

# Camino Seguro

*Safe Passage & Campus  
Connection for Burlington*





# Camino Seguro

Camino Seguro or "the safe passage" is a community based design project that examines the use of the sidewalk surrounding Camino Nuevo Charter Academy's (CNCA) Burlington campus. Anchored in CNCA's core values, Camino Seguro is part of a long-term effort to build a coalition of community members in the Westlake/MacArthur Park neighborhood. Since the project's launch in Summer 2021, coLAB has adopted a comprehensive approach to gathering feedback and assessing existing conditions along Burlington. Our findings and recommendations are informed by direct outreach which includes surveys, and workshops with educators and parents. These efforts have facilitated the identification of concerns by stakeholders which include sidewalk improvements, traffic mitigation, and community safety. Our findings will highlight existing areas of strength and opportunity as well as propose interventions that could activate the relevant public space. coLAB leverages urban design as a tool in a larger kit that can prove integral to creating a safer and more welcoming sidewalk environment for all.

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Dedicated to the students, families, and staff of Camino Nuevo Charter Academy

coLAB, cityLAB's off-campus design research center, is located in the Westlake/MacArthur Park neighborhood. This neighborhood has been impacted by historic disinvestment and a rapid rise in gentrification. coLAB engages rooted community organizations, the varied immigrant population, and the rich neighborhood ecology to activate public spaces through outreach and design processes.

The implementation of Camino Seguro returns Camino Nuevo and Grupo Nuevo to their roots as a corporation for community development which serves the residents of the Westlake/MacArthur Park neighborhood.

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# We Found...

## We all want

- a people-led approach
- sidewalk-level investment and maintenance
- to enhance community assets
- better traffic control and coordination
- more landscaping and shade



## coLAB knows that

- design and public art can strategically dignify and activate spaces both in the short and long term
- staffing-oriented solutions (ie. crossguards) are the most affordable and immediately impactful interventions
- CNCA Burlington is located between two streets identified by the City as dangerous for pedestrians and qualifies for City-sponsored intervention programs



## CNCA educators want

- safe passage **within** the school property
- more eyes on the streets, especially when moving students between buildings
- a more efficient pick up and drop off system
- safety and sanitation improvements to the alleyway



## Families want

- an additional designated pick-up and drop-off area
- more frequent street maintenance to address sanitation concerns.
- multi-generational programming and expanded community access to school facilities.
- sidewalk repair and amenities, like benches and better lighting





# Recommendations

## Specific Asks for the School (families, staff, Grupo)

### Reinforce existing traffic practices by

- emphasizing the school's formal drop off location
- identifying a prospective site for a second drop off location



### Build a sense of shared responsibility for the sidewalk by



- involving neighbors and nearby businesses in future conversations about safety and street maintenance
- educating the community on how to use 311 and how to contact local elected officials

### Incentivize volunteer participation and retention through

- certificates of appreciation
- thank you luncheons
- stipends
- safety vests for volunteers

The continued communication with the greater CNCA community about existing sidewalk stewardship efforts led by community service groups

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## Fostering space for civic engagement

### CNCA should

- form a parent & staff working group committee to build a relationship with the neighborhood council and the Los Angeles Department of Transportation to ask for repairs (from lightbulbs to sidewalks)
- apply as a school site to LADOT programs such as Safe Routes to School, Street Valet, and Student Safety Patrol Pilot

*coLAB will facilitate preliminary meetings with the neighborhood council office and additional city services to advocate for resources related to sidewalk safety*

