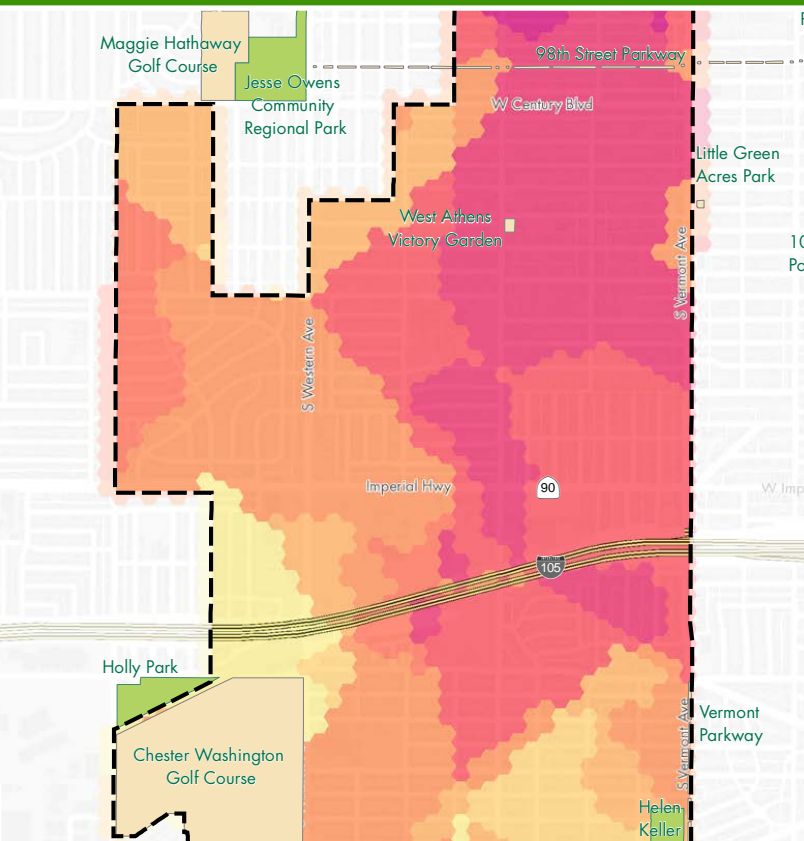


FEBRUARY 2016

WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT COMMUNITY PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION



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Funding for the West Athens-Westmont Community Parks and Recreation Plan was provided by the Strategic Growth Council through the Sustainable Communities Planning Grant program, funded by Proposition 84, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006.

This document was prepared by:



Acknowledgements

LOS ANGELES COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Hilda L. Solis 1st District
Mark Ridley-Thomas 2nd District
Sheila Kuehl 3rd District
Don Knabe 4th District
Michael D. Antonovich 5th District

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Ed P. Reyes 1st District
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Bettina Duval 3rd District
John Hsu 4th District
William J. Korek 5th District

EXECUTIVE STAFF TO 2ND DISTRICT

Karly Katona Senior Deputy for Environmental Sustainability,
Transportation and Community Development

PARKS AND RECREATION STAFF

John Wicker Acting Director of Parks and Recreation
Norma E. Garcia Deputy Director- Planning and Development Agency
Joe Mendoza Deputy Director- South Community Services Agency
Jim Smith Chief of Development
Kathline King Chief of Planning
Blake Warner Supervising Landscape Architect
Clement Lau Departmental Facilities Planner II

CONSULTANT TEAM

PlaceWorks
Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust

Special thanks to the residents of West Athens and Westmont who took time to participate in outreach events and provide feedback about the future of parks and recreation in their community. This plan is dedicated to their vision.

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WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT

Community Parks & Recreation Plan

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the Plan is to provide a vision and roadmap for a greener and safer West Athens-Westmont, including a more extensive network of publicly-accessible green spaces and recreational facilities, as well as environmental enhancement projects. The Plan provides specific implementation actions to be taken by the County in order to achieve the vision of a safer, greener community. These include acquiring space for new parks, enhancing existing recreational facilities and programs, and establishing and strengthening partnerships – all with an emphasis on enhanced community health and safety. The Plan builds on recent urban greening and green space projects and is a response to community needs and call for additional greening in West Athens-Westmont.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF EXISTING PARK

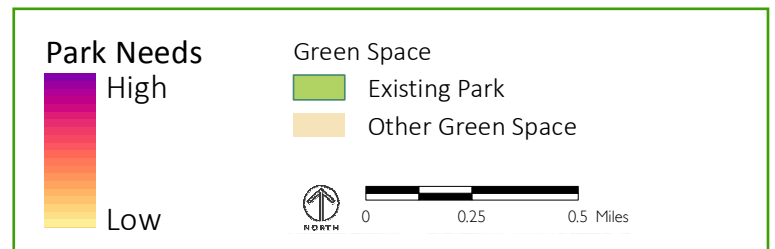
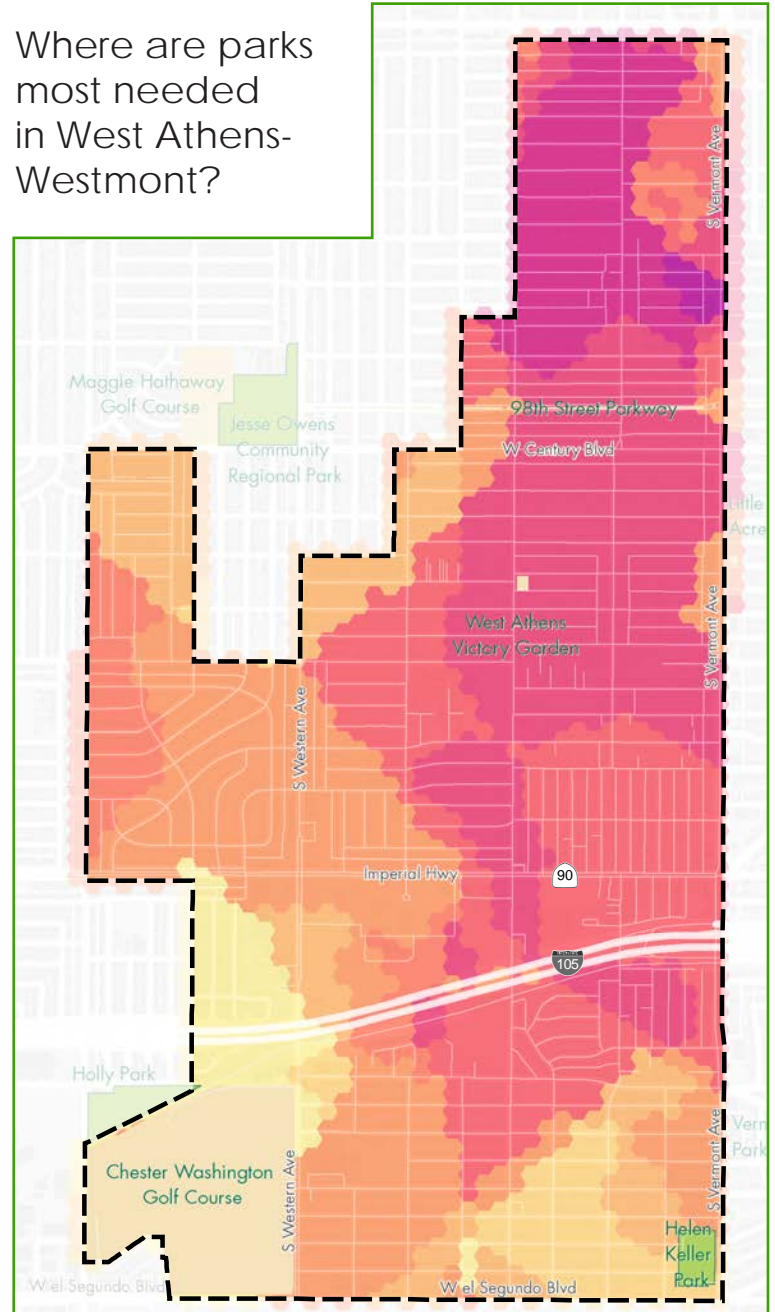


PARKS AND GREENING PROFILE

West Athens-Westmont has a severe deficit of parkland and significant public safety issues. Helen Keller Park, the only existing County Park in the community, is approximately 7 acres in size. The Los Angeles County General Plan establishes a goal of 4 acres of local parks per 1,000 residents. With a population of nearly 41,000 residents, West Athens-Westmont only has approximately **0.2 acres of local parks per 1,000 residents**, a figure significantly below the General Plan standard. Furthermore, access to existing parkland in West Athens-Westmont is not consistent throughout the community. **Approximately 84 percent of the West Athens-Westmont population is not within walking distance (1/2 mile) of a park.**

Additional access issues, such as **unsafe street conditions** and **high levels of crime**, affect the ability of residents to connect to parks and other public amenities. Coupled with other local **environmental issues**, including low urban tree canopy and emissions from nearby freeways, these issues create a **high community need** for increased parks and green spaces.

Where are parks most needed in West Athens-Westmont?



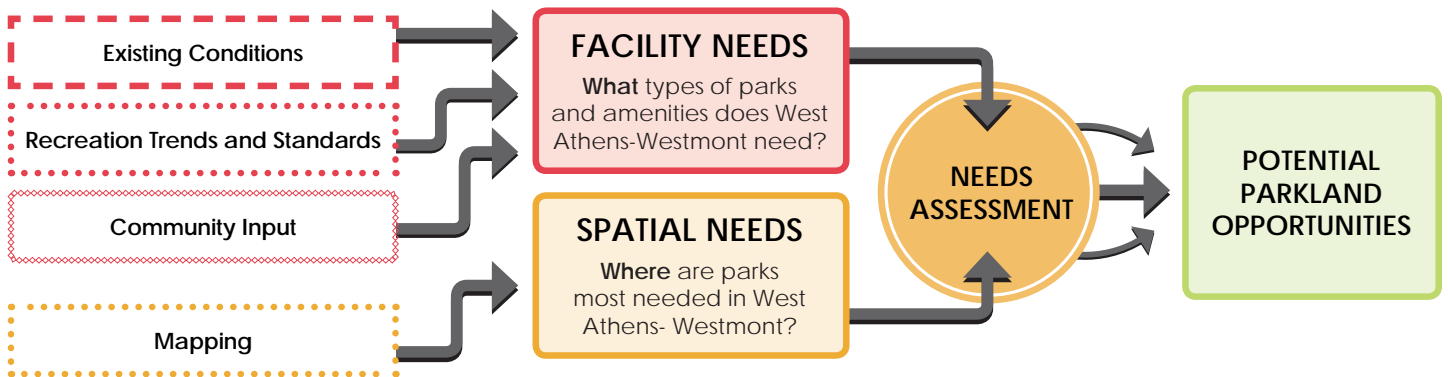
WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT GREEN VISION MAP

This map identifies potential park, trail, and greening projects that may be implemented in the short, medium, and/or long term to meet the needs of West Athens-Westmont.



SAFE & GREEN
 A parks and recreation strategy for expanding green space, public health, and safety in West Athens-Westmont

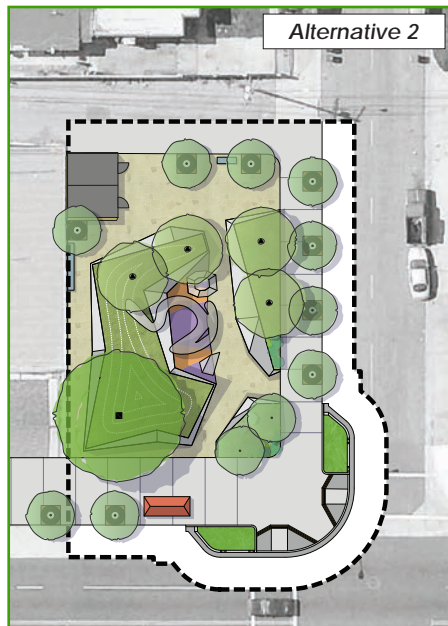
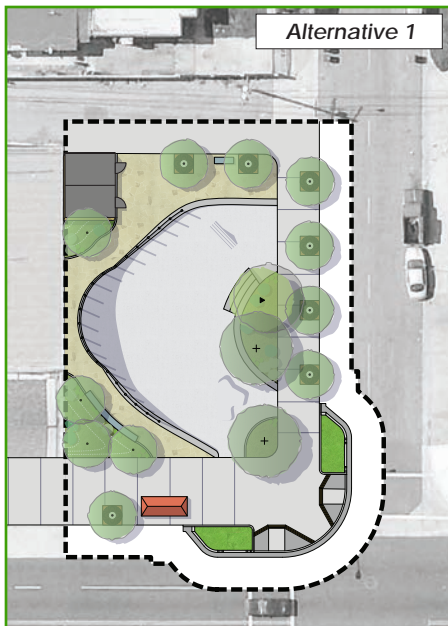
Site Identification Process



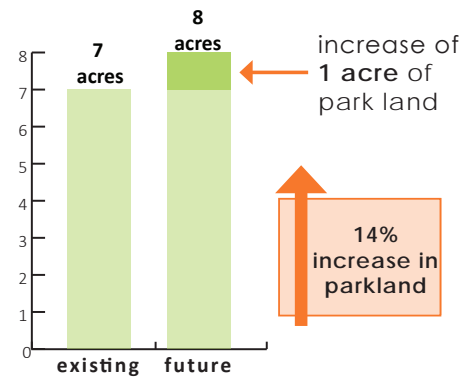
GOALS FOR WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT

1. Increase overall green space and expand recreational opportunities for people of all ages, including youth and seniors.
2. Ensure that all parks and recreation facilities improve community safety and do not create new security issues.
3. Utilize park development as a catalyst for improving public health and safety community-wide.
4. Provide new places for exercise and safe places to walk.
5. Foster public participation in park projects and ensure that the community is included in decision-making processes.
6. Maintain and enhance West Athens-Westmont's urban forest.
7. Focus on multi-benefit urban greening projects that optimize environmental services.

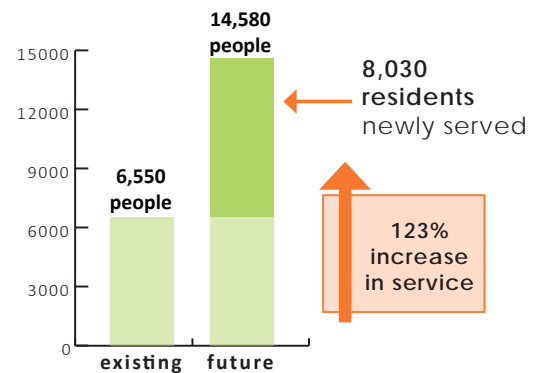
POCKET PARK DESIGN CONCEPTS



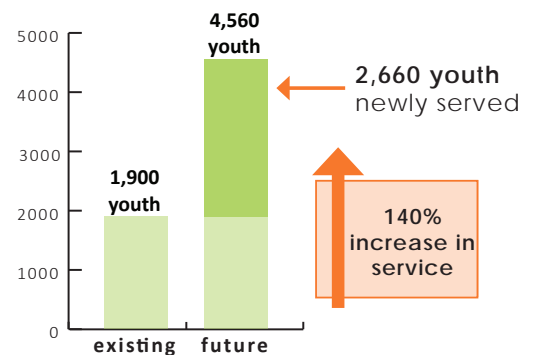
Service improvements (with the addition of potential new parks) Parkland Acres



Total Population Served



Youth Population (Under 18) Served



Graphs show improvements based on the addition of high priority park projects.



Community members providing feedback and presenting ideas at a community workshop.

POCKET PARK DESIGN CONCEPTS

1. Center for gang intervention group and restroom (prefab container building)
2. Vertical planter to provide low screen from street and seat wall on interior
3. Street trees
4. Futsal court
5. Improved street crossing
6. Low wildflower meadow along entrance



1. Center for gang intervention group (wall panels open up to create exterior gathering space)
2. Bermed planting to provide low screen from street
3. Street trees
4. Mini skate park
5. Improved street crossing
6. Low wildflower meadow along entrance



PLACEWORKS

LOS ANGELES
NEIGHBORHOOD
LAND
TRUST

For more information, contact:

Clement Lau, AICP, Departmental Facilities Planner
County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation
Tel: (213) 351-5120; E-mail: clau@parks.lacounty.gov

1 - INTRODUCTION



There are large areas of the County that are underserved by parks and recreational facilities. Nearly two out of three children in the County do not live within walking distance (one quarter mile) of a park, playground, or open space.

- Los Angeles County General Plan, Parks and Recreation Element

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN?

A Community Parks and Recreation Plan is a guiding document for the improvement of existing parks and recreation resources and the development of new parks or programs in a community based on public input and need. The plan evaluates existing facilities and programs, as well as service areas for existing parks and recreation centers, recreational needs of current residents, trends in recreational activities, and projected future changes in the area. Through community outreach, spatial analysis, and site studies, the plan identifies areas within the community with the highest need for new parks and potential opportunity sites. The plan offers recommendations for the provision of new parks and recreation, and strategies to implement them in the community.

WHY WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT?

Helen Keller Park is the only County Park in West Athens-Westmont. Helen Keller Park was recently renovated and serves as an important community hub and activity center. However, the community needs more green space and recreation facilities overall. The Los Angeles County General Plan establishes a goal of 4 acres of local parks per 1,000 residents. With a current population of nearly 41,000 residents, West Athens-Westmont only has 0.2 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. To meet the General Plan goal, West Athens-Westmont would need to have 164 acres of parkland. However, Helen Keller Park is only 7 acres in size, indicating a severe deficit of parkland.

