800 feet have a sidewalk facing a parking lot or gas station. In other words, around 30% of the available frontages are dedicated to car-specific space.



View north on Western Ave from Council St, featuring wide sidewalks where the line between sidewalk, parking lot, and driveway is blurred.



View south on Western Ave from between Oakwood and Beverly, featuring a fairly representative sidewalk condition for the site.



Street Cross Section of Western Ave at Melrose Ave (Data Source: Lilly O'Brien-Kovari. Image by LA-Más.)

Pedestrian & Bike Safety

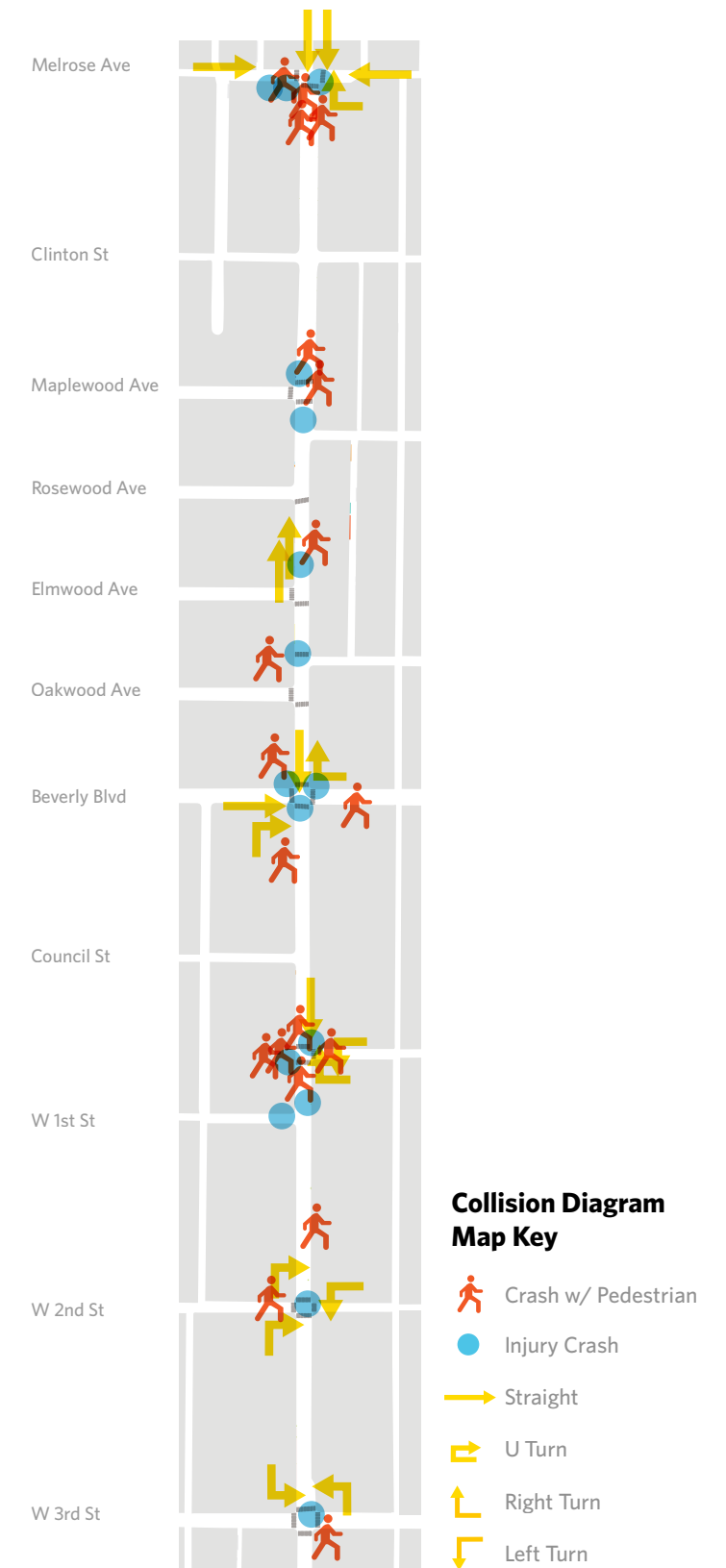
According to Vision Zero estimates, about 33% of people in the Western Ave project area walk, bike, or take transit to work; the other 67% drive. Lack of pedestrian and bike safety is partially a consequence of a car-centric streetscape. High amounts of car traffic, no bike lanes, and a lack of street buffers provide minimal separation between the street zone and the pedestrian zone. Western Ave is identified as a Vision Zero High Injury Network Street due to the frequency of accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists.