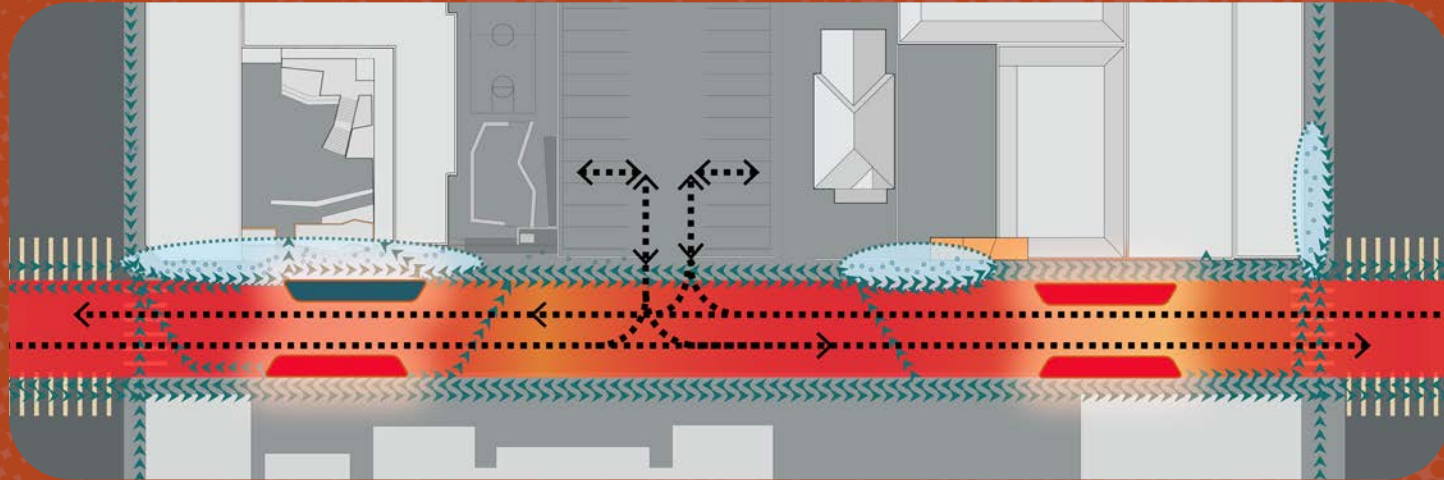


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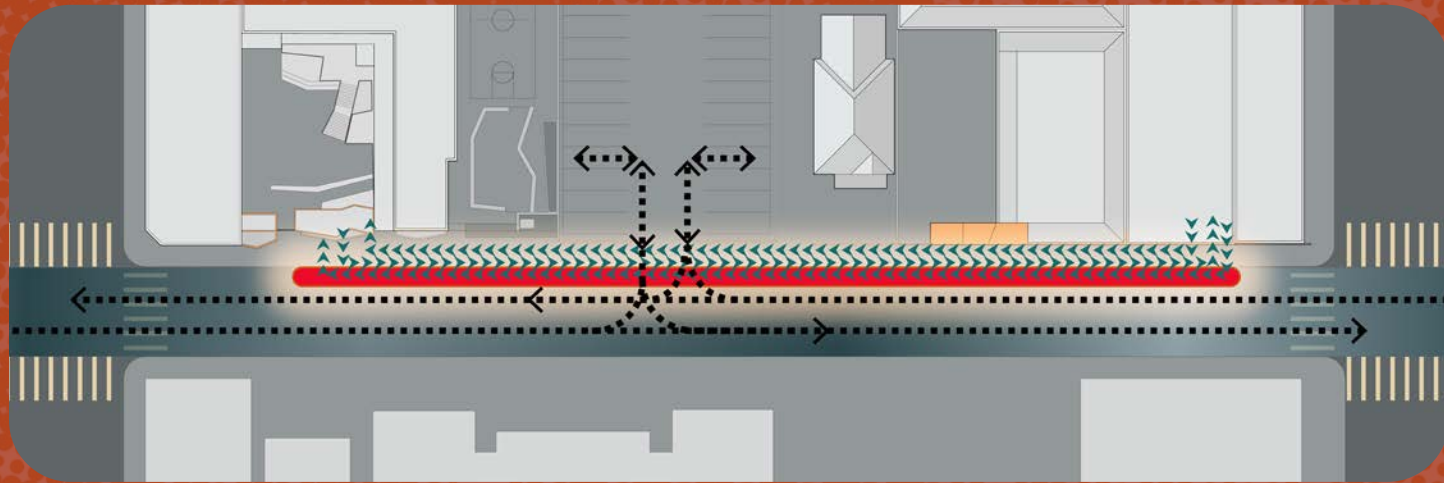