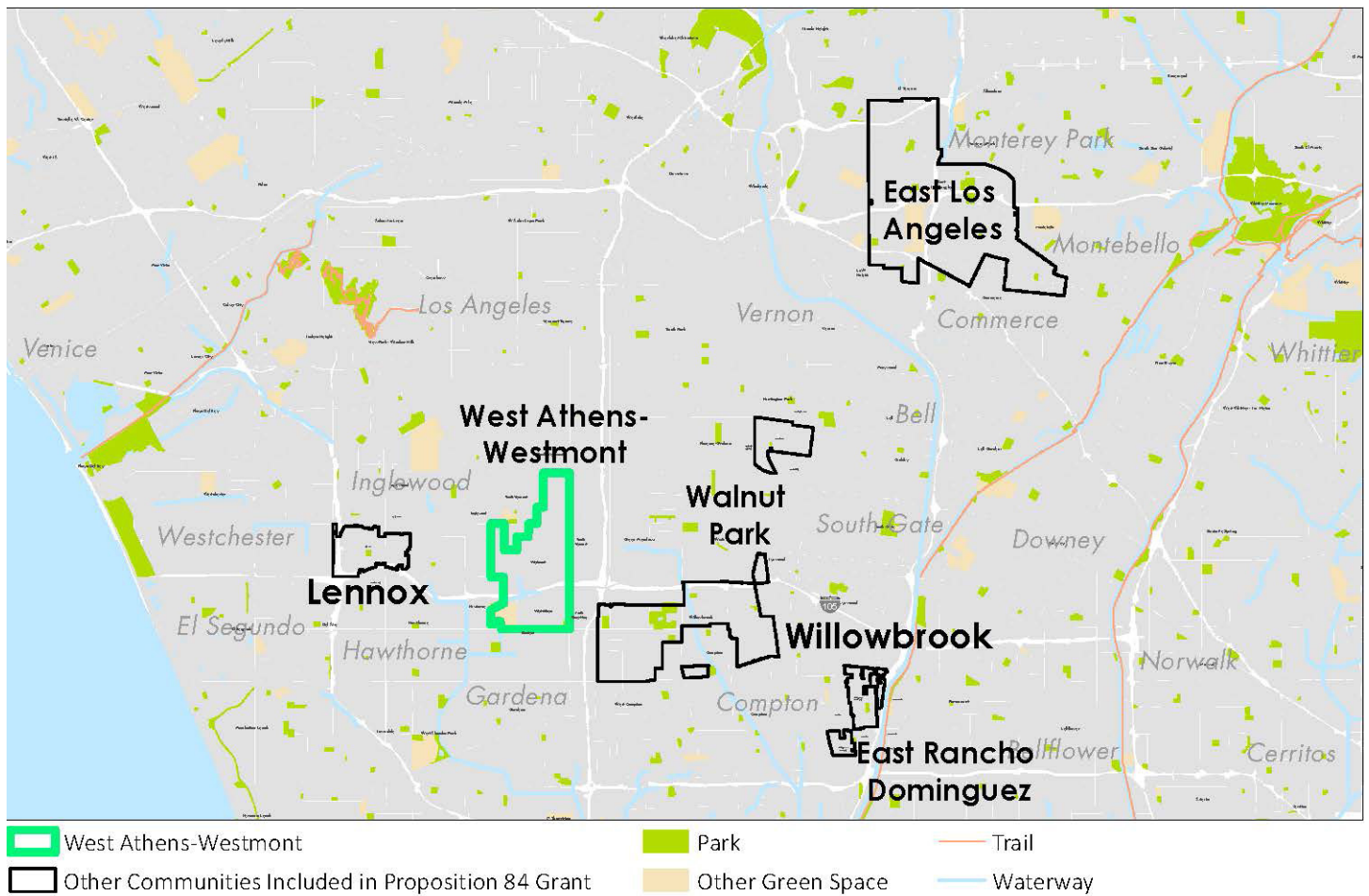
Access to parkland is very limited in West Athens-Westmont. Although there are some public parks and recreation centers located just outside the boundaries of West Athens-Westmont, many of these facilities are still too far for most residents. Nearly 84 percent of the West Athens-Westmont population is not within walking distance (half-mile) of a park. Furthermore, a difficult pedestrian environment with high levels of crime prevent many West Athens-Westmont residents from walking very far from their homes. Many residents currently fill the recreational gap by using other community resources, such as the Los Angeles Southwest College campus or Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Youth Activity League centers, or by traveling outside of the community by car. However, it is likely that most residents prefer to have additional parks and recreation opportunities within walking distance of their homes.



Helen Keller Park



FIGURE 1.1 LOCATION OF WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT IN REGION



In addition to a lack of park acres and park access, West Athens-Westmont is also facing significant crime and safety issues. Resident activists have been working hard in the community, particularly in the area around Helen Keller Park, to reduce violence and gang activity, which reached a dramatic peak in the early 2000's. Crime has decreased in the area around the park, particularly due to new park initiatives, such as movie nights, youth-focused events, and gang intervention programs. However, residents are very concerned about creating new park spaces that are unsafe or susceptible to becoming gang territory.

Residents acknowledge the need for new green space but prioritize the need for community safety. Recent community projects, such as the West Athens Victory Garden on S. Normandie Avenue and the Vermont Avenue Urban Trail, have built residents' enthusiasm for new green space and started a dialogue between the community and advocates about how green space in the West Athens-Westmont could be achieved.

Another major impediment to park development in West Athens-Westmont is the lack of available land for park creation. West Athens-Westmont is predominately a residential community with some key corridors of commercial activity. However, it is relatively "built-out," meaning nearly all the land

in the community is occupied by some type of development. Many of the commercial streets are characterized by vacant or underutilized parcels, some of which likely would require environmental cleanup due to previous land uses. Under these conditions, finding new spaces for parks is extremely difficult, and creative strategies for partnership and reuse are necessary.

West Athens-Westmont is also significantly lacking in green resources such as urban forest and habitat areas. The community has an extremely low urban tree canopy (10 percent communitywide as compared to a recommended standard of 25 percent) and is near two major freeways. Parks and urban greening could be excellent ways to introduce green infrastructure and amenities in the community, providing environmental services and public health benefits.

Currently, community members are well aware of the issues in West Athens-Westmont and enthusiastic about developing parks and programs that strengthen community safety. This plan intends to formalize their vision for green space and recreation in the community, document parks and recreation needs, explore available opportunities, and provide strategies for increasing green space in West Athens-Westmont.

HOW DID THE WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN HAPPEN?

The Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) received a Sustainable Communities Planning Grant from California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) for the “Master Plan for Sustainable Parks and Recreation: Phase I,” which consists of the development of community parks and recreation plans for six communities within Los Angeles County that currently have significant parks and recreation deficits.

In addition to West Athens-Westmont, community parks and recreation plans were developed for East Los Angeles, East Rancho Dominguez, Lennox, Walnut Park, and Willowbrook, outlined in black in Figure 1.1.

Funding for the grant was provided by Proposition 84, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006, with the purpose of funding projects that significantly reduce energy consumption, conserve water, improve air and water quality, and provide other community benefits. Due to the multi-beneficial qualities that parks and open space provide in terms of energy conservation, stormwater retention, air quality enhancement, and public health improvement, plans to increase or improve existing green space are a valuable piece of meeting the goals of the program.

The grant provided funding for technical analysis, as well as an in-depth community outreach process to gather a comprehensive understanding of existing conditions, including parks and recreation needs, and potential opportunities and strategies to address identified needs. The Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust (LANLT), and local community-based green space advocacy groups led the outreach program for the West Athens-Westmont Community Parks and Recreation Plan. The team utilized a variety of strategies, from stakeholder interviews and community workshops to interactive surveys, a youth visioning activity for green space, and a community bus tour to green space in the greater Los Angeles area. The goal of the outreach was not only to gain information about existing usage of parks and preferred facilities or amenities, but to also facilitate a dialogue with community members about parks and recreation in West Athens-Westmont. This feedback helped shape the vision for the Community Parks and Recreation Plan.

Community feedback was supported by spatial analysis and a review of existing conditions to create a robust picture of existing parks and recreation needs. Opportunity sites within the community were identified and reviewed for potential parkland development. Strategies to address the identification needs were developed, along with illustration of potential parkland ideas, to move the vision forward to an implementable plan.

WHY PARKS AND URBAN GREENING MATTER?

Parks make significant impacts on the everyday lives of urban residents. They provide valuable places for recreation and social engagement, as well as important ecological services. Together with community-wide urban greening, this plan proposes a vision with wide-reaching impacts, including:

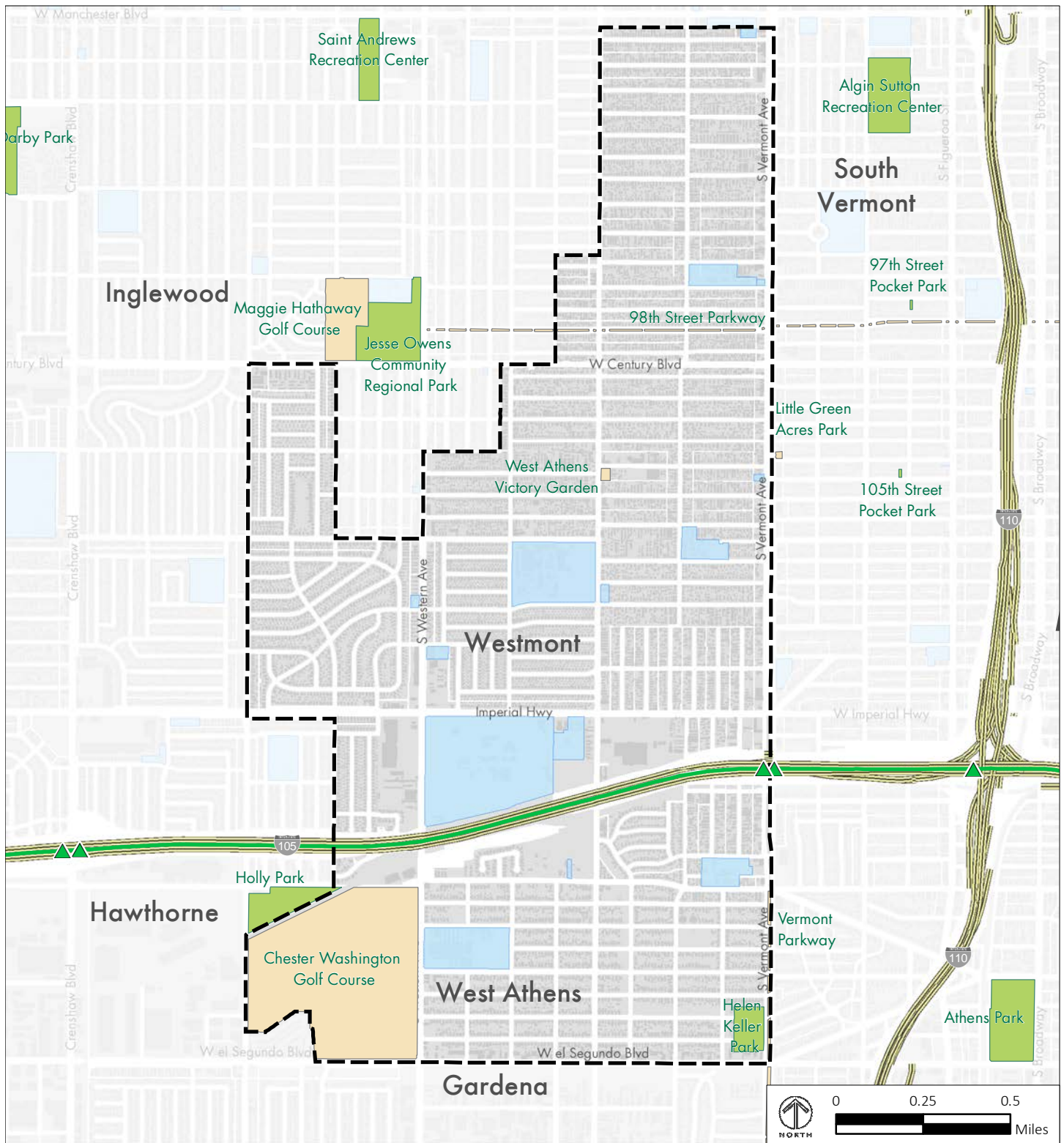
SOCIAL

- **Improved Public Health.** Parks provide locations for outdoor recreation and exercise. Trees and landscape features help clean the urban air and water. Additionally public trails and tree-lined streets encourage walking and physical activity.
- **Stress Reduction and Academic Performance.** Parks in urban areas convey serenity by providing a sensory experience of being surrounded by nature, which helps to reduce stress. Additionally, parks and trees near school grounds facilitate environmental education opportunities and create a healthy setting for learning. Access to green space and opportunities to exercise can help students concentrate and focus in school.
- **Community Safety.** Violence and crime rates are lower in areas with nearby trees and landscaping than areas without trees. Furthermore, research has indicated that neighbors have better relationships with each other and that communities are stronger and more cohesive where there is green space, perhaps because people like where they live and feel safer.
- **Community Building.** The presence of a healthy park network and community-wide efforts to improve park spaces can empower communities to work together to protect and/or expand the network, and to build community identity.
- **Walkable Streets.** Shaded paths and trees offer pedestrians a buffer from nearby vehicles, respite from the hot sun, and colorful scenery to enjoy. In addition, trees can provide dramatic view corridors and, when properly planned, facilitate way-finding within an urban area.







ENVIRONMENTAL

- **Wildlife Habitat.** Parks and green infrastructure provide shelter and food for birds and small animals. The root network of trees and plants are home to a wide array of organisms that provide beneficial soil improvements. A varied plant population supports a wide diversity of habitat, which in addition to being beneficial regionally and globally, creates a dynamic, educational, and enjoyable environment for humans.

FIGURE 1.2 WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT



Sources: Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, 2013; Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Agency, 2012; GreenInfo, 2015; PlaceWorks, 2015.

-  West Athens-Westmont
-  Existing Park
-  Other Green Space
-  School
-  Metro Rail Green Line Station
-  Metro Rail Green Line

- **Stormwater Management.** Trees and stormwater treatment facilities within parks improve the quality of stormwater by intercepting and filtering stormwater before it reaches the underground water system, thus reducing the total amount of runoff lost to storm drains or contributing to flood events.
- **Improved Air Quality.** Trees and plants in urban parks can play several roles in improving air quality. The most direct way that trees help to improve air quality is by absorbing and filtering air pollutants, such as ozone and nitrogen dioxide, through their leaves or needles. In addition, parks reduce air pollution by creating cool microclimates since increased temperatures can accelerate the production of some air pollutants, such as ozone smog. Increased shading can also reduce the demand for air conditioning in buildings, impacting energy need and emissions from energy production at a larger scale.
- **Heat Island Mitigation and Temperature Stabilization.** Urban areas can become “urban heat islands” due to the abundance of dark surfaces like asphalt and buildings that absorb the sun’s heat and re-radiate the heat resulting in higher air temperatures. Parks and green space can reduce this heat island effect by shading parking lots and other surfaces, effectively intercepting the sun’s heat and reducing temperatures through evapotranspiration.

ECONOMIC

- **Energy Conservation and Green Infrastructure.** Energy upgrades and energy conservation measures at parks can result in significant savings. Additionally, trees can help reduce the need for cooling and heating buildings, thereby reducing the cost of operating these systems. In addition, trees are an important component of many green infrastructure projects that reduce costs of stormwater management.
- **Increased Property Value.** Numerous studies have shown a general increase in property value for residential properties near parks and areas with street trees.
- **Increased Activity in Retail Areas.** Small park plazas and street trees can raise the aesthetic appeal of a shopping street, and thus attract more shoppers to a retail block.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAN?

This planning document brings together community input, spatial analysis, and design to present a community-wide plan for parks and recreation. To accomplish this, the plan:

- Provides a guide toward developing new green spaces and enhancing existing recreational amenities in West Athens-Westmont.
- Documents community input on parks and recreation planning issues in the community.
- Formalizes a vision for parks and recreation in West Athens-Westmont based on community input and identified needs.
- Recommends potential sites and site types for acquisition and development of new projects.
- Develops conceptual plans for potential future park sites.
- Proposes meaningful strategies that can be realized by the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) in collaboration with its partners.

WHAT DOES THE PLAN INCLUDE?

Chapter 1. Introduction provides a summary of the plan, background of the planning process, and intended purpose.

Chapter 2. Existing Conditions identifies key conditions related to parks and recreation amenities within West Athens-Westmont, including a demographic profile of the community, an inventory of existing parks and recreation programs, a summary of the existing urban forest, and spatial analysis of the neighborhood.

Chapter 3. Community Outreach summarizes the community outreach completed as part of this plan, including key input from the community regarding their perception of park needs and ideas for new parks.

Chapter 4. Needs Assessment describes the current state of park and recreation need within West Athens-Westmont, based on findings from existing conditions, community outreach, and spatial analysis.

Chapter 5 Vision Plan describes the goals and vision of parks and urban greening in West Athens-Westmont, including opportunities for new park development, enhancement of existing facilities, and installation of green infrastructure, including improvements to the urban forest in West Athens-Westmont.

Chapter 6. Design Concepts provides conceptual site designs for sample sites selected during the planning process.

Chapter 7. Implementation recommends potential actions and funding sources for carrying out the vision presented in the plan.



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SOUTHWEST
COLLEGE
Year of Empowerment
2014-2015

2 - EXISTING CONDITIONS



The West Athens-Westmont area is 3.2-square miles in size and consists of two unincorporated communities in Los Angeles County: West Athens and Westmont. It is bordered by the City of Los Angeles to the north, the unincorporated community of West Rancho Dominguez and the City of Compton to the south, the City of Gardena to the east, and the City of Inglewood to the west. It is easily accessible from the 105 and 110 freeways to the west and north, respectively, as well as through major corridors, including east-west connections via Century Boulevard and West 120th street, and north-south connections via S. Vermont Avenue and Western Avenue.

POLICY CONTEXT

There are various existing policies in place relevant to the development, financing, and maintenance of new parks in unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County, including the following policy documents:

- **PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT OF THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES GENERAL PLAN 2035 (ADOPTED OCTOBER 2015).** The Parks and Recreation Element of the County of Los Angeles General Plan guides and plans for the development and maintenance of parkland and recreation space and facilities to meet the needs of existing and future residents. The General Plan will guide future development throughout the unincorporated areas of the County to the year 2035.
- **LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR 2020 (SAMP).** In 2004, the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation prepared a Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) for Horizon Year 2020. The SAMP provides guidance for park development serving future population growth within the County in accordance with the General Plan's parks and open space guidelines. The SAMP includes an assessment of existing parks and recreation resources and sets five-, ten-, and twenty-year priorities for identified needs in each Supervisorial District within the County.
- **FLORENCE-FIRESTONE COMMUNITY PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN (DRAFT OCTOBER 2010).** The Florence-Firestone Community Parks and Recreation Plan plans for services that meet the parks and recreation needs of residents in the unincorporated Florence-Firestone area. While this plan applies exclusively to Florence-Firestone, it contains examples of best practice policies reflective of a community process that could be replicated for establishing new parks in West Athens-Westmont and other unincorporated communities.
- **LOS ANGELES COUNTY CODE, TITLE 17 - PARKS, BEACHES AND OTHER PUBLIC AREAS.** In the Los Angeles County Code, Title 17 – Parks, Beaches and Other Public Areas, there are several ordinances pertaining to parks and recreation. In general, the Code implements planning policies and establishes enforceable regulations. The ordinances in Title 17 regulate parks and recreation areas,

arboreta and botanical gardens, beaches, Pyramid Lake, and particular recreational activities (i.e. skateboarding and roller skating).