The following are findings from the Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS):

Reported in the last 5 years (01/2011 - 12/2016)
 304 vehicle collisions
 107 collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists

Reported in the last 1 year (01/2015 - 12/2016)
 137 vehicle collisions
 52 collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists

Collision Diagram (right)	
Fatal Collisions	1
Injury Collision	25
Mapped	26
Not Drawn	73
Total	99



Sidewalk Experience (cont.)

Dead Space

In some sections, the storefronts “turn their backs” on the sidewalk, which creates gaps or sections of “dead space.”

Sections of Wide Sidewalk

Sections of wide sidewalk present an opportunity for activation.

Maplewood Ave

W 3rd St

Lack of Shading + Seating

For some stretches of sidewalk, there is limited shade and seating.

Sidewalk as Driveway

Shading + Seating

Clinton St

Clinton St

Elmwood Ave

Public Space + Green Space

This stretch of Western does not include any parks, dedicated green spaces, or open public areas for gathering. Several businesses have green hedges on their walls or surrounding their parking lots. These zones are not always open to the sidewalk and can feel like gaps in the pedestrian experience, but they also provide much-needed green space to the area. There are currently about 36 trees planted in the sidewalk along Western Ave, and additional trees and shading would be a great asset to the street. The *Welcome to Western* project will feature a tree planting program, and KYCC has identified 87 opportunities for trees to be planted along the corridor.



The highest number of mature trees is along a southern section, nearby several schools.



Heat Map of Tree Locations

Graffiti + Cleanliness

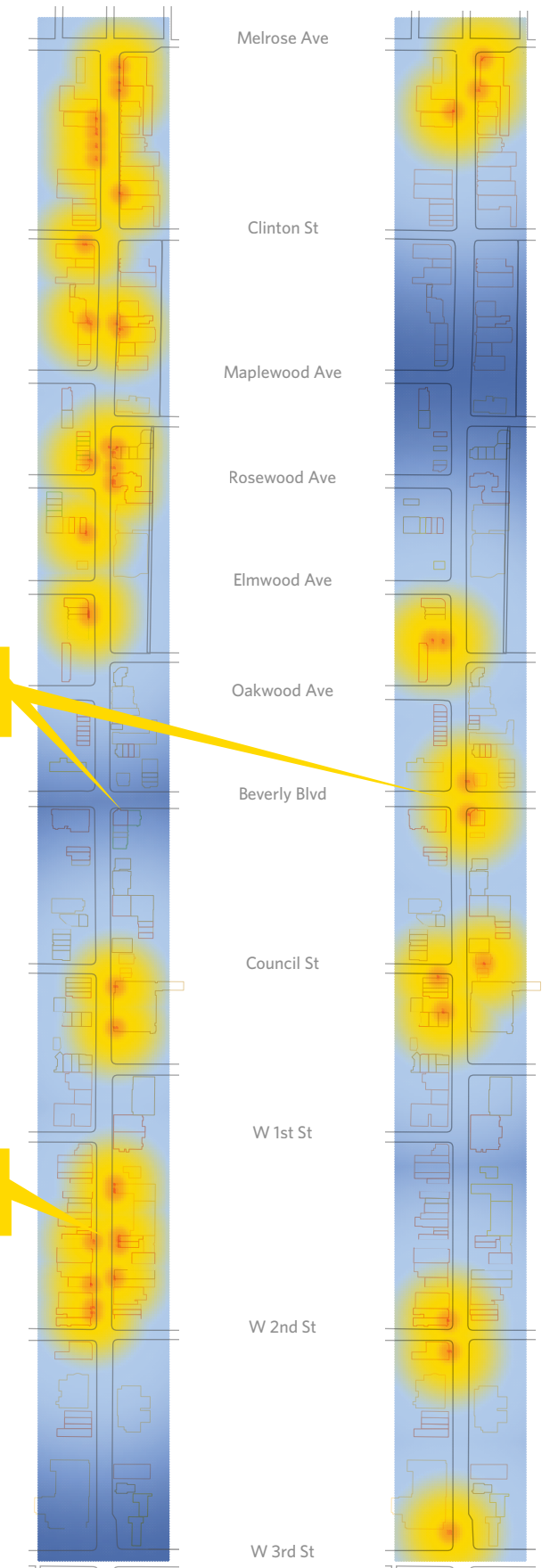
Graffiti, vandalism, and cleanliness are often cited as problems for this stretch of Western Ave. There are a number of instances of graffiti (occasionally gang-affiliated tagging) along the stretch, although business owner overall do a very good job of covering up graffiti on their properties. Certain stretches also accumulate trash on the ground. The trash and graffiti can reduce the sense of safety for pedestrians. Sections of the street can also feel dark at night, also reducing the sense of safety.