# Key Issues

## Sidewalk safety



Pick Up & Drop Off



Lunch Hour



The diagrams above highlight vehicular congestion and pedestrian walking patterns at varied points throughout the school day. Students gather on the sidewalk in mass during pick up/drop off, when transitioning from North campus to the courtyard for lunch, and when alternating between buildings for class transitions both during and after school. **The sidewalk is too narrow to accommodate the flow of students in large numbers.**

## Community connection

Strong community and civic partnerships are needed to build successful, long-term interventions. Building positive relationships with neighbors can help improve safety and empower young people, families, and educators to feel comfortable and confident in their community.

The nearby vocational college, fire department, local businesses, and residents share the use of the public space surrounding the campus. In order to establish a public safety model based on collective stewardship it is vital to form relationships with the school's immediate neighbors and local public agencies.



1. CNCA Community



2. Public Agencies



3. Businesses



4. Neighbors



5. Yellow House



6. College

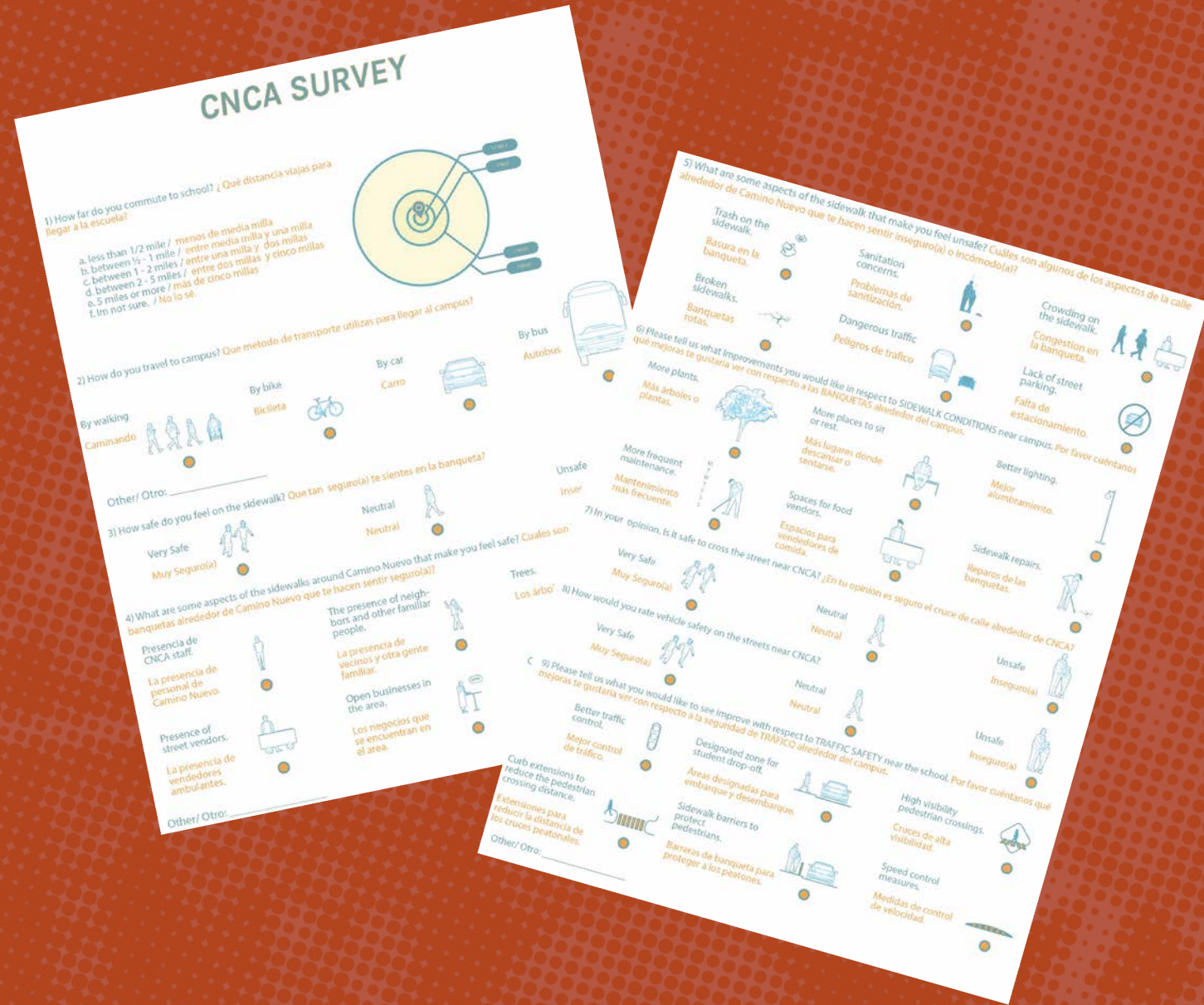


7. Encampments



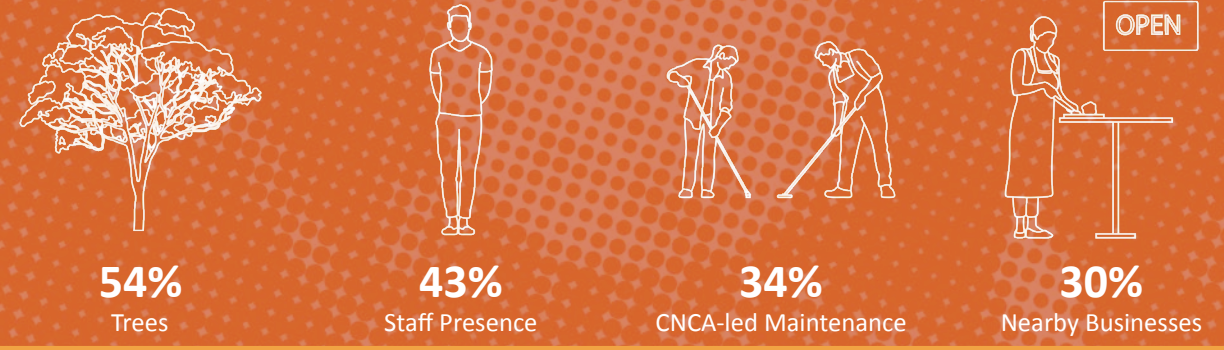
# Survey

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the issues and areas for opportunity along Burlington, coLAB developed and distributed a survey asking about commuting methods, perceptions of safety, desired improvements, and existing traffic conditions. Between October 4 to December 17, 2021, nearly 150 survey respondents shared their hopes and concerns for Camino Seguro. Bilingual (English and Spanish) surveys were distributed during class visits, as part of our sidewalk outreach during pickup and drop off times, via school e-news blast, and at CNCA professional development meetings.