- **THE QUIMBY ACT.** The California Quimby Act, which is part of the Subdivision Map Act, applies to residential subdivisions and permits cities and counties in California to adopt ordinances which require the dedication of land and/or payment of in-lieu fees for park and recreational facilities. The Quimby Act is made effective through the Los Angeles County Quimby Code in Title 21 (Subdivision Code), which details how it is applied throughout the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County.

A summary of these policy documents and their relevance to the West Athens-Westmont Community Parks and Recreation Plan can be found in Appendix A.

DEMOGRAPHICS

West Athens and Westmont are distinct census designated places (CDP)¹, which are geographic areas identified by the US Census Bureau for statistical purposes. However, for parks and recreation planning, both communities will be explored together, collectively called West Athens-Westmont, as they face similar challenges in providing parks and recreation amenities to their residents, and both CDPs would benefit from amenities in either community.

POPULATION

Population is an important indicator for assessing park and recreational needs. Traditionally, park and recreation standards have been based on the ratio of parkland provided to population (i.e. X acres/1,000 residents). The Los Angeles County General Plan establishes a goal of 4 acres of local parkland per 1,000 residents. West Athens-Westmont was home to a combined 40,582 residents in 2010, including 31,853 in Westmont and 8,729 in West Athens. There is currently one park in the combined community, which is 7 acres in size, amounting to only 0.2 acres of local parkland per 1,000 residents. This represents a significant deficiency of local parks in the community.

1 CDP's are populated areas that lack separate municipal government. CDP's are delineated solely to provide data for settled concentrations of population that are identifiable by name but are not legally incorporated under the laws of the State in which they are located.

Over the past two decades, the growth rate for the area has fluctuated, with an approximate 2 percent increase in population from 1990 to 2000 and a 0.3 percent decrease in growth from 2000 to 2010. Comparatively, Los Angeles County experienced growth over the past two decades: 7 percent between 1990 and 2000, and 3 percent between 2000 and 2010.

AGE

Identifying a population's age profile is important for parks and trails because different age groups have different recreational needs. For example, young children require more play equipment and cushioned surfaces for safety, while seniors utilize more passive recreational amenities such as walking paths and gardens. Understanding how the population shifts over time with respect to age is also an important consideration in planning future parks and recreational facilities.

From 2000 to 2010, West Athens' median age increased from 28 to 34 years, and Westmont's median age increased from 26 to 32 years. Both communities are still younger when compared with the County's median age of 35. Together, it is important to note that the older age groups in the West Athens-Westmont area (45 and over) have increased in their share of the population, with the 45 to 64 year-old group experiencing the largest increase, from 18 percent in 2000 to 23 percent in 2010, followed by the over-64 age group, from 7 percent in 2000 to 10 percent in 2010. Conversely, the 5 to 17 year-old age group experienced a sharp decline in their share of the population, from 27 percent to 20 percent. All other groups have stayed relatively consistent from 2000 to 2010.

The decline in the younger population is evident countywide and is likely to continue as the limited supply and high cost of housing in the region becomes increasingly prohibitive for young families with children. While the younger population is declining, as baby boomers approach retirement, an increase in seniors over the next decade is likely to occur as more residents age in place. Therefore, it will be important to include more passive recreational amenities when planning for new parks and recreational facilities.

The age groups making up the largest percentage of the population in the West Athens-Westmont area include the 25 to 44 year-olds (27 percent) followed closely by the 45 to 64 year-olds (23 percent) and 5 to 17 year olds (20 percent). Since no single age group significantly dominates in West Athens-Westmont, there is a need for a variety of park and recreational amenities that can support all age groups.

HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN

Between 2000 and 2010, the percentage of households with children under age 18 in the West Athens-Westmont area significantly decreased from 47 percent in 2000 to 38 percent in 2010. This is consistent with the age profile described previously, which shows an increase in the older age groups'

share of the population and a decrease in the younger age groups' share of the population. However, the community still has considerably more households with young children compared with the County (32 percent). It is important to continue to plan for park amenities that support families with children in the West Athens-Westmont community; however, more consideration should be placed on the needs of the growing older population.

RACE AND ETHNICITY²

The racial and cultural profile of a community often influences recreational preferences and is important to consider along with other demographic trends. Numerous studies have shown that parks and recreation needs, preferences, and perceptions vary by race/ethnicity, place of origin, and length of residence in the U.S. In 2010, the majority of the population in the West Athens-Westmont area combined is African American (51 percent) and Latino (46 percent). From 2000 to 2010, the percentage of the Latino population increased by approximately 7 percent, while the percentage of the African American population decreased by 7 percent. Growth in the Latino population in particular is a trend that is happening in many communities countywide and indicates a need to consider their preferences in the planning of future parks and recreational programming.

INCOME

In 2010, the median household income of West Athens and Westmont were \$47,773 and \$31,395 respectively. These levels are significantly lower than the County's median income of \$56,200. In general, lower income populations have fewer opportunities to engage in physical activity and have poorer health outcomes than the average population.³ This is due in part to the fact that low-income groups often face social and environmental barriers to physical activity and may have fewer means by which to overcome these obstacles than other income levels. For example, lower income residents are much more likely to rely on public parks for recreation; many lower income families have little or no money to spend on recreational facilities and programs offered by alternative providers such as private gyms and the YMCA.

About 52 percent of the combined population in West Athens-Westmont is very low or low income, meaning their income is less than \$35,000 annually. This is a significant percentage of the population and emphasizes the need to focus on the needs of lower income residents in the planning of new parks, trails, and green space, in order to improve their access and opportunities for physical activity.

² The race and ethnicity categories used in this document (i.e. African American, Asian, Latino, White, and Other) are derived from the 2010 U.S. Census.

³ Active Living by Design, 2012, "Low Income Populations and Physical Activity."

FIGURE 2.1 DEMOGRAPHICS SUMMARY

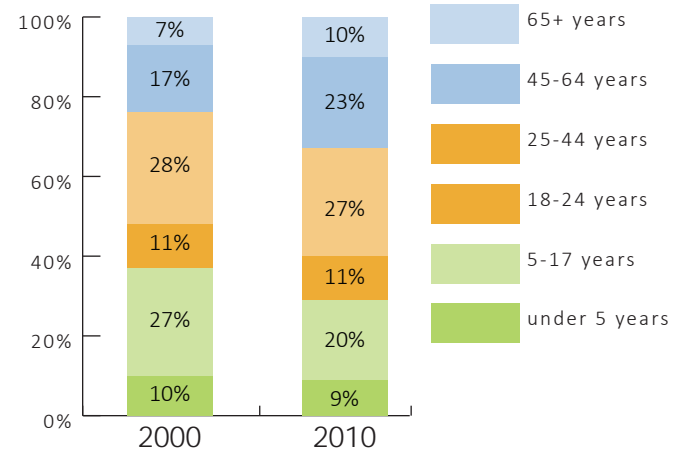
POPULATION CHANGE

	1990	2000	2010	Percent Change 1990-2000	Percent Change 2000-2010
WEST ATHENS	8,859	9,101	8,729	+2.7%	-4.3%
WESTMONT	31,044	31,623	31,853	+1.9%	+0.7%
WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT COMBINED	39,903	40,724	40,582	+2.1%	-0.3%
LOS ANGELES COUNTY	8,863,164	9,519,338	9,834,410	+7%	+3%

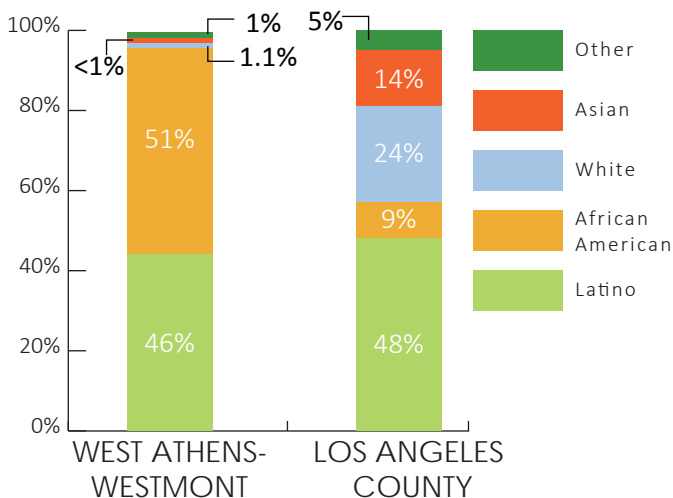
RACE AND ETHNICITY

	Percent of 2000 Pop.	Percent of 2010 Pop.	Percent Change 2000-2010
LATINO	39%	46%	+7%
AFRICAN AMERICAN	58%	51%	-7%
WHITE	1.3%	1.1%	<1%
ASIAN	<1%	<1%	NO CHANGE
OTHER	1%	1%	NO CHANGE
TOTAL	100%	100%	--

POPULATION BY AGE

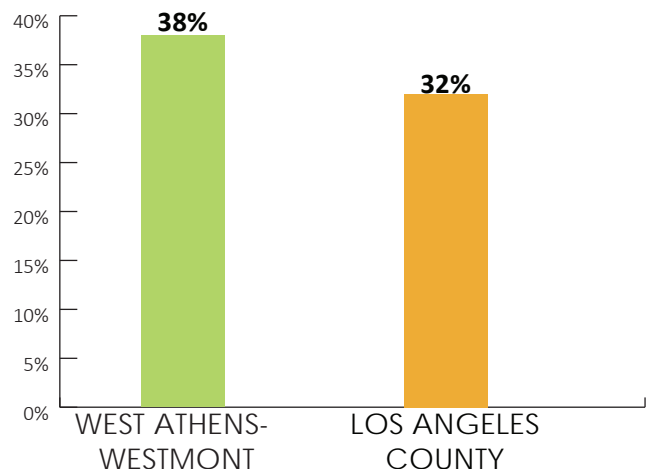


(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)



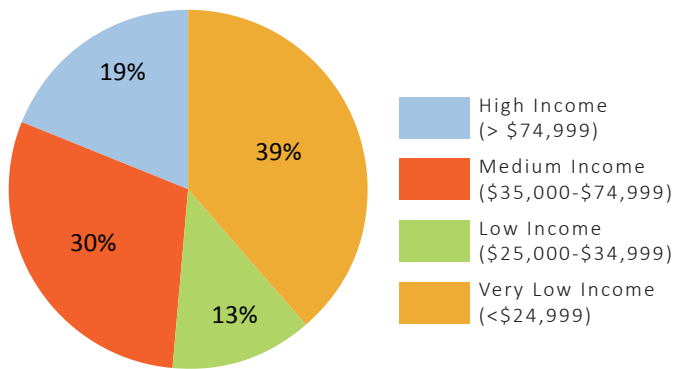
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)

HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN



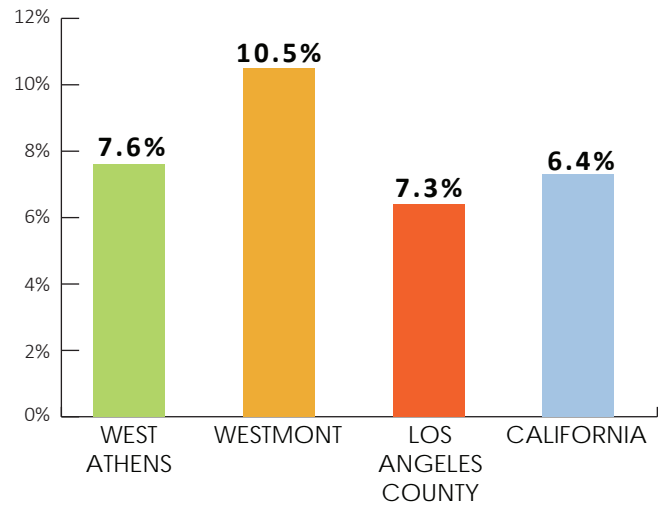
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)

INCOME GROUPS



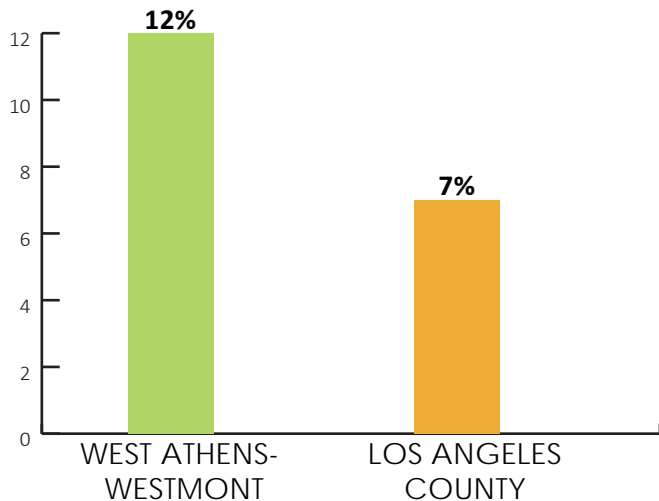
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)

UNEMPLOYMENT ESTIMATES (2013)



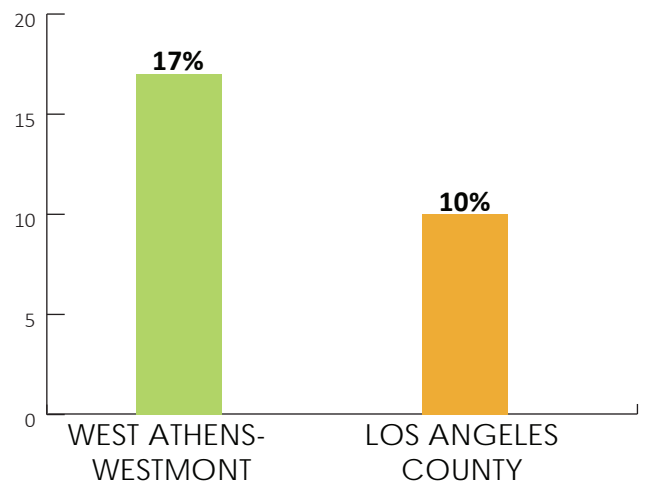
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Fact Finder 2013)

POPULATION THAT COMMUTES WITH PUBLIC TRANSIT



(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)

POPULATION WITHOUT ACCESS TO VEHICLES GROUPS



(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates)

EMPLOYMENT

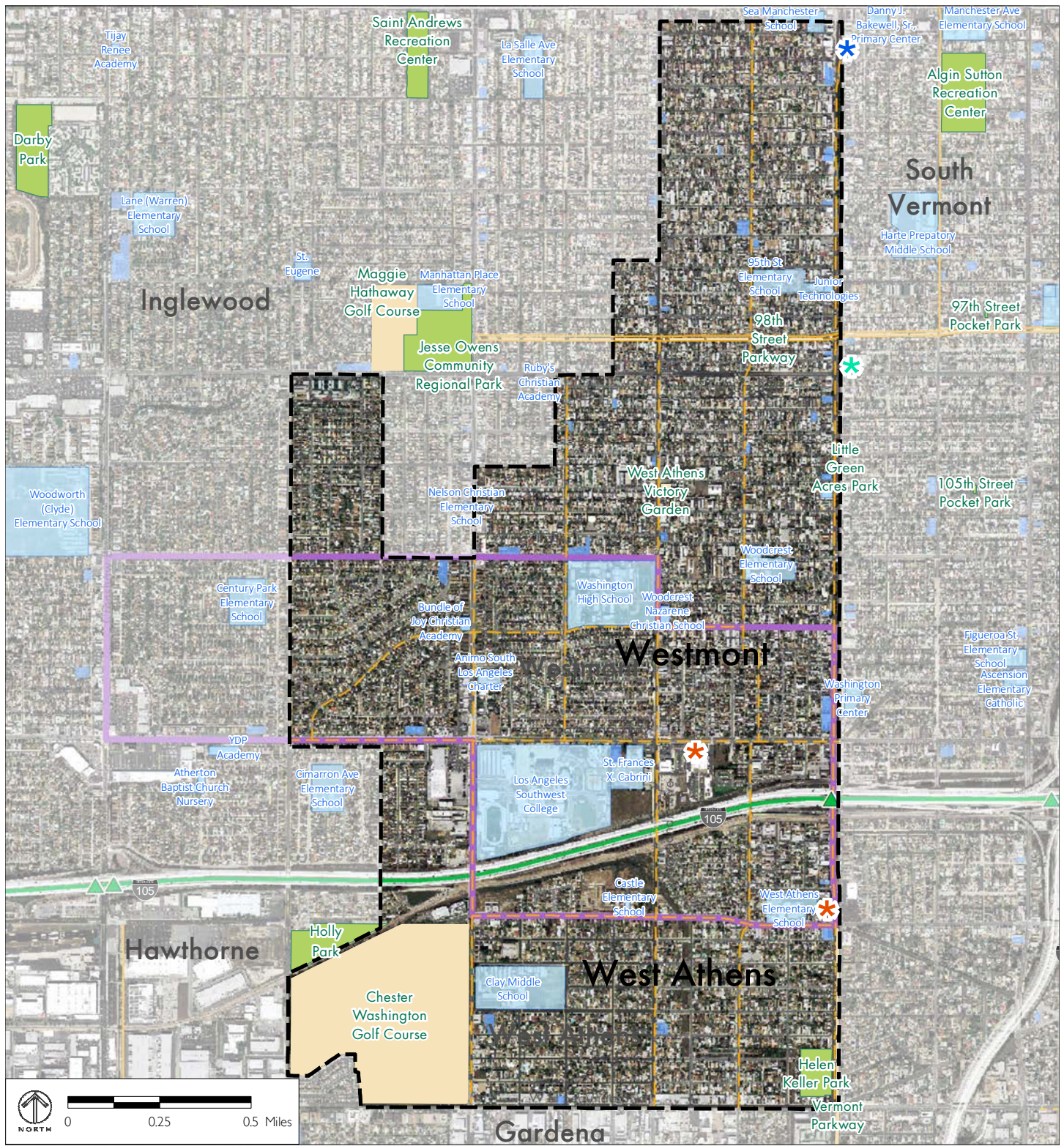
According to the 2007-2011 American Community Survey from the U.S. Census, most of the employed residents of West Athens are in the manufacturing (17.8%) or educational services, health care, and social assistance (16.6%) industries. A slightly smaller percentage work in professional, scientific, administrative and waste management service (14.1%; transportation, warehouse, and utilities (10.5%); and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, or food service (10.2%).

Similarly, most of the employed residents of Westmont work in educational services, health care, and social assistance fields (20.1%). A slightly smaller percentage work in the retail trade (11.2%); arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, or food service (10.9%), or manufacturing (10%) industries. A small percentage of the population of Westmont is in the armed services (0.1%), which is the same percentage of California's population in the armed services.

The State of California Employment Development Department estimates from May 2015 indicate that the unemployment rate in West Athens (7.6 percent) and Westmont (10.5 percent) is higher than the County (7.3 percent) and State (6.4 percent) averages.