Graffiti is more present in areas where Public Art is lacking in the streetscape, and slightly less frequent near the murals.



Currently, the largest concentration of graffiti is located towards center of blocks and away from main intersections.



Heat Map of Graffiti

Heat Map of Public Art

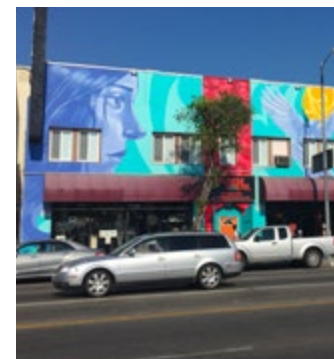
Storefronts + Visual Character

Public Art

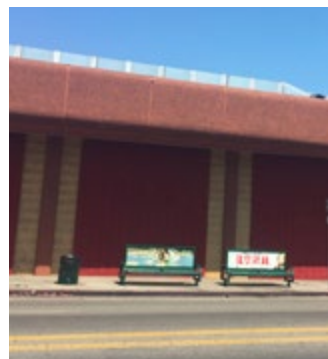
There are 12 murals along the mile-long stretch, in addition to other examples of public art. Many of these murals were recently completed by Beautify Earth in partnership with local artists. This creates the beginning of the sense of a mural district, although the art remains far enough apart that a strong sense of visual cohesiveness is not conveyed yet.

Vacancies + Gaps

There are a number of vacancies (or seemingly vacant buildings) along the stretch, which reduces the sense of a vibrant corridor. There are also a number of businesses and institutions that “turn their back” on the street, which creates the sense of a gap in the pedestrian experience. Lastly, a significant number of lots have parking between the sidewalk and the business, which makes a pedestrian feel stuck in the middle of two car-centric zones.



Murals



Gaps



Former Fire Station #29



Former See's Candy Shop

Distinctive Architecture

This stretch of Western Ave features several architecturally significant buildings, ranging from historic brick buildings to Art Deco landmarks to more eclectic contemporary structures. Some examples include:

Former Fire Station #29
158 S. Western Ave. / 1913 / Architect J.J. Backus

This two-story Italian Renaissance style brick building was designed as a fire station to serve the far western suburbs of the fast growing city of LA. The fire station would go on to be staffed for over 75 years, longer than any LA fire station before or since. (Source: www.lafire.com) The building is now Historic-Cultural Monument #310 and is split into three commercial spaces.

See's Candy Shop and Kitchen No. 1
139 N. Western Ave. / 1921

This Italian Renaissance Revival style commercial building was the original See's Candy Shop and Kitchen. Today the building is split into 4 commercial spaces.