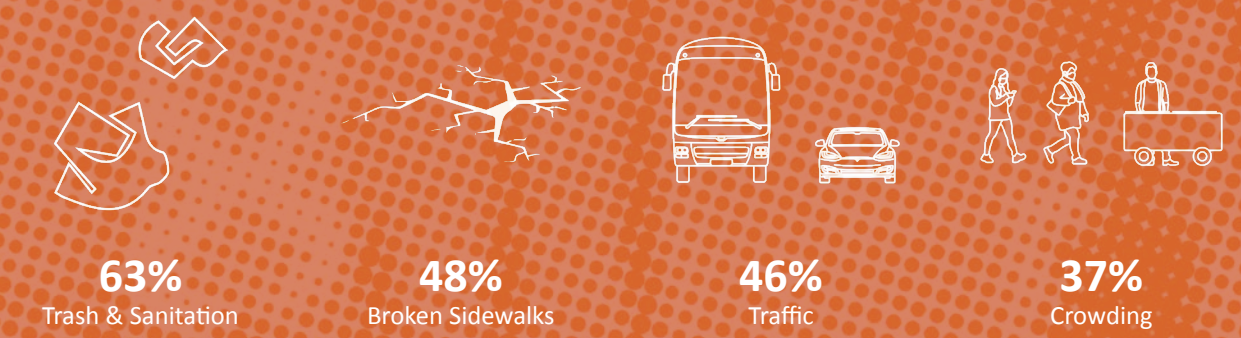


Overall, we found that 64% of respondents walk or wheel to school, emphasizing the importance of safe sidewalks. Student surveys indicated mostly “safe” or “neutral” feelings about sidewalk safety. We attribute this to the presence of familiar adults on the street, which all respondents indicated was a key safety element. Nonetheless, all respondents indicated that there is room for improvement. Many respondents, especially in class visits, were concerned about public drinking and intoxication, attributed to Liquor Depot. Encampments which physically obstruct the sidewalk were also a major safety concern.

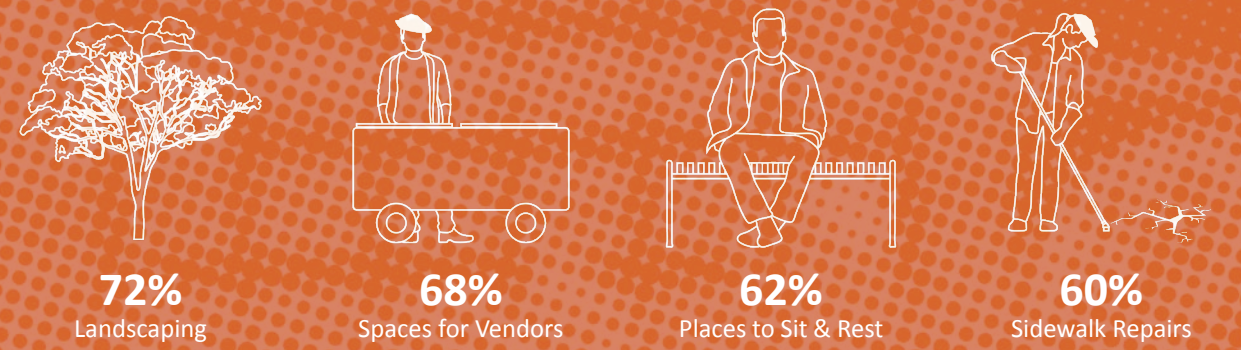
## Top ranked assets that make us feel safe



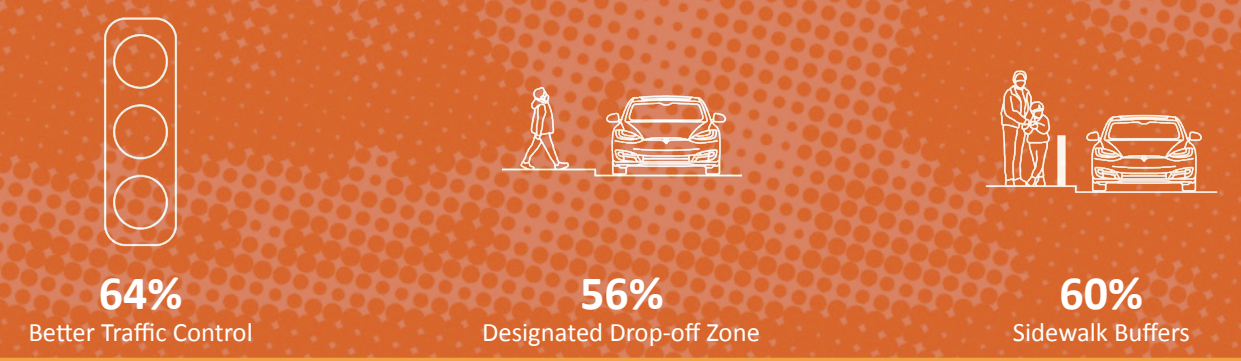
## Top ranked sidewalk concerns



## Desired sidewalk improvements



## Most desired traffic mitigations





# Workshops

To more thoroughly explore issues and opportunities raised throughout the survey process, on Tuesday, November 16, Thursday, November 18, and Thursday, December 16, 2021 we conducted three one-hour long workshops with 26 participants including parents, students, teachers and staff. Workshops consisted of a group site walk (20 minutes), mapping activity (20 minutes), and personal experience share out, including aspirations for the sidewalk (15 minutes). After individually identifying site assets, challenges, and opportunities, workshop participants created a collaborative map.