FIGURE 2.2 WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT COMMUNITY MAP

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Sources: Los Angeles County, 2013; Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Agency, 2012; PlaceWorks, 2015.

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Existing Park | Public Transit Network | Bicycle Network | ✱ Sheriff's Youth Activity League (YAL) Location |
| Other Green Space | ▲ Metro Rail Green Line Station | — Existing Bike Routes | ✱ Weingart YMCA Wellness & Aquatic Center |
| Schools | — Metro Rail Green Line | - - - Proposed Bike Routes | ✱ Community Build |
| Religious Institutions | — The Link Shuttle | | |

VEHICLE ACCESS

Understanding transportation needs is important when considering access to parks and trails. Significantly more households in the West Athens-Westmont area (17 percent) have no vehicle access compared with County households (10 percent). The relationship between automobile ownership and access to parks is not often discussed, but cars clearly make a big difference because they give residents mobility and options. With cars or some form of transportation, residents can travel to recreational facilities outside of their immediate neighborhood, including beaches, arts and cultural facilities, regional parks, state parks, and national parks.

West Athens-Westmont residents are also considerably more dependent on public transportation than other residents in the County. Approximately 12 percent of West Athens-Westmont working residents commute to work via transit compared with 7 percent of workers county wide. This underscores the need to plan new neighborhood and community parks within walking or biking distance to residents and/or in close proximity to public transportation lines wherever possible.

COMMUNITY LAYOUT AND TRANSIT

West Athens-Westmont is located approximately 8 miles southeast of Downtown Los Angeles and within Supervisorial District 2. The community boundary between West Athens and Westmont is located slightly north of the 105 Freeway along Imperial Highway. Major north-south corridors, including Van Ness Avenue, Western Avenue, S. Normandie Avenue, and S. Vermont Avenue cross the Freeway into both communities. Other smaller, residential streets terminate at the freeway. The greater West Athens-Westmont area is bounded by El Segundo Boulevard to the south and Manchester Boulevard to the north. S. Vermont Avenue serves as the eastern boundary, although the western boundary steps along various rights-of-way. To the east the community is bounded by unincorporated communities of South Vermont and North Shoestring. The City of Inglewood is located to the northwest of the community and the City of Hawthorne is located to the southwest.

Community boundaries within unincorporated areas can be difficult to determine on-the-ground and it is common for geographic boundaries to be at times different than resident's perceived understanding of their community. Some residents consider the whole area to be part of a community called "Athens," while others see the areas north and south of the freeway as entirely separate. Spatially, the layout of the communities is different. North of the 105 Freeway is more dense with virtually no green space or urban greening. South of the 105 Freeway is more open with larger property lots. Additionally, the community's one County park is located in this area, as well as a County-operated golf course and a public park operated by the City of Hawthorne. There is also a large utility corridor that runs through this area. These features combine to create a feeling of more open space, although this

is not entirely desirable from the resident's perspective, who also consider large open areas to be unprotected and potentially dangerous.

The community is served by the Metro Green Line and several Metro buses, which run along Santa Fe Avenue, Pacific Boulevard, Seville Avenue, and Florence Avenue. Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (DPW) additionally manages a public shuttle called "The Link." The shuttle offers residents reduced fares (25¢ for the general public and free for seniors, persons with disabilities, children under 5 and Metro Pass Holders) to local destinations within West Athens-Westmont and the City of Inglewood, including the S. Vermont/Athens Green Line Metro Station, two Sheriff's Youth Activity League (YAL) locations, Los Angeles Southwest College, and Washington High School. The Link shuttle runs from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday to Friday and 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Figure 2.2 displays The Link's routes in West Athens-Westmont.

PARKS INVENTORY

Helen Keller Park is the only park in West Athens-Westmont. As seen in Figure 2.2, the park is located on S. Vermont Avenue between El Segundo Boulevard and W. 125th Street.

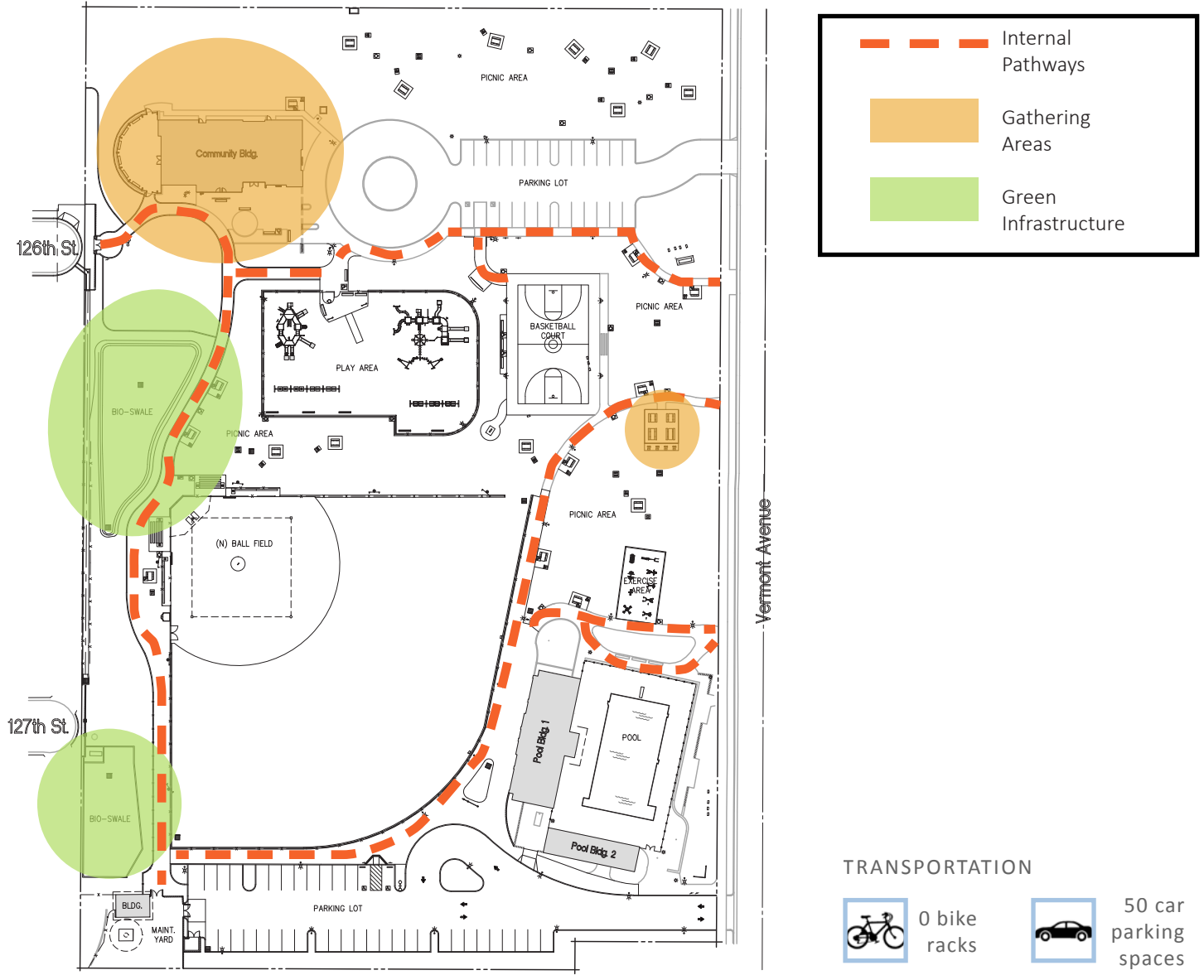
The 2004 SAMP suggests that by the year 2020, the Recreation Planning Area in which West Athens-Westmont is located (Planning Area 2 of Supervisorial District 2), will be deficient in providing space for walking, bicycle riding, fishing, hiking, roller skating, running, and skate boarding, as well as places to play basketball, softball or baseball, volleyball, soccer, football, tennis, and racquetball or handball. These estimates are based on the national statistics for participation in different types of recreation, and although they show a general projected deficiency in recreational amenities, it is important to incorporate the community preferences presented in the community outreach component of this plan in making future decisions about how to distribute recreational spaces.




HELEN KELLER PARK

Figure 2.3 provides an overview of the facilities and amenities at Helen Keller Park. However, at the time of this parks inventory, Helen Keller Park was undergoing a renovation of the community building and remediation of soil and groundwater in the southwestern area of the park. The park was closed during this process. The community building opened in December 2014 and the other areas re-opened at the end of 2015. Prior to the remediation, Helen Keller Park served as an important community hub for the wide array of youth programming and community events held at the park. These programs, discussed below, were enhanced by the renovation although stalled during the long renovation process.

FIGURE 2.3 SNAPSHOT OF HELEN KELLER PARK

EXISTING CONDITIONS



-  Internal Pathways
-  Gathering Areas
-  Green Infrastructure

TRANSPORTATION

-  0 bike racks
-  50 car parking spaces

FACILITIES

 sports	 flexible outdoor	 play	 social outdoor	 indoor rec	
 1 softball/ baseball field	 1 basketball court	 1 pool	 1 fitness zone	 1 multi- purpose field	 2 picnic shelters
 outdoor cooking	 1 tot lot (2-5 yr olds)	 1 playground (5-12 yr olds)	 1 community center	 1 computer lab	 1 office

Helen Keller Park is 7 acres and is located at 12521 S. Vermont Avenue. The park contains one softball/baseball field, one basketball court, and one multi-purpose field, a fitness zone with exercise equipment, a tot lot, and a playground for older youth between the ages of five and twelve. There is also one large covered picnic shelter, barbecues, and restrooms for group gatherings and picnics. There is one pool and bathhouse for swimming and aquatic exercise.



The renovated community building at Helen Keller Park is 4,000 square feet and is certified LEED Gold, utilizing a number of green building practices, including use of recycled materials, water efficient fixtures, and low-albedo roof material to reflect heat. The center contains a computer lab, arts-and-crafts room, outdoor patio, reception area, and a full kitchen. The center also includes a 100-seat movie screening room donated by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) Los Angeles Chapter and Warner Bros. Entertainment. Adjacent to the community building, there is also a sloped lawn area where the community can watch outdoor movies.

Trees are planted along the edges of the park and along the paths, creating spaces for passive recreation and relaxation within the park. As discussed below, Helen Keller Park has lower tree canopy than other parks in the area and a high percentage (36.1% of population) of the trees in the park are London planetree (*Platanus x acerfolia*) in its urban forest. During renovation, some of landscaping was replaced with drought tolerant species and the turf was restored for improved areas of play.

sports fields, there are lights around the perimeter of the park, as well as along the interior pathways and in the playground area. There is an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant path through the park ensuring that residents with disabilities can access the amenities within the park.

Helen Keller Park is accessible to pedestrians entering from S. Vermont Avenue to the east and from two entrances through the residential neighborhood to the west. The park has two parking lots located on the northern and southern sides of the park with a total of 50 parking spaces. In addition to lights for

FIGURE 2.4 MATRIX OF PARK ELEMENTS AT HELEN KELLER PARK

Size	Park Amenities										Play			Recreation Amenities					Buildings/Structures												
(acres)	Restrooms	Group Picnic Shelters	Picnic Tables	Barbecues	Splash Pad	Fitness Zone	Outdoor Stage	Vending Machine	Drinking Fountain	Art / Monuments	2-5 years	5-12 years	2-12 years	Softball Field	Multipurpose Field	Soccer Field	Football Field	Basketball Court	Tennis Court	Volleyball Court	Skate Park	Walking Paths or Trails	Swimming Pool	Community Building	Senior Center	Offices	Gymnasium	Multi-purpose Room	Computer Lab	Security Lighting	Parking
7																															

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS

Recreational programming enriches a community by providing access to new forms of physical activity and social engagement. The Parks and Recreation Element of the 2035 Los Angeles General Plan states that parks and recreation programs specifically benefit the greater community by:

- *Offering opportunities to play, grow, and learn.*
- *Providing a sense of place and belonging.*
- *Promoting health and wellness.*
- *Improving neighborhood and community connections, and problem-solving.*
- *Enhancing community cohesiveness while honoring diversity.*
- *Helping protect natural environments.*

Although many programs target health and fitness, recreational programming can also offer educational opportunities, job and life skills, or arts and social activities. The types of activities offered vary based on community interest and involvement.

PROGRAMS AT HELEN KELLER PARK

Community demand and partnership with outside groups, like BAFTA, have led to a robust programming and event schedule at Helen Keller Park. Many residents consider the programs and events put on by DPR as the major reason why the park is safer now than in the past and that these events have allowed the park to become a true community resource.

BAFTA and other local violence prevention groups, including A Better LA, have been working in West Athens since 2004 when community members reached out to the groups in frustration about the high level of gang activity and violence in their community, which included the death of four children at Helen Keller Park. Gang leaders reached out to numerous groups to bring alternative programming into the community and received support from BAFTA to develop a program. The events began at Helen Keller Park, but have expanded to other parks in the area, including Athens Park in Willowbrook. Local groups credit the program with reducing crime in the community and improving safety around these parks.⁴

Figure 2.5 shows the events that occur at Helen Keller Park throughout the year. The new community building with the indoor movie screening room and outdoor stage allow for the popular year-round Helen Keller Film Festival to continue at the park. The festival includes a movie screening one Saturday a month. Table 2.1 lists the current youth, and teens programs offered at Helen Keller Park. Table 2.2 lists the adult, and family

FIGURE 2.5 EVENTS AT HELEN KELLER PARK

MONTH	EVENTS
January	Community Breakfast 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
February	Black History Program (various events through the month)
March	
April	Easter Egg Hunt 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
May	Cinco de Mayo Festival 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
June	Father's Day Basketball Tournament
July	Gospel Jazz in the Park 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
August	
September	
October	Halloween Celebration 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
November	Thanksgiving Community Dinner 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
December	Christmas Party 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Helen Keller Park Film Festival
(Fourth Saturday of the month - year round)

4 2014, February 24. "How BAFTA Helped Stop Violence in LA." Los Angeles Confidential website. <<http://la-confidential-magazine.com/Post/how-bafta-helped-stop-gang-violence-in-south-central-la>>.

TABLE 2.1 SUMMARY OF PROGRAMS AT HELEN KELLER PARK

YOUTH				
PROGRAM	MONTH	DAY	TIME	AGE
Sports/Wellness				
Boys and Girls Basketball	September- June	Tuesday and Thursday	5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	6-16 years
Dance Group	Year round	Tuesday and Thursday	5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	6-16 years
Snack/Lunch Program	Year round	Monday- Friday	4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	0-18 years
Summer Lunch	July-August	Monday- Friday	12:00 p.m.- 1:00 p.m.	0-18 years
Youth Baseball	March-July	Monday-Friday Saturday	4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	5-15 years
Social/Enrichment				
After School Program	Year round	Monday- Friday	2:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	6-12 years
Computer Class	Year round	Monday- Friday	4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	7-15 years
Beautiful Butterflies	Year round	3rd Thursday	5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.	10-18 years
Summer Day Camp	June-August	Monday-Friday	7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.	6-12 years
Toastmaster's Leadership Club	Year round	1st and 3rd Sunday	3:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.	12-18 years
ADULT				
100 Citizen Health and Wellness Exercise	Year round	Tuesday and Thursday	6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Over 18 years
Ballroom Dance	Year round	Tuesday and Thursday	9:30 a.m.- 11:30 a.m.	All
Line Dance	January	Tuesday and Thursday	10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	All
FAMILY				
Mommy & Me	Year round	Monday- Friday	11:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.	Over 18 years
Men Empowerment	January	Tuesday and Thursday	10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	All
Neighborhood Empowerment Program	Year round	Monday- Friday	11:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.	Over 18 years
SENIOR				
Social and Recreation Activities	Year round	Monday- Wednesday	9:30 a.m.- 11:30 a.m.	seniors

programs at Helen Keller Park. The various park programs are offered at different times throughout the year. The tables also include a summary of the month, day and time of each program.

OTHER RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS

SCHOOLS

The public schools in West Athens-Westmont are part of Los Angeles Unified School District and operate an afterschool program through the District's Beyond the Bell Program. The programs take place at the schools afterschool until 6:00 pm and focus on academic enrichment and offer arts and fitness activities.

SHERIFF'S YOUTH ACTIVITY LEAGUE (YAL)

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Sheriff) operates the South Los Angeles YAL through two program centers: Irmas Youth Center on S. Vermont Avenue and the South Los Angeles Station on Imperial Highway. The YAL centers provide youth with afterschool activities ranging from homework help to sports practice. The YAL also organizes field trips for youth ranging from academic experiences, like museums or campuses, to recreational ones, like sporting events or tournaments. While Helen Keller Park was closed, the YAL organized trips to water parks so young people did not miss out on a summer pool experience.

SHIELDS FOR FAMILIES, INC.

Shields For Families, Inc. is a substance abuse, mental health, and child development advocacy group working throughout Los Angeles County. They operate a center in West Athens-Westmont adjacent to Los Angeles Southwest College at 11601 S. Western Avenue that offers programs and assistance to children whose parents are attending substance abuse treatment programs. They also offer afterschool programming that involves tutoring, mentoring, and social and recreational activities.



*Track and Stadium
Los Angeles Southwest College*

LIBRARY PROGRAMS

Woodcrest Library, part of the Los Angeles County public library system, offers homework help and some early childhood education programs. The library also provides free Wi-Fi internet access and public computer access.

WEINGART YMCA WELLNESS AND AQUATIC CENTER

The Weingart YMCA is located outside the West Athens-Westmont border at 9900 S. Vermont Avenue. The center has an indoor heated pool, group exercise studio, cycling/yoga studio, indoor basketball court, indoor racquetball court, and saunas. There is also a fitness center at the facility with free weights and cardiovascular equipment. The center offers a variety of morning and evening fitness classes held throughout the week. The YMCA also sponsor youth camps held throughout the larger Los Angeles area. To use the facilities at the Weingart YMCA, residents must pay a membership fee. Family memberships range from \$59 per month for two adults and their children to \$49 per month for one adult and their children. Adult membership costs \$37 per month and youth (ages 13-17 years) cost \$25 per month.

COMMUNITY BUILD

Community Build is a South Los Angeles-based community organization that focuses on youth programming and economic development. The Community Building Youth & Community Center is located just outside the West Athens-Westmont boundary on S. Vermont Avenue and W. 88th Street.

OTHER GREEN SPACES LOS ANGELES SOUTHWEST COLLEGE (LASC)

LASC's campus is located along Imperial Highway east of Western Avenue and is approximately 64 acres in size. This two-year college is part of the State of California Community College System. The campus includes a number of sports facilities, including a football field and walking track, baseball and softball fields, and an aquatic center. Many residents utilize the walking track at the football field to walk for exercise.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

WEST ATHENS COMMUNITY GARDEN

The West Athens Community Garden, located on S. Normandie Avenue and 105th Street opened in September 2013. The land was previously owned by the Community Development Commission of the County of Los Angeles (CDC), who transferred the property to the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust (LANLT) who constructed and manages the garden in partnership with the Little Green Fingers Initiative.