Selig Commercial Building (aka Crocker Bank Building)
3rd St. & Western Ave. / 1931 / Architect Arthur E. Harvey

This Art Deco landmark was originally designed as a Selig retail store (haberdashery) and was later converted into a Crocker Bank. The Selig building was named a city Historic-Cultural Monument in 1985. According to the Art Deco Society of Los Angeles, it is one of only two black-and-gold, glazed terra cotta Art Deco buildings that remains in the city today.

Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC)
340 N Western Ave, 1990,
Architects Jeffrey Daniels & Elyse Grinstein

The KFC franchise on Western Ave is a playful and unusual example of postmodern architecture, shaped like a chicken bucket or an abstracted chicken.



Selig Commercial Building



KFC

Signage, Wayfinding, Mobility

Signage

There is a large amount of highly varied signage along Western Ave. These signs can create a vibrant, exciting, and eclectic visual character. The diversity of the businesses is evident by the mixture of languages and styles on business storefronts. At other times, though, the signs lack any sense of visual cohesiveness. Additionally, there is very little signage designed specifically for pedestrians. The lack of cohesive signage in the public realm could be attributed the overlaying of so many different council districts and neighborhoods.

Transit

The area is fairly well connected to public transit options, featuring 6 bus lines and one nearby Metro station. The bus lines that travel to this stretch include: 207; 14/37; 16/17/316; 757; DASH Hollywood/Wilshire; and DASH Wilshire Center/Koreatown. The Wilshire/Western Station on the Metro Purple Line is 0.5 mi (about a 10 min walk) from Western Ave & 3rd St. That said, there is fairly minimal signage related to transit options, and none that is specific to walking distances. Bicycle infrastructure is limited with an absence of bike lanes or bike racks. The area feels primarily accessible by car.

Interconnected-ness

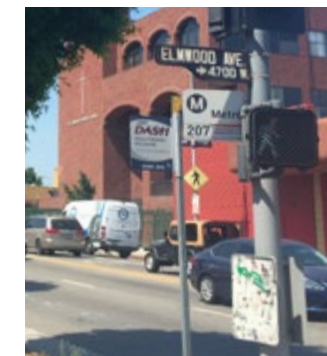
There are a number of nearby attractions and amenities in the area around Western Ave. There could be an opportunity to make the corridor feel more clearly connected to these surrounding amenities.

Nearby amenities / landmarks / attractions include:

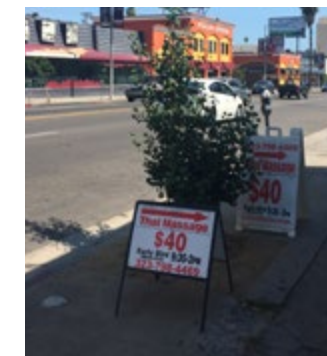
- Wilshire Blvd commercial zone
- Commercial heart of Koreatown (such as the area along 6th Street and Olympic Blvd)
- Wiltern Theater (Wilshire and Western)
- Wilshire Branch Library
- “Little Bangladesh”
- Wilshire-Western Station
- Nat King Cole Post Office (Western and 3rd St)
- Hollywood’s Historic Hotel
- Hollywood Forever Cemetery
- Los Angeles City College



Signage (for motorists)



Signage (for pedestrians)



Signage (on sidewalk)



Bike Racks

4. Moving Forward



Community Engagement

Community Engagement

Community engagement to date has been focused on one-on-one conversations with business owners and employees along the corridor and targeted outreach to key community leaders through the formation of the Community Advisory Committee. We will continue to keep business owners and community leaders informed and encourage them to share their ideas with us through regular email, phone, and in-person check ins. Moving forward, our community engagement strategy will be focused on planning three public events that are designed to introduce a diverse mix of residents and customers of Western Ave to the project scope, solicit their input about their desired infrastructure improvements, and invite them to participate in an iterative community-design process.

In October, LA-Más will be hosting the *Welcome to Western* kick-off event which will feature opportunities for community members to provide quick and also more in-depth comments, suggestions, and personal stories about experiences on the corridor, along with free food from a local business. In November and December, we will host two public design workshops that are iterative and build off one another.