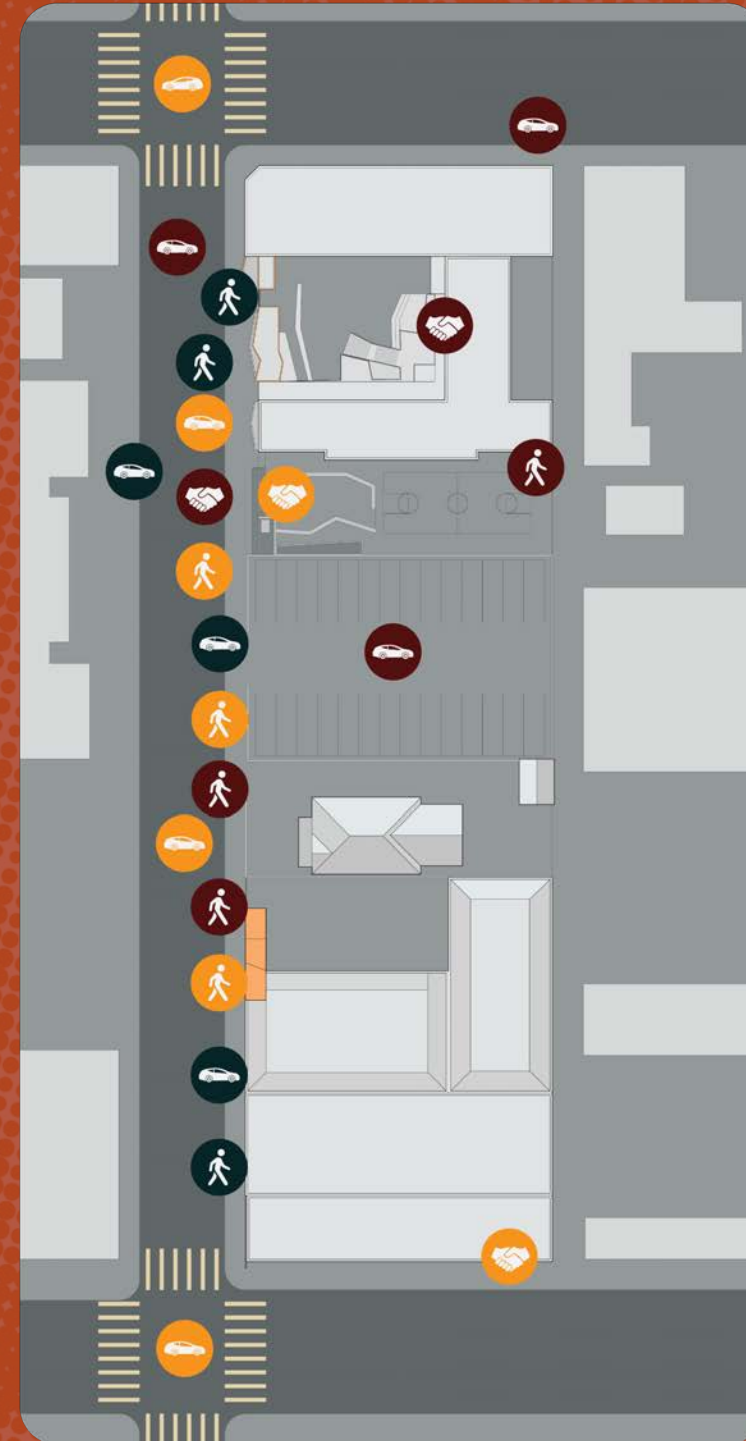
*“Art is important because it helps us remember”*

*“It would be good to have a designated area for drop off that functions better so that teachers don’t have to walk onto the streets to help students disembark from cars”*

*“Traffic is a concern because when more than two classes have to use the sidewalk during the passing period, students will have to step off the sidewalk onto the street. It’s scary because some cars drive very fast going down Burlington Ave.”*



Both families and educators desired improvements in sidewalk maintenance, and improving overall aesthetics through physical interventions, like landscaping. Adult participants also agreed that improvements are needed for the pick up / drop off system. After school staff echoed concerns from teachers during lunch transitions: crowded sidewalks mean students are stepping into the street during periods of high traffic.