Currently, the garden contains 30 raised planting beds and there are 27 gardeners utilizing the space. The garden is open from sunup to sundown; however access is limited to gardeners, their guests, and LANLT staff, except during special events. The garden is enclosed with a fence and a locked gate, which gardeners can open with a combination.

The garden has a small play structure and children's garden for young people to use while their parents tend their plots. There is also a small walking path around the perimeter of the garden for garden members to use for exercise. LANLT plans to plant 25 fruit trees at the West Athens Victory Garden and enhance the community gathering space.

LEARNING GARDEN AT WOODCREST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In 2015, Woodcrest Elementary School partnered with The Kitchen Community to install a learning garden on their school campus. The garden is composed of modular raised beds and is used to grow food for the students, and is an outdoor classroom to learn about plants and ecology.

LITTLE GREEN ACRES PARK

The City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks manages a community garden just outside of the West Athens-Westmont boundary at S. Vermont Avenue and 104th Place. The garden was formerly a vacant lot and has been transformed into a series of irregular in-ground planting beds. The garden is open from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. but access is restricted by the City of Los Angeles.

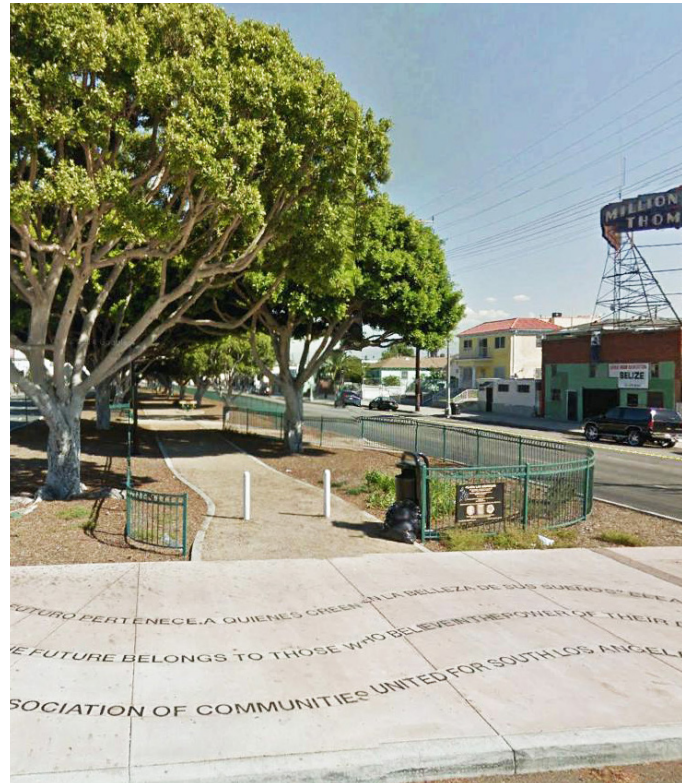
VERMONT AVENUE - 88TH STREET TO 92ND STREET MEDIAN URBAN TRAIL

S. Vermont Avenue is a major corridor through South Los Angeles and has a median between its north-bound and south-bound traffic. Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (DPW) has implemented a number of streetscape, pedestrian, and bicycle improvements to the corridor and is planning future actions to improve mobility along S. Vermont Avenue. The median is called the Vermont Avenue Parkway due to the landscape planting along the route. Through most of Westmont-West Athens, DPW improved many of pedestrian crosswalks and increased the landscaping within the median.

In one section between 88th Street and 92nd Street, DPW constructed an urban trail with benches and exercise equipment. Between five blocks, the trail runs approximately 1,360 linear feet and only includes one street crossing. There are median trailheads located at 92nd Street, 90th Street, and 88th Street. Access to the trailheads is located within the center of S. Vermont Avenue.

98TH STREET PARKWAY

There is also a central median running east and west through West Athens-Westmont along 98th Street. The median is owned and maintained by City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. There are overhead power lines running above the corridor and utility towers located within the median. Short trees and shrubs are planted within the median but it is not utilized for walking or other recreational purposes. The median is approximately 35 feet wide. The towers occupy this entire width.



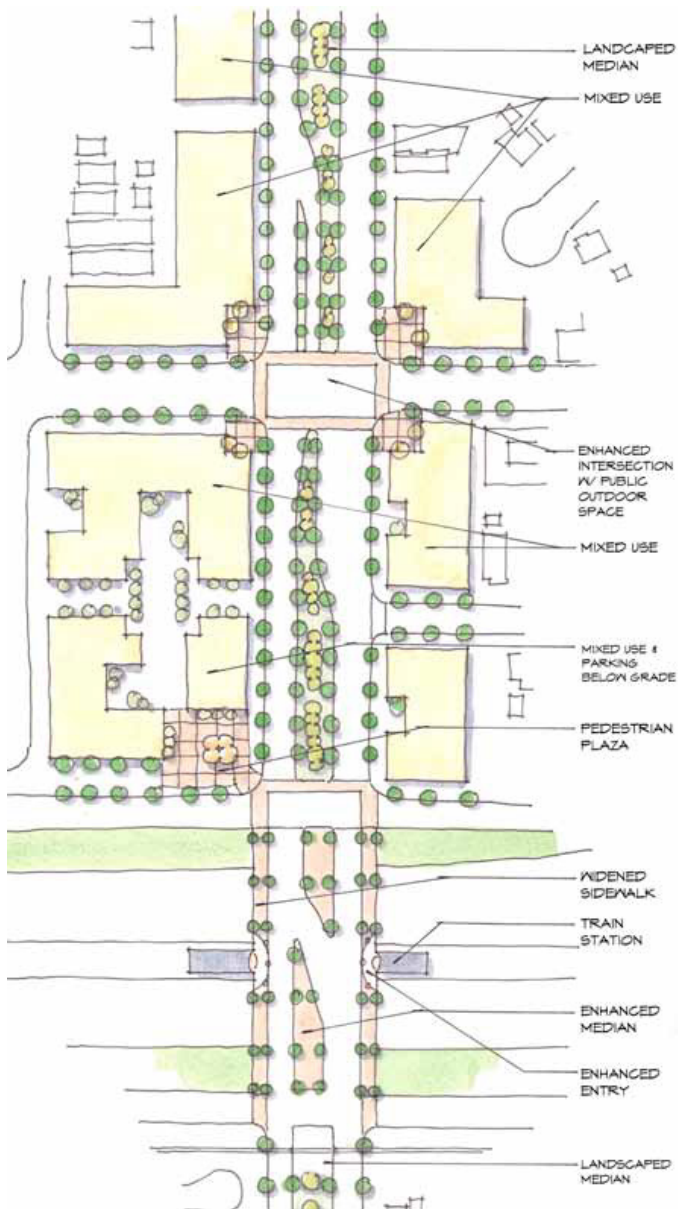
90th Street Trailhead
Vermont Avenue - 88th Street to 92nd Street Median
Urban Trail
source: Google, DigitalGlobe, 2015



Fitness Equipment and Benches
Vermont Avenue - 88th Street to 92nd Street Median
Urban Trail
source: Google, DigitalGlobe, 2015

PLANNING CONTEXT LASC EXPANSION STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In 2001, voters approved a bond measure to provide funds for the refurbishment and expansion of colleges within the Los Angeles Community College District, including LASC. These funds have made it possible for LASC to significantly expand since the early 2000's. Major improvements include the construction of the School of Career and Technical Education, Fitness and Wellness Center, Athletic Field House and Stadium, Child Development Center, Student Services Building, and parking structures near the Western Avenue and Denker Avenue entrances. Funds have also been applied to the renovation of the Cox Building, including the Library and Little Theatre.



Vision for Vermont/Athens Green Line Station
source: Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning

VERMONT GREEN LINE STATION TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING (DRP) AND URBAN LAND INSTITUTE (ULI)

DRP designated the half-mile area surrounding the Vermont/Athens Station of the Metro Green Line as a Transit Oriented District (TOD) in the 2005 zoning code. TOD's are targeted areas for dense development close to public transit and are typically characterized as having strong commercial centers and denser housing than surrounding areas. As part of long-term planning for this area, DRP and ULI completed a study of the area in 2010 in partnership with a team of architects, planners, and economists to identify potential development opportunities and challenges to successful implementation of the TOD vision.

The group developed a strategic plan to improve the area directly around the station, creating a plaza and gateway to provide Metro riders with a sense of arrival once they arrived. The strategic plan also calls for two active commercial nodes: a mixed-use urban center to the north at Vermont Avenue and Imperial Highway, and a smaller neighborhood-serving center to the south at Vermont Avenue and 120th Street. The plan also acknowledges the limited green space in the area and calls for the enhancement of the S. Vermont Avenue median and the development of a linear park. This concept served as the inspiration for the previously described urban trail.

GREEN LINE STATION ACCESS PLANS METRO

In 2007, Metro completed an assessment of access to the Vermont/Athens Station. The study identified numerous issues with accessing the station as a pedestrian or cyclist, including the lack of curb cuts at major intersections; disrepaired, discontinued, or missing sidewalks; and difficult rail crossings.

The study also includes a series of recommendations for coordination, maintenance/security, and physical improvements that could enhance pedestrian and bicycle access. DPW plans to implement recommendations from the plan overtime, including sidewalk repair, intersection improvements, and coordination with rail companies to improve maintenance along the lines. Other specific physical improvement recommendations included:

- Potentially remove barrier walls on 117th Street.
- Utilize traffic calming measures at intersections near the station.
- Create a bike route on 117th Street from S. Vermont Avenue to Main Street and 118th Street from Main Street to Avalon Boulevard.
- Consider noise abatement measures for the station platform.
- Install clear signage to indicate the location of the station along major corridors.

URBAN FOREST INVENTORY

Trees are intricately connected to the quality of life in an urban landscape and are key components of most greening strategies. The benefits afforded by trees, when grouped together as a healthy urban forest, are extensive. Benefits can include improved public health, walkable streets and increased pedestrian activity, community safety, improved air quality, reduced temperatures in urban heat islands, stormwater management, reduced building heating and cooling costs, and an enhanced sense of community, serenity, and beautification.⁵⁶ As such, understanding the extent, condition, benefits and costs of the urban forest is essential to identifying greening opportunities and making good management decisions regarding tree planting, maintenance, removal, and replacement.

EXISTING URBAN FOREST

The existing urban forest in West Athens-Westmont was examined based on tree canopy coverage data for the neighborhood as a whole, as well as an inventory of trees at Helen Keller Park. The neighborhood-wide canopy analysis provides a big picture understanding of the overall urban forest in West Athens-Westmont and sets a benchmark for increasing overall coverage. The inventory of the trees within Helen Keller Park provides an understanding of forest structure and forest benefits.

CANOPY COVERAGE AT THE COMMUNITY SCALE

EXISTING COVERAGE

Utilizing LIDAR⁷ images provided by the County of Los Angeles, it was possible to determine overall tree canopy coverage in West Athens-Westmont, including both publicly and privately maintained trees. Although this method does not allow for the assessment of each individual tree, it provides a clear picture of the total coverage and reveals the areas that are well-planted or areas to focus new plantings. Figure 2.6 shows the density of tree canopy coverage in West Athens-Westmont.

As Figure 2.6 demonstrates, the tree canopy coverage in West Athens-Westmont is relatively uniform, with Chester Washington Golf Course and Helen Keller Park standing out

as a pocket of high canopy coverage. There is markedly low in coverage near the 105 Freeway. Additionally, areas around the major north-south street, such as S. Normandie Avenue and Western Avenue, are distinctively low.

West Athens-Westmont has a total tree canopy coverage of 10 percent. It is expected that the urban forest would differ based on land use. Table 2.2 provides a breakdown of the existing coverage in West Athens-Westmont based on land use. For simplification, similar land uses were combined for this analysis. The table also includes the list of land uses in each group.

In addition to parks, streets and sidewalks serve as a primary location for urban forest trees, although roadways in West Athens-Westmont show significantly low coverage. Street plantings can mitigate the impacts of stormwater running off roadways, absorb vehicle emissions, and improve the pedestrian environment. Currently, 13 percent of West Athens-Westmont's roadways contain tree canopies, suggesting that there is opportunity to increase street planting. These plantings would be most beneficial on roadways that form connections to Helen Keller Park, Chester Washington Golf Course, schools, and other future green space in the community; effectively creating a green network within the community for humans and urban wildlife.

RELATIVE CANOPY COVERAGE

Research conducted by American Forests⁸ recommends an overall average canopy coverage of 25 percent as appropriate for urban areas in temperate and arid climates, such as West Athens-Westmont, based on recommended coverage for specific land uses of 35 percent for suburban residential, 18 percent for urban residential zones, and 9 percent for central business districts. Furthermore, the City of Los Angeles 1-Million Tree Canopy Cover Assessment found an average canopy coverage of 21 percent within the City and set a target coverage of 27.5 percent as an average for all land use types.⁹ The study additionally found an existing coverage of 30.5 percent for low-density residential, 14.5 percent for medium/high-density residential, 3.5 percent for industrial, 5.6 percent for commercial, 18.3 percent for institutional, and 9.4 percent for unknown uses.

West Athens-Westmont is currently lower than both the American Forest standard and the existing target coverage for the City of Los Angeles. Table 2.3 demonstrates these differences.

5 Southern Center for Forest Benefits and Benefits of Urban Trees, USDA Tree Benefits brochure, <http://www.urbanforestrysouth.org/resources/library/benefits-of-urban-treesbooklet>, accessed March 23, 2010.

6 Alliance for Community Trees, Benefits of Trees and urban Forests (Resource List), http://www.actrees.org/files/Research/benefits_of_trees.pdf, accessed February 25, 2014.

7 LIDAR, which stands for "Light Detection and Ranging", is a remote sensing technology that is use to examine the Earth's surface by using light beams from airborne lasers to measure distance, which provides a detailed group of elevation data points that can be used for mapping topography.

8 American Forests is a nonprofit conservation organization that is a recognized for their pioneering work in the science and practice of urban forestry.

9 McPherson, E. Gregory, James R. Simpson, Quingu Xiao, and Chuxia Wu. Los Angeles 1-Million Tree Canopy Cover Assessment. USDA. January 2008. http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/documents/psw_gtr207/psw_gtr207.pdf.

TABLE 2.2 TREE CANOPY COVERAGE IN WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT BASED ON LAND USE

Land Use	Combined Land Use Groups	Total Area (Acres)	Total Canopy Area (Acres)	Tree Canopy Coverage
Low-density Residential	Single-family residence	1,101	115	10%
High-density Residential	Unlimited residence Limited multiple residence Two-family residence	326	25	8%
Commercial/ Institutional	Unlimited commercial Commercial manufacturing Commercial planned development Commercial recreation Institutional Neighborhood business Parking restricted Restricted business	359	22	6%
Industrial	Heavy manufacturing Light manufacturing Restricted heavy manufacturing	72	5	7%
Open Space*	Open space	179	30	17%
TOTAL		2,037	197	Average:10%

*Open Space includes Helen Keller Park, Chester Washington Golf Course and the adjacent streets.

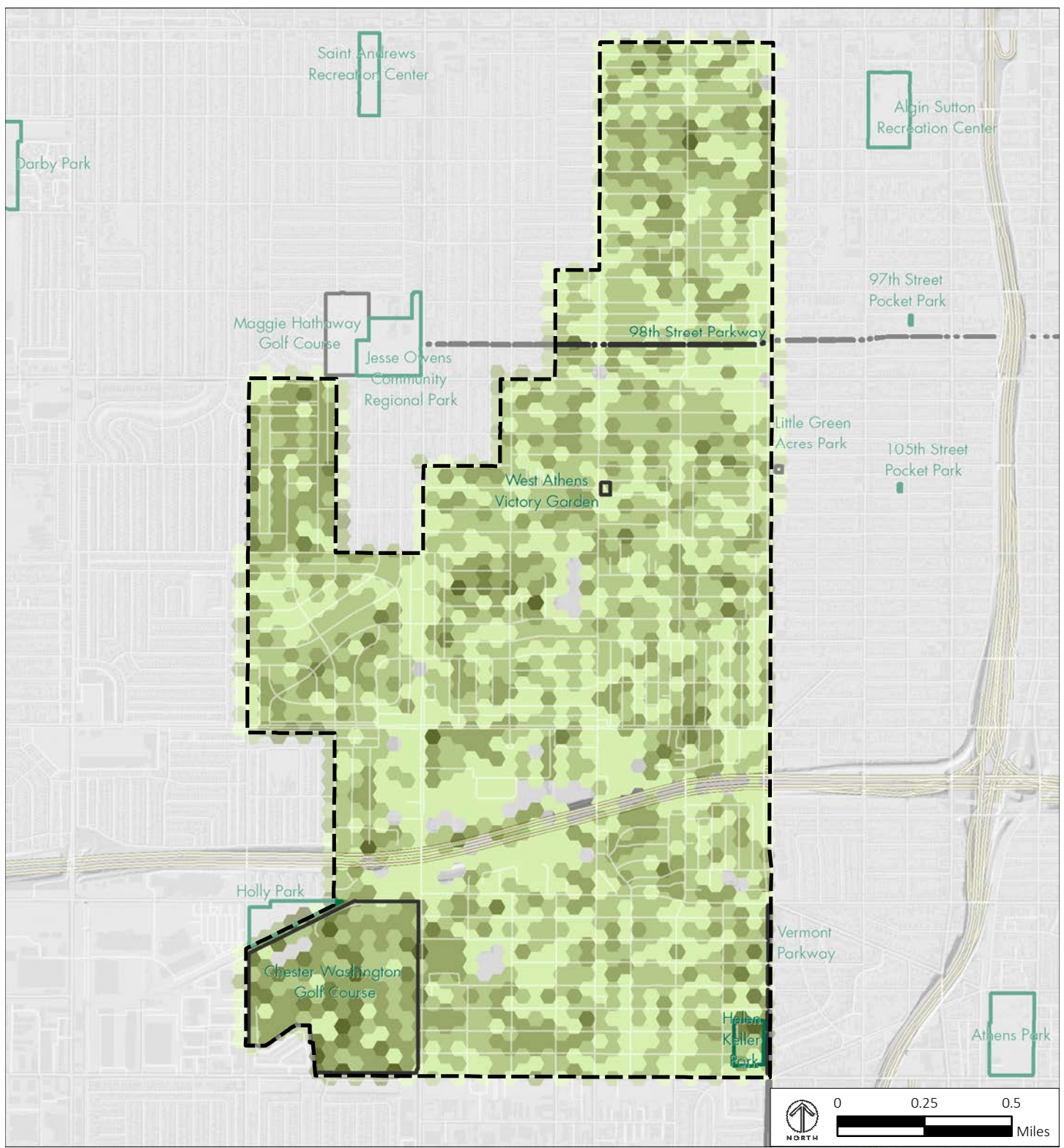
TABLE 2.3 WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT TREE CANOPY COVERAGE COMPARISONS

Land Use	West Athens-Westmont Existing Tree Canopy Coverage	American Forest Recommended Tree Canopy Coverage	City of Los Angeles Existing Tree Canopy Coverage	City of Los Angeles Target Tree Canopy Coverage
Low-density Residential	10%	35%	31%	n/a
High-density Residential	8%	18%	15%	n/a
Commercial/Institutional	6%	9%	6% / 18%	n/a
Industrial	7%	n/a	4%	n/a
Open Space*	17%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Average	10%	25%	21%	27.5%

*Open Space includes Helen Keller Park, Chester Washington Golf Course and the adjacent streets.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

FIGURE 2.6 EXISTING CANOPY COVERAGE



- Tree Canopy Coverage
- < 5%
 - 5% - 10%
 - 10% - 20%
 - 20% - 30%
 - > 30%

- Parklands
- Existing Park
 - Other Green Space

Source: Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation, 2013; GreenInfo, 2015; PlaceWorks, 2015.