Outreach for these events will include door-to-door flyer distribution and poster hanging (for businesses and residents on Western), CAC members and City Council staff distributing flyers to their constituents and making announcements at religious services, school principals and afterschool program coordinators sending flyers home with students and staff, presentations at the Greater Wilshire Neighborhood Council and Wilshire Center Neighborhood Council, posting on social media (facebook, nextdoor, instagram), and partnerships with business owners that we hope will agree to offer discounts for workshop attendees. Additionally, all events will occur in well-known and visible spaces along Western Ave in order to attract widespread community participation.



Design and Physical Improvements

Design and Physical Improvements

At the *Welcome to Western* kick-off event in October and the two public design workshops in November and December, the *Welcome to Western* team will collect thoughts, feedback, and input from community members and area stakeholders which will inform what kinds of physical improvements and design interventions would best serve their needs and wants. At the kick-off event, open-ended feedback about people's thoughts about and desires for the area will be solicited. At the following public design workshops, our team will present design schemes and work collaboratively to arrive at final designs by January 2018.

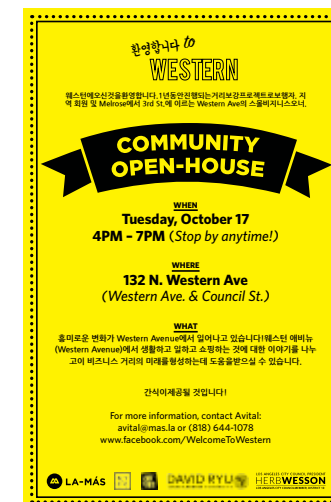
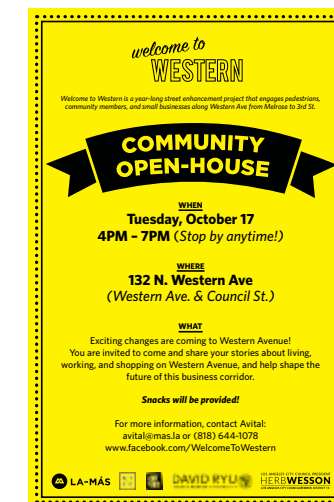
In addition to physical design improvements, *Welcome to Western* will also feature a tree planting program and a storefront re-painting program. The project team is currently gathering input from business and property owners about whether they are interested in having a tree planted in front of their property. KYCC has identified 87 locations where trees could be planted, and pending approval from business and property owners, will plant Pink Trumpet, Ginko, and Myrtle trees along the corridor. The project will also include free facade re-paintings (limited to two colors, with design input from LA-Más) to 15 interested businesses along the corridor. All improvements will be completed by summer of 2018.

Broad goals for enhancing Western Ave might include:

- Increase walkability
- Activate the sidewalk
- Increase physical vibrancy
- Help create a more welcoming physical realm where people are more likely to visit and linger
- Help create a cohesive visual identity for the corridor

Potential design improvements could include:

- Street furniture (seating, tables)
- Shade structures/devices
- Trash cans
- Highlight existing public art and insert additional artwork
- Parklet(s)
- Streetscape Patterning (street, sidewalk, fences, etc) to enhance the pedestrian zone
- Graffiti Abatement strategies
- Additional Street Lighting
- Across-the-street Banners
- Wayfinding and/or Corridor Signage
- Additional Bike Infrastructure
- Artwork/design to highlight historical, architectural, and cultural heritage
- Play structures for children
- ...More!



Community Open-House flyers (in English, Spanish, and Korean)



LA-Más is a non-profit urban design organization that helps lower-income and underserved communities shape their future through policy and architecture.

We envision a world where city growth is equitable and self-directed — where the best local solutions are brought to a city-wide scale.

welcome to **WESTERN**

Welcome to Western is a year-long street enhancement project that engages the users of Western Ave between Melrose and 3rd Street.

Welcome to Western is a Great Streets project sponsored by Mayor Eric Garcetti and made possible by Councilmember David Ryu and Council President Herb Wesson in partnership with LA-Más and the Koreatown Youth & Community Center (KYCC).