## SHARED WANTS

- Better sidewalks
- Continued investment
- More frequent maintenance
- Better traffic control
- Improve pick up / drop off
- Safer crosswalks
- Joyful environment
- Collective stewardship of public space
- Expressing school identity

## FAMILY WANTS

- Comfortable waiting areas
- Shorter wait times at dismissal
- Sidewalk repairs
- Safer streets
- Reduced congestion
- Eyes on the street
- Multigenerational programs
- Engaging neighbors

## EDUCATOR WANTS

- Additional staffing for oversight
- Widened sidewalks
- Visually protected playground
- More parking
- Traffic rule enforcement
- Value sharing between home and school environments
- Lower student to teacher ratio on the street during passing periods



Sidewalk Improvements



Traffic Mitigation



Community Ecology



# Next Steps

## Improve short term systems by

- placing more cones
- strategically placing school made signage
- placing more educators with eyes on the streets



## Implement an activation day which

- shows a range of design opportunities
- invites policy makers
- encourages petition signing
- builds community pride
- generates a sense of civic engagement




## Experiment with interventions which

- are characterized by a DIY/ pop-up model
- make a case for more permanent installations



## Building a Better Burlington Community

Capacity and coalition building among CNCA stakeholders is essential to provide a more structured and sustainable framework for existing organization efforts from school administration, students and families. Through continued engagement of CNCA stakeholders, our school community will have a more active say in the planning of Camino Seguro's culminating sidewalk activation event and more direct influence of how the implementation budget is used.

An illustration showing two children sitting on the ground next to a wooden planter box filled with flowers. A street lamp is visible in the background.

- coLAB is proposing two potential sites where activation day will open the street as a laboratory to celebrate shared efforts to date and form future initiatives. This event serves as an opportunity to activate the stakeholder body as collaborators in a coLAB led demonstration day, through:
  - the School's programming of the parking lot
  - temporarily shutting down the block
  - connecting people through art, music and community celebration

We will document outcomes to inform what sidewalk interventions seem feasible as long-term solutions.





# Activation day

## Option 1: Parking lot event pilot

Two smaller scale events that create an adaptable model for the activation of the surface of the parking lot. This event can provide opportunities for CNCA to connect with families and neighbors on a regular basis and showcase strategic partnerships. If succesful could become a periodic event.