TREE INVENTORY WITHIN HELEN KELLER PARK

Trees within Helen Keller Park were inventoried and assessed in 2013 with funding provided by a grant from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE).¹⁰ This section provides an overview of the forest structure and benefits provided by the forest contained within Helen Keller Park. The inventory was utilized to create a database within an analysis tool called iTrees Streets. This free tool was developed by a team of researchers with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, Davey Tree Service, and the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), which allows cities to analyze the benefit of their forest. iTrees Streets is a street tree management and analysis tool that uses tree inventory data to assign dollar values to energy savings, carbon dioxide reduction, air quality, stormwater control, and property value increase.

The 2013 inventory identified 61 trees in Helen Keller Park. Helen Keller Park’s trees are together referred to as the “Park Forest” in this section. This report summarizes the species composition, age composition, and estimated benefits provided by the forest in dollar value, as well as an overview of the general condition, necessary maintenance, and potential conflicts with existing infrastructure. The complete data set resulting from iTrees Streets’ analysis is provided in Appendix B. The number of trees at Helen Keller Park and the related canopy coverage is provided in Table 2.4. Canopy coverage in Helen Keller Park was calculated using iTrees streets rather than LiDAR data.

FOREST STRUCTURE

Studies of urban forests suggest that a strong urban forest resources “possess a mix of species, sizes, and ages.”¹¹ This diversity ensures the longevity and resilience of the forest over time. Increasing tree species diversity reduces the risk that a single blight, disease, or pest can destroy an entire forest population, as many of these issues are species-specific and spread more easily to related populations. Researchers additionally recommend utilizing native trees wherever possible, as they are well-suited for the environment and have developed resilience to local pests, and provide suitable habitat for native wildlife. Diversity in age and size ensures the long-term stability of an urban forest. As trees die and are replaced, there needs to be younger trees to offset the removal. Very young trees do not provide the same benefits as established trees, so simply replacing the tree would not achieve the

same immediate effect. The Park Forest in Helen Keller Park is described below with consideration to structural diversity.

SPECIES COMPOSITION

West Athens-Westmont’s Park Forest is composed of 83.6 percent broadleaf species, 14.8 percent conifers, and 1.6 percent palm trees. Of the broadleaf species, 80.3 percent are deciduous and 3.3 percent are evergreen. Most of the forest (85.2 percent) is comprised of large stature trees. Medium and small stature trees account for 4.9 percent and 1.6 percent of the forest, respectively.

Species diversity is also an important consideration to forest health, as diversity can buffer the impacts of pests and weather conditions on the forest. For this reason, it is widely recommended that no more than 10 percent of the forest be comprised of any one species. West Athens-Westmont’s Park Forest includes 11 unique species. The species of the Park Forest include London plane tree (*Platanus x acerfolia*) (36.1 percent), California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) (19.7 percent), sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) (14.8 percent), Canary Island pine (*Pinus canariensis*) (9.8 percent), cherry plum (*Prunus cerasifera*) (8.2 percent), Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*) (3.3 percent), Mexican fan palm (*Washingtonia robusta*) (1.6 percent), Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*) (1.6 percent), algarrobo europeo (*Ceratonia siliqua*) (1.6 percent), Cajeput tree (*Melalueca quinquernervia*) (1.6 percent), and jacaranda (*Jacaranda* spp.) (1.6 percent). While it is notable that London planetree (*Platanus x acerfolia*) comprises a significant portion of the Park Forest, it is possible that if trees outside of parks were to be inventoried the species diversity may be more balanced. However, the diversity within parks suggests that diversity should be a key consideration for additional plantings and/or replacement planting.

Inclusion of native species in the urban forest can be beneficial as native species are well-suited to the local climate and provide valuable habitat. While native species are not always well-suited to the constraints of urban environments, such as small tree wells and clearance requirements along roadways, many species are highly suitable to park environments. It is notable that California native species within West Athens-Westmont’s Park Forest are limited to 13 trees, or 21.3 percent of the forest. These trees include 12 California sycamore trees (*Platanus racemosa*) and a single Monterey pine tree (*Pinus radiata*). While these species are native to California, not all of them are native to or appropriate for Los Angeles County.

TABLE 2.4 OVERVIEW OF TREES AT HELEN KELLER PARK

Total Trees	Tree Canopy Coverage (%)
61	14%

10 A grant from the Statewide Prop 84 CALFIRE Inventory Program was awarded to the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department in 2013 for the creation of a tree inventory, as well as an analysis of the trees’ health, maintenance, and spatial needs, for the underserved areas within the community.

11 Clark, James R., Nelda P. Matheny, Genni Cross, and Victoria Wake. “A Model of Urban Forest Sustainability.” *Journal of Arboriculture* 23(1): January 1997.

The diversity within parks suggests that improving diversity, including number of native species, should be a key consideration for additional plantings and/or replacement planting.

RELATIVE AGE DISTRIBUTION

Age distribution is an important consideration when assessing an urban forest since every tree has a limited life span and different considerations are necessary depending on the age of a tree. For instance, urban trees are often planted at the same time (such as during the construction of a new park or street) and thus will reach the end of their life span at the same time. This makes it challenging to preserve an area’s character, while addressing safety issues and removing trees. It is beneficial to a forest’s health to have an uneven age distribution.¹² Studies suggest that the bulk of the tree population (approximately 40 percent) be composed of young trees in order to offset the loss of older and diseased trees.¹³

Given the difficulty of determining the age of each tree, diameter-at-breast-height (DBH), or 4.5 feet above ground level, is often used as an indicator of age distribution. West Athens-Westmont’s Park Forest is dominated by established trees. Approximately 21 percent of trees are relatively young with DBH less than 12”; 49 percent are established trees with DBH of 12-24”; and 30 percent have DBH of over 24”.

CONDITION

Tree health also determines when it needs to be replaced as diseased trees can die prematurely. In this analysis, each tree was evaluated as being dead, critical, poor, fair, or good with consideration to the structural condition (the woody components) and the functional condition (the foliage).

The Park Forest in Helen Keller Park is relatively well-managed, with the majority of trees (97 percent) receiving a fair rating. There were only two trees receiving critical ratings, both London plane trees (*Platanus x acerfolia*).

MAINTENANCE NEED

As part of the tree inventory, maintenance needs were categorized for each tree based on Calfire grant guidelines. Maintenance needs identified for Helen Keller Park’s Park Forest are described in Table 2.5.

The identified maintenance needs indicate that 16 percent of the Park Forest’s trees should be removed. In addition, 48 percent of the trees are identified as requiring Priority 1 pruning, which indicates a high level of potential hazards need to be addressed and may indicate that maintenance has been deferred. Additional tree plantings will be an important consideration when addressing maintenance needs.

¹² Clark, et al. 1997.

¹³ Richards NA. 1982/83. “Diversity and stability in a street tree population.” *Urban Ecology*. 7:159–171.

CONFLICTS WITH EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

Urban trees exist in close proximity to other features of the urban environment and can interfere with infrastructure. Common issues include sidewalk damage from tree roots and tree canopy interference with overhead utility lines.

None of the trees in Helen Keller Park’s Park Forest cause any sidewalk damage. This is primarily because many of the trees are planted on the interior of the park space and provide ample space for root growth.

Similarly, none of the trees in West Athens-Westmont’s Park Forest conflict with overhead utility lines because there are no utility lines crossing Helen Keller Park.

TABLE 2.5 MAINTENANCE NEEDS

Maintenance Need	Description (Based on Calfire Grant Guidelines)	Number of Trees
Priority 1 Removal	Trees that have defects that cannot be cost-effectively or practically treated, and pose hazards to people or property. These trees are the first to be removed.	5
Priority 2 Removal	Trees that should be removed but do not pose a liability as great as the first priority.	5
Priority 1 Pruning	Trees that require priority 1 trimming to remove hazardous deadwood, hangers, or broken branches. Hazardous limbs or leaders are greater than four inches in diameter.	29
Priority 2 Pruning	Trees that have dead, dying, diseased, or weakened branches between two and four inches in diameter and are potential safety hazards.	19
Training Pruning	Young, large growing trees that require pruning to minimize future maintenance requirements.	3

FOREST BENEFITS

The benefits of an urban forest to a population can be measured both in environmental impacts and economic value. These benefits can be estimated and quantified based on tree size, type, and condition to provide a value for the urban forest. Following is a summary of both the environmental and economic benefits of Helen Keller Park’s Park Forest, based on iTrees Streets’ analysis. As iTrees Streets was designed for the analysis of street trees rather than park trees, the analysis assumes that trees are set along roadways, and therefore the estimated benefits are likely on the high side for park trees. A full summary of the impacts of the individual tree species in Helen Keller Park’s Park Forest can be found in Appendix B.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Environmental benefits include the interception of stormwater runoff, improvement of air quality, and reduction of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Larger trees with more established canopies and roots tend to have greater impacts. It is important to maintain a young population, as well as to replace dying or removed trees, thereby maintaining continuous urban forest benefits. These benefits are summarized in Table 2.6.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Many of these environmental benefits also have economic value, although this value is difficult to quantify since the services that trees provide are generally considered free. However, iTrees Streets can be used to quantify the economic value trees provide. Based on the analysis using this program, Helen Keller Park’s Park Forest currently has an estimated gross value of \$14,753, in the combined benefits related to energy savings, carbon dioxide sequestration, air quality, stormwater management, aesthetic and other benefits.

- **Energy Savings.** Trees save energy by reducing the need to heat and cool buildings. The value of energy savings is calculated by iTrees Streets based on assumptions for tree species regarding shading, canopy coverage, species size, and assumptions relating to regional climate and wind patterns.

- **Carbon Dioxide Reduction.** The value of reductions in carbon dioxide are calculated by iTrees Streets based upon costs associated with global warming. The amount of carbon dioxide sequestered depends upon tree size and species. Carbon dioxide released and generated by tree maintenance (i.e, use of chain saws) and by decomposition of trees are also considered by iTrees Streets.
- **Stormwater Runoff Reduction.** The implied value of stormwater reduction considers the amount of stormwater captured and the general cost of urban stormwater management.
- **Aesthetic and Other Benefits.** The fiscal value of beautification, shade, habitat, privacy, comfort, and great urban spaces is difficult to quantify. iTrees Streets estimates the fiscal value of these benefits based upon estimated property values. Research shows that buyers are willing to pay more for houses and properties with trees, and therefore trees increase property value.

These benefits are summarized Table 2.7. Considering these benefits as a whole, the average annual economic benefit of a tree within Helen Keller Park’s Park Forest is \$242. As previously stated, estimates are based on benefits provided by street trees and therefore may be high for park trees.

TABLE 2.6 SUMMARY OF ANNUAL NET ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS AT HELEN KELLER PARK

Stormwater (Gallons of Stormwater Intercepted)	Air Quality (Pounds of Reduced Air Pollutants)*	Carbon Dioxide (Tons of CO2 Sequestered per Year)
89,865	128	10,329

* Air Quality pounds includes deposition of Ozone (O3), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2), Particulate Matter (PM10) and Sulfur Dioxide (SO2) and avoidance of NO2, PM-10, Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), and SO2, but does not take into account potential Biogenic Volatile Organic Compounds (BVOCs) emissions.

TABLE 2.7 SUMMARY OF ANNUAL NET ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Energy	Stormwater	Air Quality*	Carbon Dioxide	Aesthetics	Total
\$1,760	\$494	\$194	\$51	\$12,254	\$14,753

* Air quality includes deposition of ozone (O3), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), particulate matter (PM-10) and avoidance of NO2, PM10, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and sulfur dioxide (SO2), as well as Biogenic Volatile Organic Compounds (BVOCs) emissions.

SPATIAL ANALYSIS

Existing community facilities and infrastructure, as well as community indicators, were mapped and evaluated in order to gain a better understanding of West Athens-Westmont's physical environment and examine social factors such as crime, safety, and public health. This analysis provides insight on the issues and conditions relative to the existing park. In addition, it informs the site evaluation and eventual selection for potential new parks and recreational projects.

Spatial analysis includes a series of maps that provide a geographic assessment at the community scale. Together, they help to provide a comprehensive picture of community conditions, including opportunities and constraints, as well as need for new parkland development. This analysis includes six components:

- Park Access
- Population Density
- Vacant Lands
- Transit and Transportation
- Crime
- Health

PARK ACCESS

Traditionally, DPR considers a local park to be accessible to residents within a half-mile of the park. Half of a mile is considered a distance residents can typically walk to within ten minutes. Larger regional parks generally draw from a larger area, up to 25 miles away; however, park users may drive or use public transit to visit these facilities. These access boundaries for parks in and around West Athens-Westmont are shown in Figure 2.8.

Additional analysis suggests that park usage might be limited by the existing street network and pedestrian access conditions. For this study area, the half-mile walking distance threshold was combined with street data and common pedestrian routes to determine if residents have walkable access to Helen Keller Park.

PARKLAND GAP AND WALKABILITY

The parkland gap/walkability analysis was completed using the Network Analyst tool in ArcGIS, as well as field visits, to identify areas with and without walkable access to parks. All parks within the community boundary were used in the analysis along with parks up to a half-mile outside the community boundary. Fieldwork was used to identify pedestrian access points to the park, barriers, and connections affecting walkability. Residential and non-residential areas were differentiated using the Los Angeles County Assessor's parcel information.

West Athens-Westmont is park poor. As shown in Figure 2.7, only 16 percent of West Athens-Westmont's population can reach parks by foot. The remaining 84 percent of the population is not within a half-mile walking distance. The community has only one County Park, and parks outside of the community are not within close enough proximity to provide access. The Parkland Gap/Walkability Analysis map shown in Figure 2.9 clearly illustrates this issue.

Helen Keller Park is the only County Park in the community. It is located in the southeast corner of the community and only serves a very limited portion of residents. Helen Keller Park is more accessible to other communities, such as North Shoestring and Gardena. Holly Park is located in close proximity to West Athens-Westmont, across from Chester Washington Golf Course, but the park is cut off from West Athens-Westmont by the railroad right-of-way. Jesse Owens Community Regional Park, Algin Sutton Recreation Center, and the two pocket parks located east of the community, serve a portion of West Athens-Westmont, but they do not make a substantial difference in addressing the lack of access to parks in the community.

The analysis shows that West Athens-Westmont would need at least one large park, or several smaller parks, to serve residents. This is especially the case above the 105 Freeway and Imperial Highway, where residents lack access to open space and parks. Pedestrian routes/paths to existing parks like Holly Park, or planned parks above the 105 Freeway, would have a positive impact on park accessibility for the residents of West Athens-Westmont.

FIGURE 2.7 POPULATION NEAR A PARK

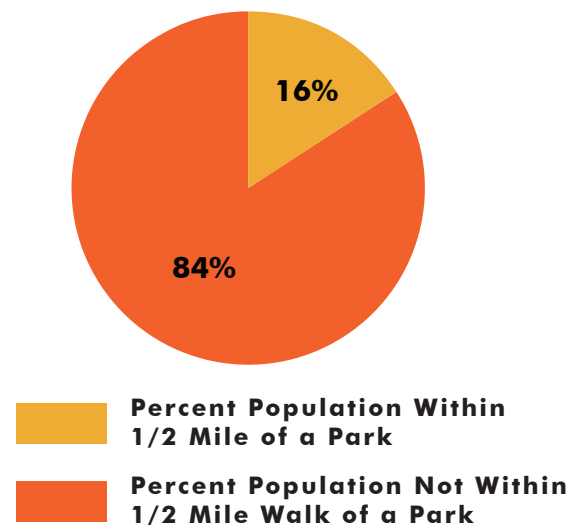
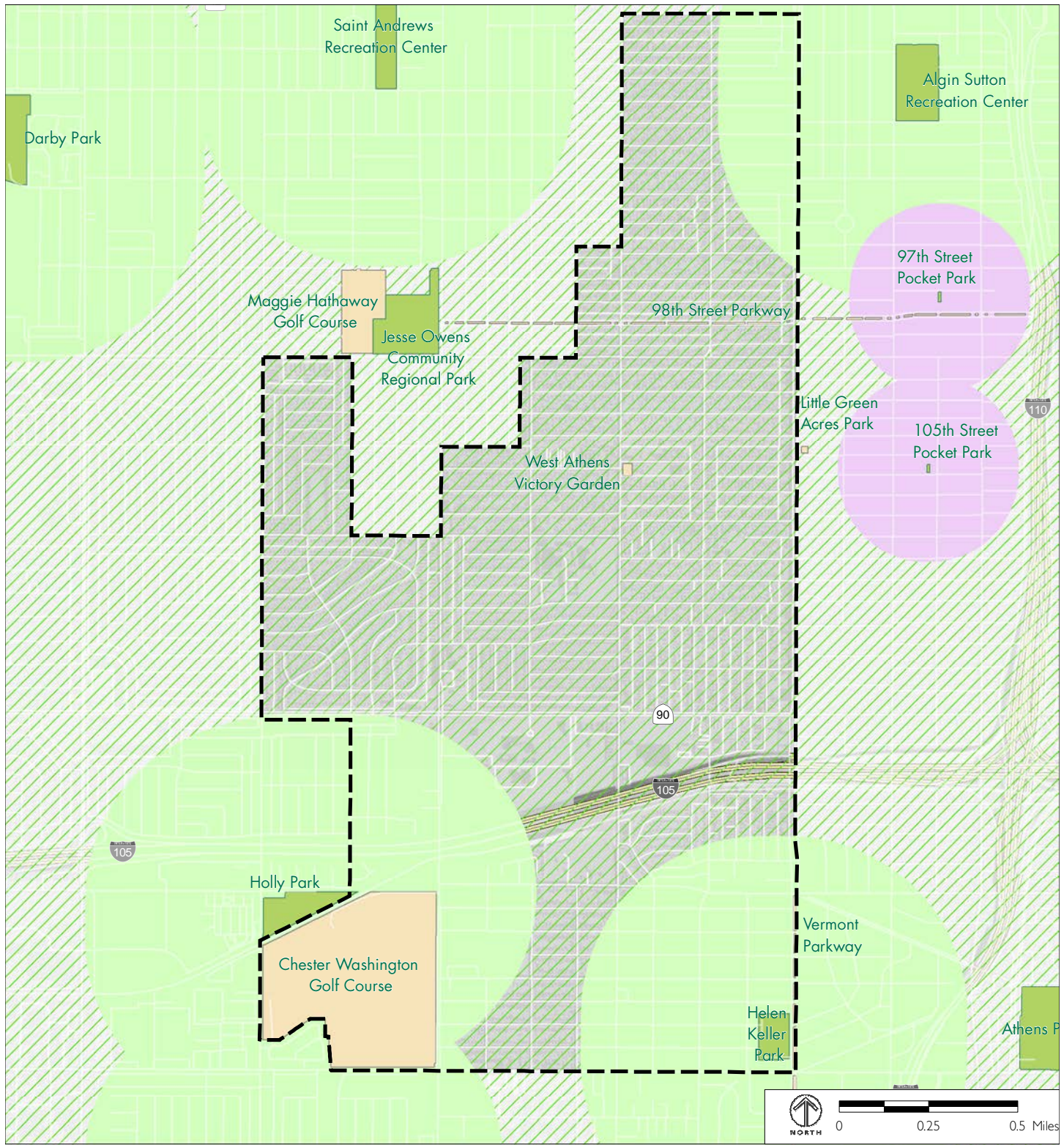


FIGURE 2.8 SERVICE AREAS - LOCAL AND REGIONAL PARKS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

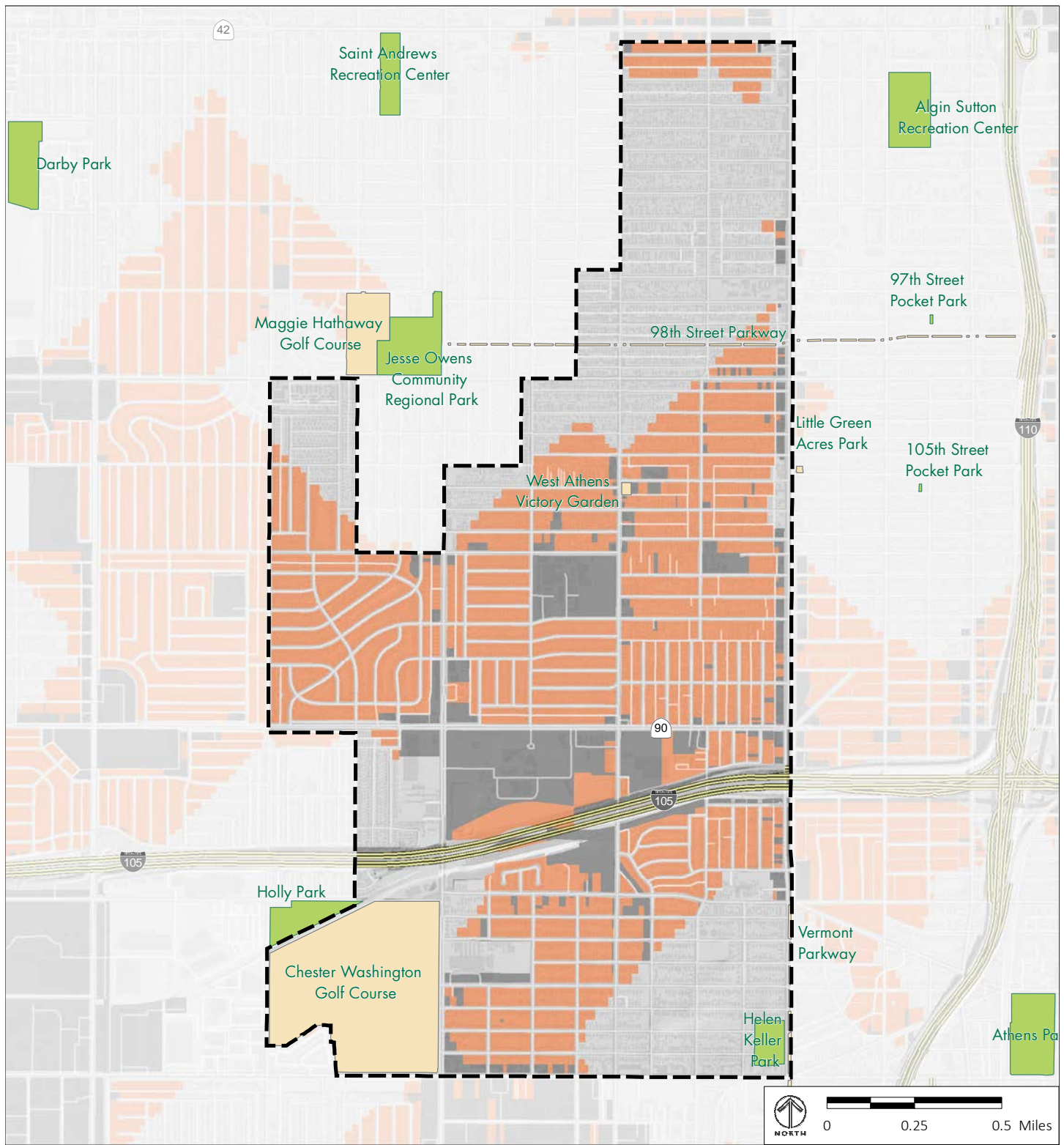


Source: Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, 2013; PlaceWorks, 2015.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Parklands | Quarter Mile Pocket Park Service Radius |
| Existing Park | Half Mile Neighborhood Park Service Radius |
| Other Green Space | 20-Mile Community Regional Park Service Radius |
| | Area Not Within Any Park Service Area |

Note: Athens Park and Jesse Owens Community Regional Park are Community Regional Parks that have service areas that extend to West Athens-Westmont.

FIGURE 2.9 PARKLAND GAPS/WALKABILITY



EXISTING CONDITIONS

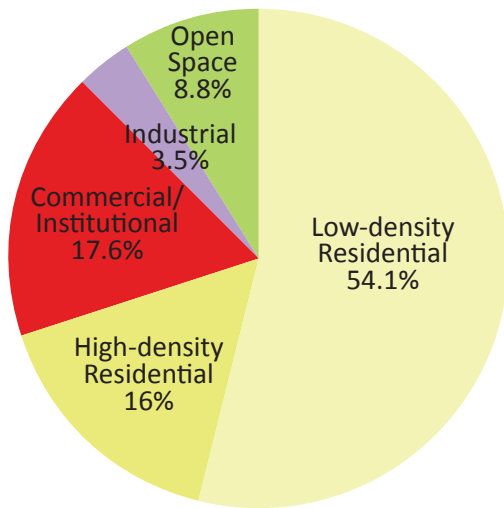
Source: Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, 2013, PlaceWorks, 2015.

- | | | | |
|--------------------|--|--------------------|-------------------|
| Park Access | | Green Space | |
| | Areas Within 1/2 Mile (10 minute walk) of a Park | | Existing Park |
| | Non-Residential Areas Not Within 1/2 Mile (10 minute walk) of a Park | | Other Green Space |
| | Residential Areas Not Within 1/2 Mile (10 minute walk) of a Park | | |

LAND USE

As shown in Figures 2.10 and 2.11, West Athens-Westmont is predominately a residential neighborhood. Over half of the community (54 percent) is low-density residential and 16 percent is high-density housing. The majority of “high-density” residential properties are typically small in number with five to ten units rather than large structures common to dense downtown areas, and most of these units are located north of the 105 Freeway. Generally, housing units are located on small lots, which produce a low but dense pattern of development across the community.

FIGURE 2.10 LAND USE TYPES

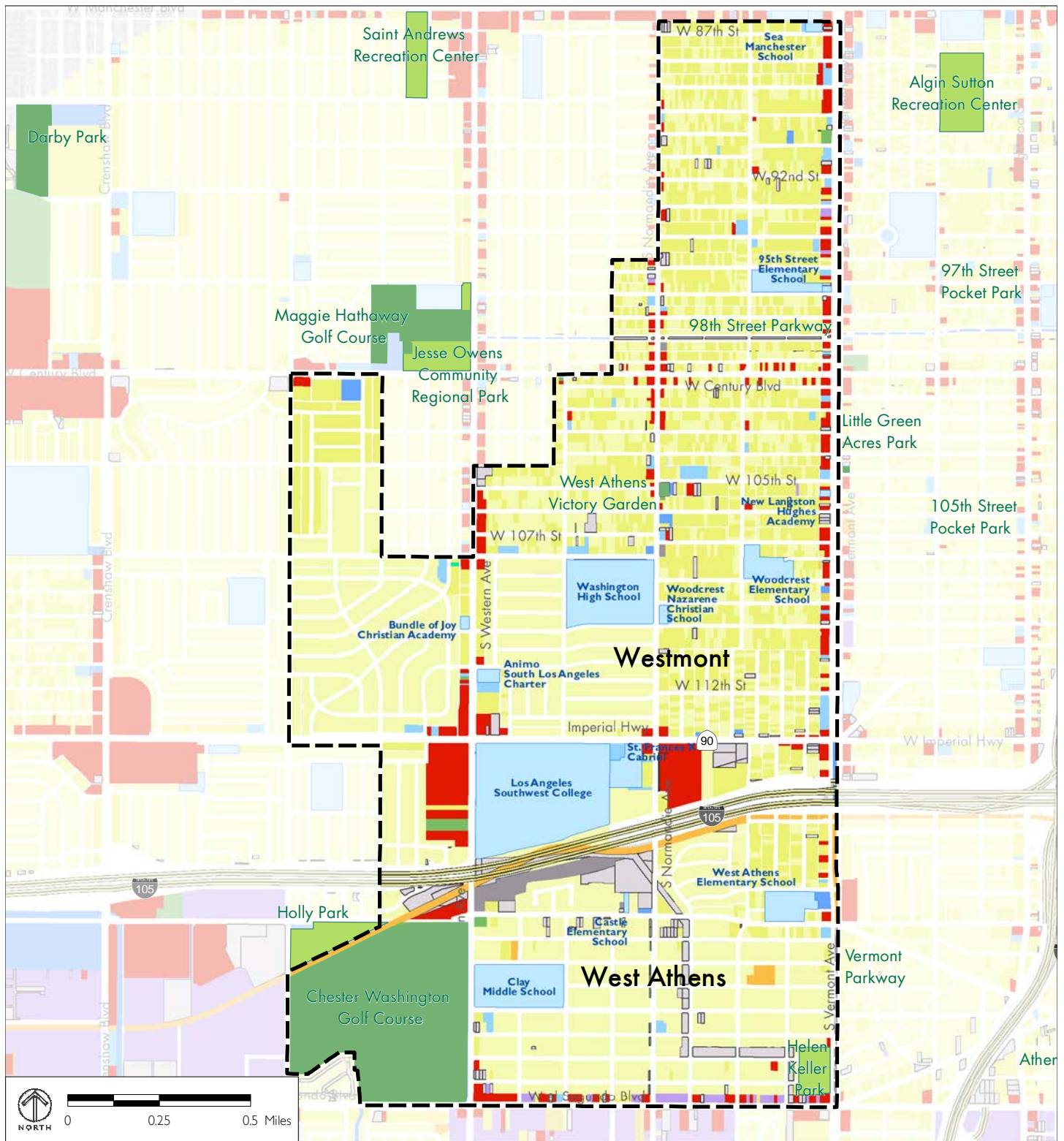


The LASC campus is one of the largest single land uses in the community and creates a distinct urban campus feel along this section of Imperial Highway. Commercial uses are concentrated along north-south corridors, including Western Avenue, S. Normandie Avenue, and S. Vermont Avenue. There are some commercial businesses along Century Boulevard and along El Segundo Boulevard at the southern border of the community. Commercial businesses along these corridors are typically low density and sporadically vacant. There are few chain stores and most businesses are smaller “mom and pop-” style establishments, such as delis, hair salons, and bike shops. There are also a large number of storefront churches. Many of these facilities also offer childcare or education services. There is a larger retail center located to the west of the community along Imperial Highway and to the east along 120th Street at S. Vermont Avenue. Industrial uses within West Athens-Westmont are typically low intensity industrial uses, such as automotive repair centers.



Iconic Kindles Donut Sign at Century Boulevard and S. Normandie Avenue
 source: Google, DigitalGlobe, 2015

FIGURE 2.11 LAND USE



Sources: Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, 2013; Los Angeles County Assessor 2012; PlaceWorks, 2015.

West Athens-Westmont

- Green Space and School
- County Park
- Other Green Space
- School

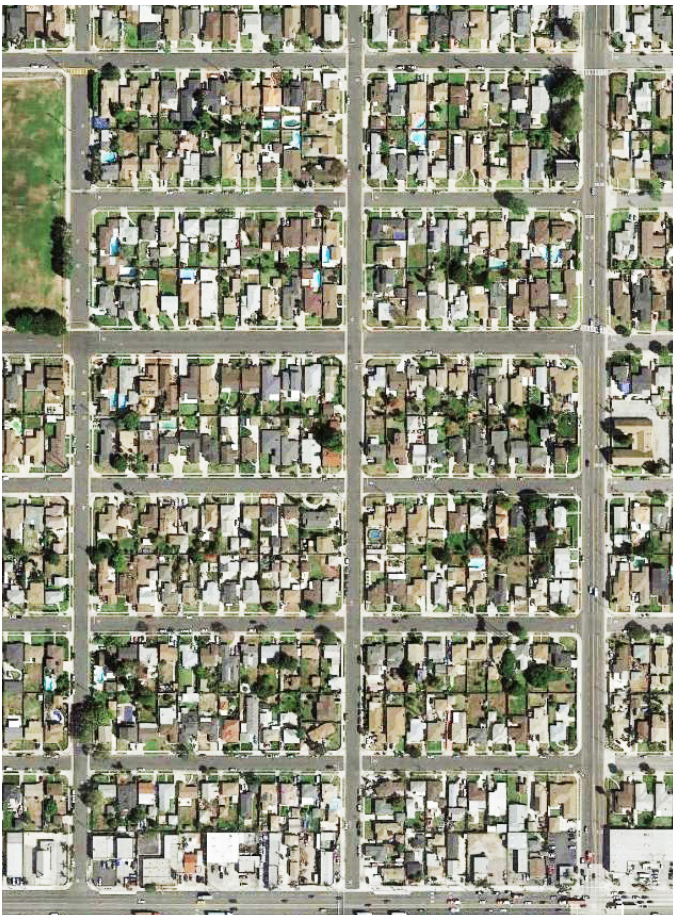
Land Use

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Residential Single Family | Commercial | Miscellaneous |
| Residential Multi Family | Industrial | Recreational |
| Residential Manufactured Homes | Institutional | Agriculture |
| Residential Rooming/Boarding House | Government Owned | Vacant Land |

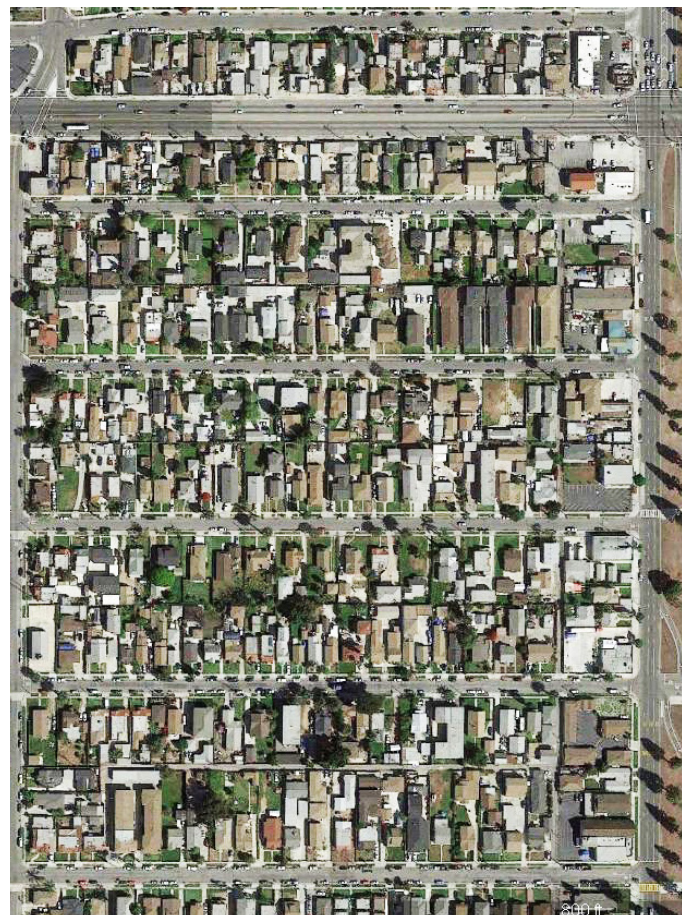
POPULATION DENSITY

West Athens-Westmont’s population density patterns directly correspond with land uses within the community that have a large population in the “high-density” residential areas north of the 105 Freeway near the east side of the community. This creates long stretches of dense residential housing, as shown in the aerial images below.

Figure 2.12 shows the population density patterns within West Athens-Westmont. The area in the northeast has slightly greater population density than the rest of the community. Parks and recreation facilities and public amenities are intended to be used by residents, so facilities within close proximity to dense residential areas can provide service to large numbers of residents. However, park development within these areas is especially challenging due to limited land availability and close proximity to neighboring properties.