- Private
- Non-use of sidewalk



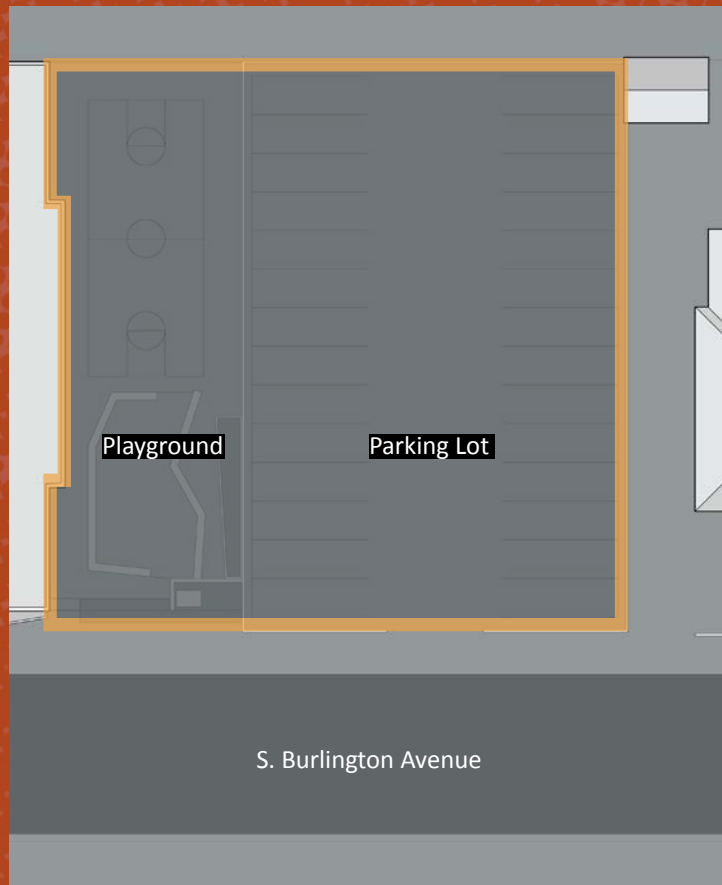
LADOT Little Street Event



Movie Night



LACC Swap Meet



## Option 2: Burlington block party

One event that creates an opportunity for neighbors and stakeholders to experinece the potential transformation of Burlington Avenue. This event will showcase design-based interventions at scale.

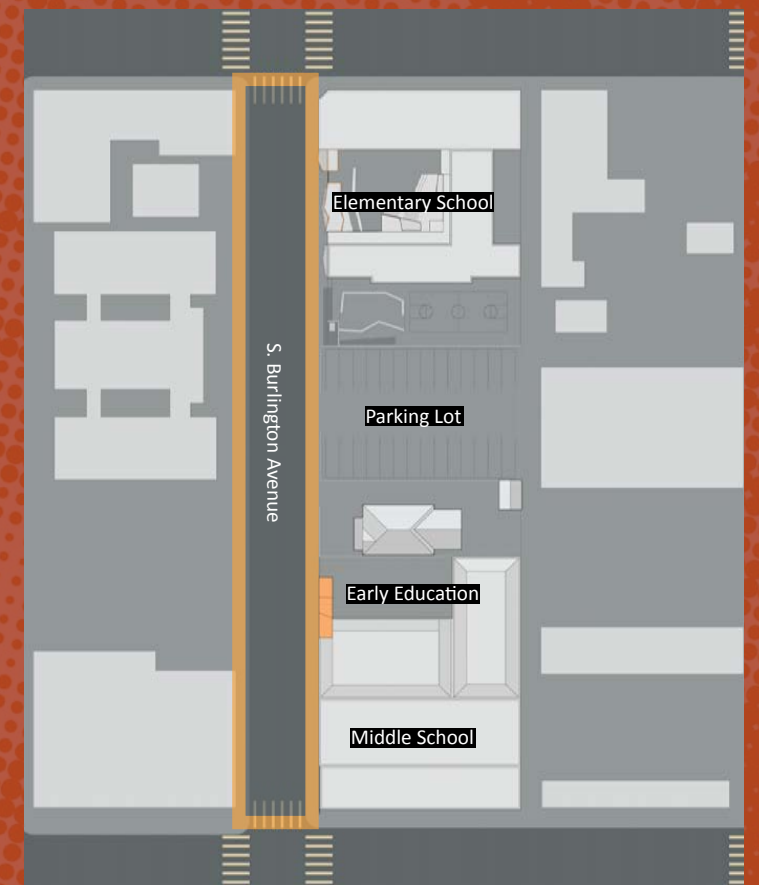
- Public
- Use of street and sidewalk



Play Streets Library



Play Streets NY





# Strategic Investment

## Tactical Infrastructure and Public Art

Camino Nuevo's Burlington Campus is located within a Vision Zero priority corridor. Through strategic investment in sidewalk improvements along Burlington Avenue, Camino Seguro has the potential to connect to planned improvements along Bonnie Brae and Little Street. This would make the entire corridor safer and more walkable as well as tie it into the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. See more plan details at the [LADOT Livable Streets Website](#)



Public Art



Spaces for Vendors



Shade and Seating



Landscaping



Camino Seguro



Playground Redesign



Linear Palisade Connection



Housing

Camino Seguro is the first phase of a strategic multi-year investment effort by Grupo Nuevo to improve the CNCA Burlington campus. Together we can continue to envision the sidewalk as a place to connect and create a better future for students, staff, larger teaching community, neighbors, and more.