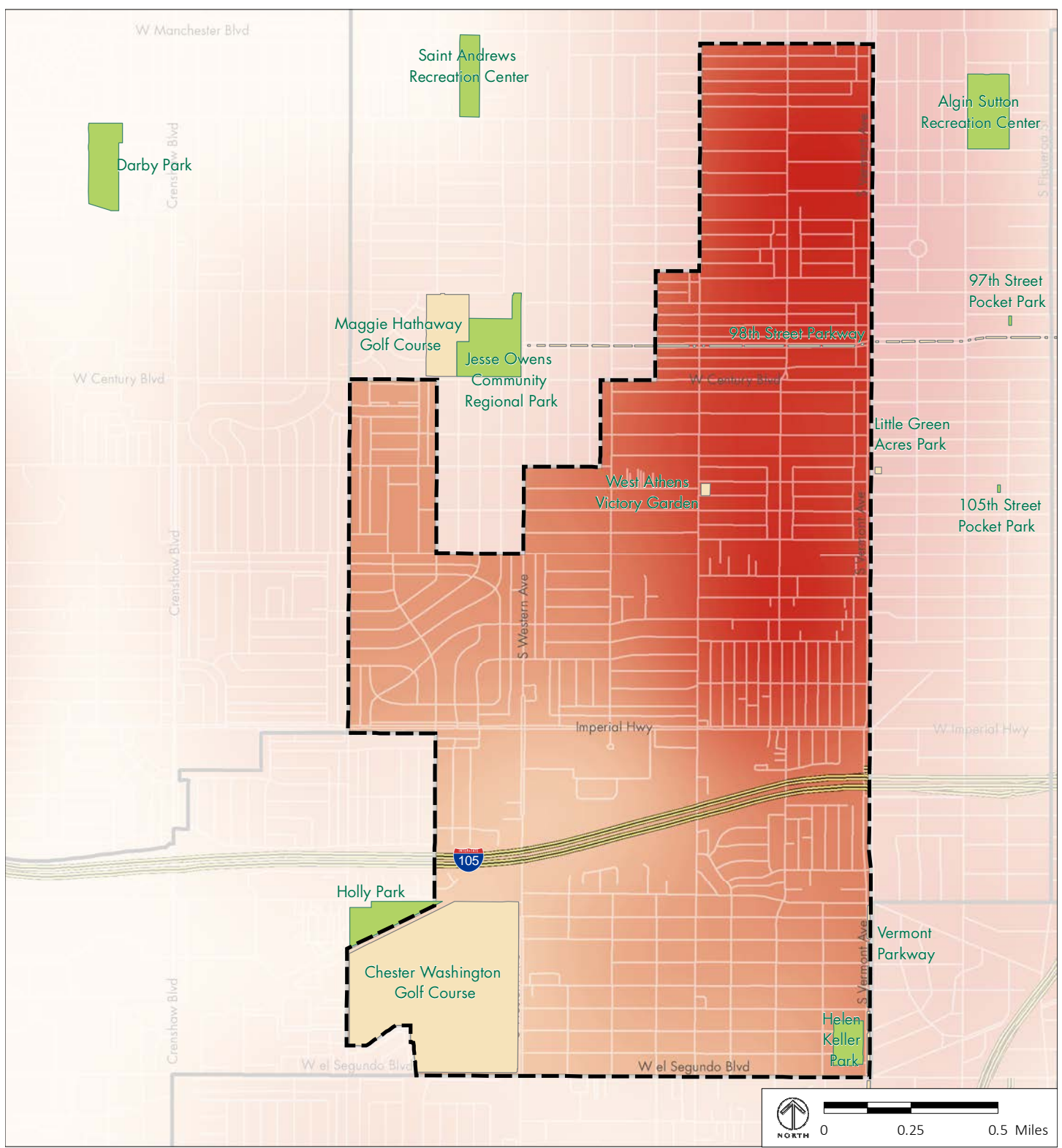


Typical Density Pattern South of the 105 Freeway in West Athens-Westmont
 source: Google, DigitalGlobe, 2015



Typical Density Pattern North of the 105 Freeway in West Athens-Westmont
 source: Google, DigitalGlobe, 2015

FIGURE 2.12 POPULATION DENSITY



Source: Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, 2013; United States Census Bureau, 2010; Los Angeles County Assessor, 2013; PlaceWorks, 2015.

Green Space
 Existing Park
 Other Green Space

Population Density (Persons per half square mile)
 High : 26,780
 Low : 0

TRANSIT AND TRANSPORTATION

Figure 2.14 shows the existing transportation network and the concentration of pedestrian and bicycle collisions in West Athens-Westmont between 2002 and 2010. Pedestrian and bicycle collisions represent any collisions involving either pedestrians or bicyclists. The figure uses a gradient overlay to show areas with a high concentration of collisions using a distance of 500 feet as the threshold for combining collisions into clusters. This summary provides a description of the most problematic areas and considers these areas as they relate to Helen Keller Park and other community spaces in West Athens-Westmont.

OVERVIEW

West Athens-Westmont is very well-connected by transit, with eleven Metro bus lines running through the community. This includes seven local services, two shuttle/circulator services, and one rapid service. West Athens-Westmont is also served by Metro Green Line, which runs east-west just south of LASC, and has a stop at S. Vermont Avenue above the 105 Freeway.

Currently, there is one bikeway on West 98th Street. The 2012 County of Los Angeles Bicycle Master Plan proposes to install seven additional bikeways in the community.¹⁴ Five of the planned bikeways are in the north-south direction. The two planned east-west bikeways follow roads near two large schools: Washington High School and Southwest Community College. Several nearby bikeways are located just outside the community: one on South Broadway and another near Crenshaw Boulevard. Completion of the bikeway network would include an extension of the planned bikeways on El Segundo Boulevard, Imperial Highway, 120th and 108th Streets.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLIST SAFETY

The concentration of pedestrian and bicycle collisions between 2002 and 2010 is higher in the northwestern portion of the community, with the highest concentration of collisions (67) near the intersection of South Vermont Avenue and West 87th Street. The data on concentration of pedestrian and bicycle collisions between 2002 and 2010 illustrates that the community has a high number of pedestrian accidents relative to its size. The community has a similar average of bicycle collisions as Los Angeles County as a whole, although this may be due to low bicycle ownership. The most problematic areas are listed in Table 2.8.

All of the problematic areas in terms of bicycle and pedestrian collisions are located along S. Normandie and S. Vermont Avenue, north of Imperial Highway. This is also the area of West Athens-Westmont with the highest concentration of Metro bus stops, with 62 of 122 bus stops located along these corridors.

As seen in Figure 2.13, West Athens-Westmont has a higher rate of pedestrian collisions in comparison to Los Angeles County, with 8.34 pedestrian collisions per 1,000, compared to the County's 4.73 per 1,000. The bike collision rate is almost the same as in the County (2.95 in West Athens-Westmont, 3.04 in the County). As shown on the map, most of the pedestrian collisions are concentrated in the northeastern portions of the community. Planning for new green space in these areas of the community should include careful consideration of ways to improve pedestrian safety.

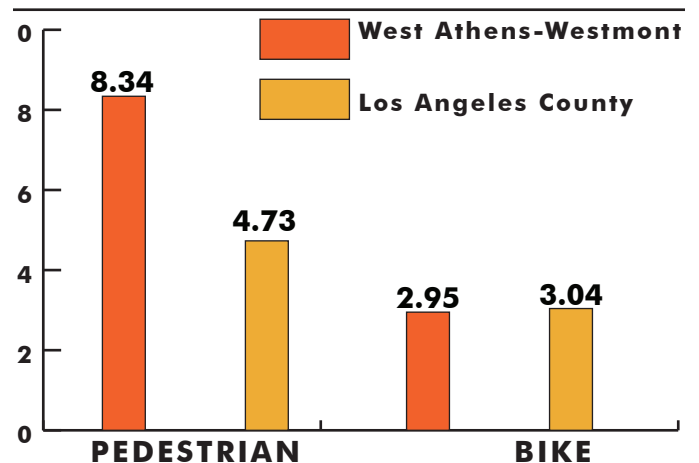
TABLE 2.8 PROBLEMATIC AREAS FOR PEDESTRIANS

Location ^A	Number of Collisions ^B
S. Vermont Avenue and W. 87 th Street	67
S. Vermont Avenue, between Imperial Highway and W. 112 th Street	48
S. Vermont Avenue and W. 105 th Street	41
S. Vermont Avenue and 92 nd Street	35
W. 87 th Street and S. Normandie Avenue	35
W. 107 th Street and S. Normandie Avenue	26

^AThe Location column describes the closest intersection near problematic areas

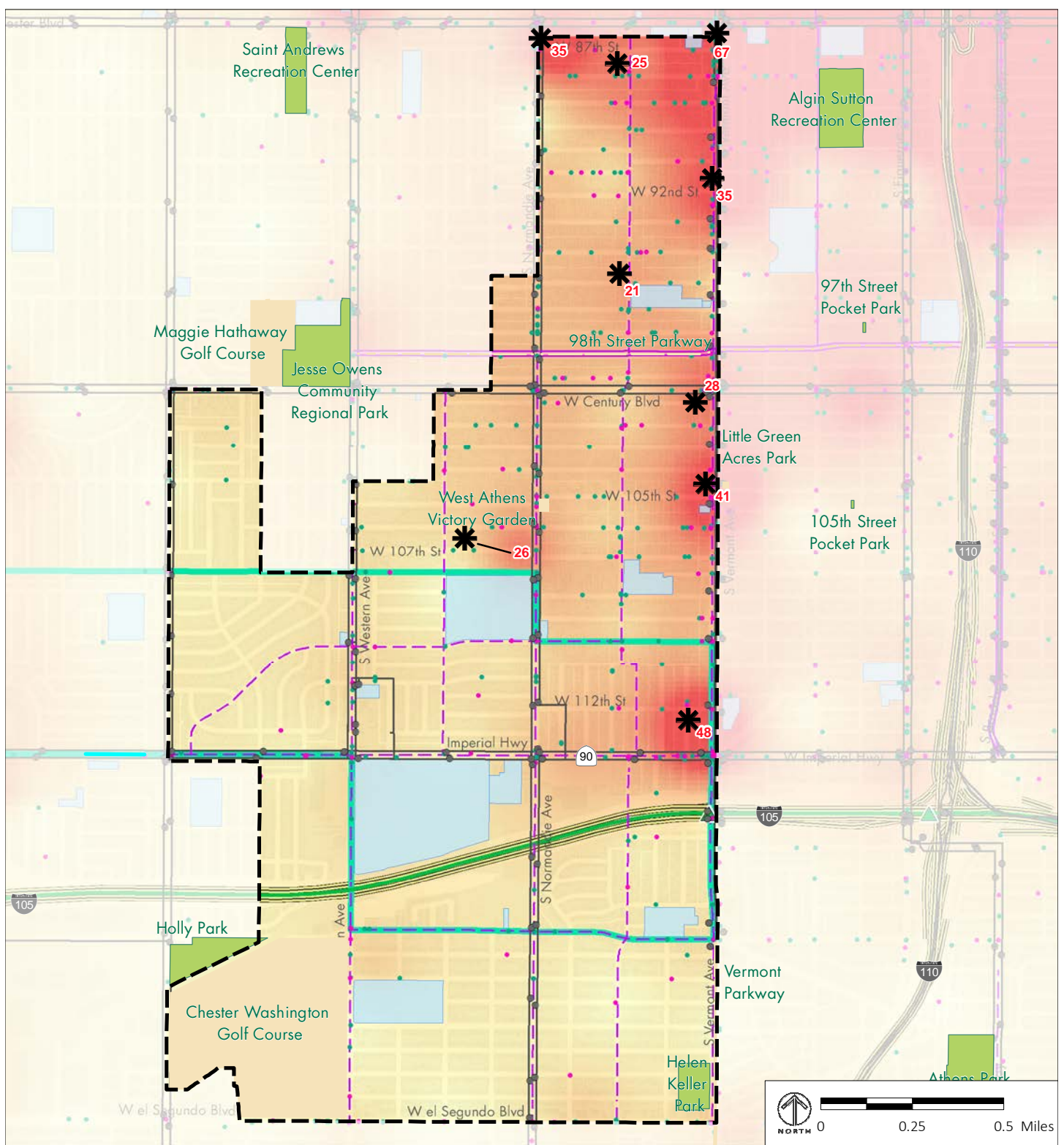
^BThe Number column indicates concentration collision locations within 500 feet from one another

FIGURE 2.13 PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE COLLISIONS PER 1,000 RESIDENTS



¹⁴ Los Angeles County Bicycle Master Plan. Alta Planning + Design. County of Los Angeles. March, 2012.

FIGURE 2.14 TRANSPORTATION, SAFETY, AND CONNECTIVITY



Sources: Los Angeles County, 2013; Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Agency, 2012; Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS), 2002-2010; PlaceWorks, 2015.

- | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Green Space | Public Transit Network | Bicycle Network | High Concentration (67) |
| Existing Park | Metro Rail Green Line Station | Existing Bike Route | Low Concentration (1) |
| Other Green Space | Metro Rail Green Line | Proposed Bike Route | Collisions involving Pedestrians |
| School | Bus Stop | Pedestrian and Bicycle Collisions | Collisions involving Bikes |
| | Bus Route | Problematic Area | Collision Concentration w/in 500ft |
| | Link-Athens Shuttle Route | | |

CRIME AND SAFETY

For this study, crime data analyzed spans from January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012. The crime analysis used Esri's Hot Spot Analysis Tool in ArcGIS to identify areas of crime concentration. This tool analyzed both the spatial clustering and intensity of each crime location. Each crime category was weighted differently in order to give greater importance to more violent crimes. Any crime that was viewed as being a major concern to public safety received a higher intensity ranking, from 300 to 600. Non-violent offenses were ranked from 0 to 200. Table 2.9 lists crime intensity ranking categories.

As shown in the Figure 2.15, crime hot spots are concentrated north of the 105 Freeway. There are no significant crime hot spots in the vicinity of the park. This is in part due to the community activism around violence prevention around Helen Keller Park. Residents in the area still consider it to be extremely dangerous, as they remember the community's severe crime epidemic in the late 1990's and early 2000's.

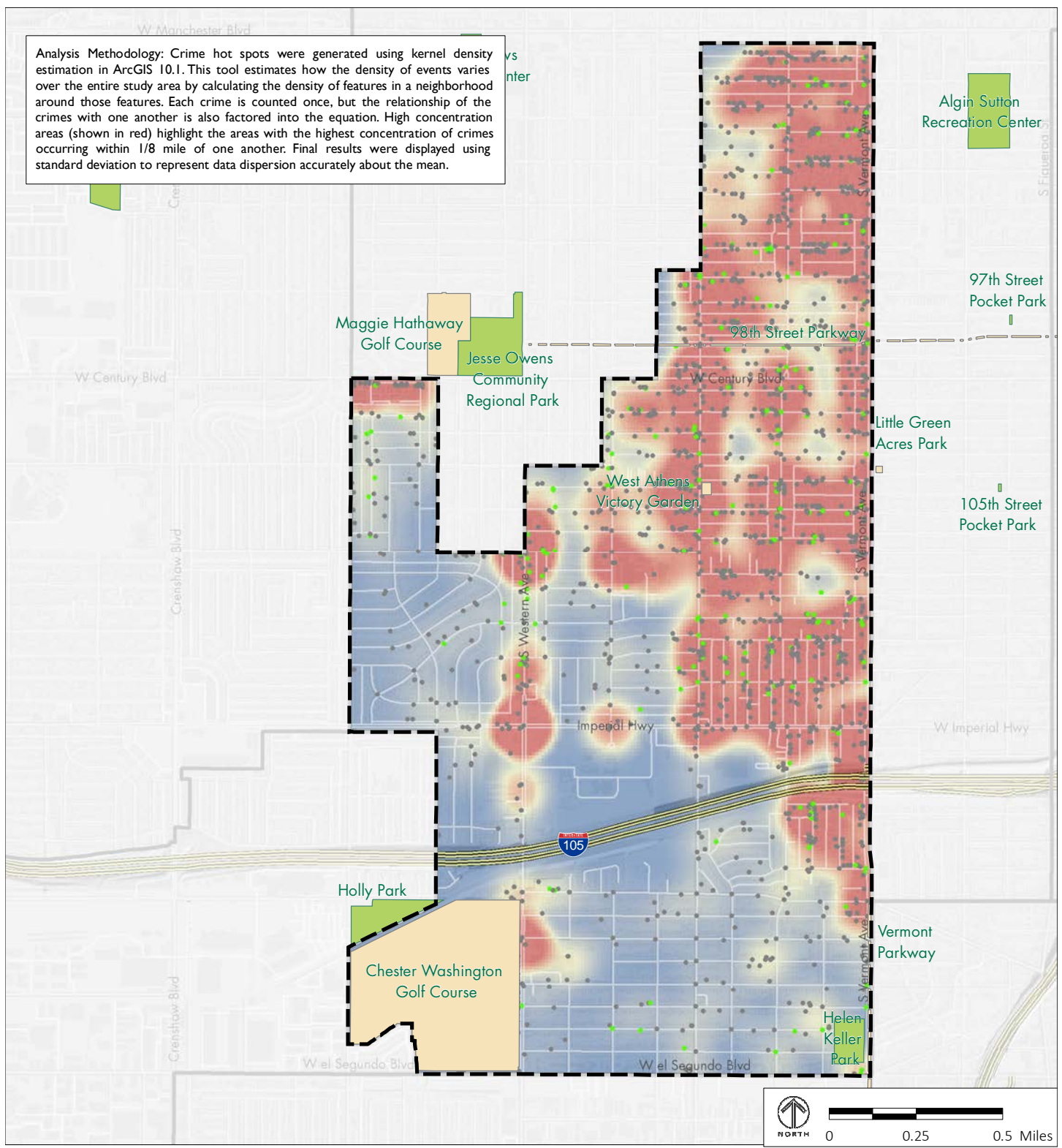
Most gang-related crimes are also concentrated in the high crime area north of the 105 Freeway. Some of these gang-related crimes occur south of the freeway along S. Vermont Avenue, but only a few occur as far south as Helen Keller Park.

TABLE 2.9 CRIME CATEGORY INTENSITY RATIO*

Intensity	Crime Categories
0	Accidents miscellaneous, accidents traffic/vehicle/boat, commitments, miscellaneous non-criminal, persons dead, suicide and attempt
100	Disorderly conduct, federal offenses without money, federal offenses with money, forgery, fraud and nsf checks, fraud and nsf checks, gambling, juvenile non-criminal, liquor laws, mentally ill, misdemeanors miscellaneous, offenses against family, persons missing, receiving stolen property, vagrancy, vandalism, vehicle / boating laws, warrants
200	Drunk / alcohol / drugs, narcotics, weapon laws
300	Burglary, drunk driving vehicle / boat, felonies miscellaneous, larceny theft, non-aggravated assaults, sex offenses misdemeanors
400	Grand theft auto, robbery
500	Arson, aggravated assault, forcible rape, sex offenses felonies,
600	Criminal homicide

*Source: Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, 2012. Crimes were categorized and given an intensity ranking in order to give more weight to violent offenses.

FIGURE 2.15 CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Analysis Methodology: Crime hot spots were generated using kernel density estimation in ArcGIS 10.1. This tool estimates how the density of events varies over the entire study area by calculating the density of features in a neighborhood around those features. Each crime is counted once, but the relationship of the crimes with one another is also factored into the equation. High concentration areas (shown in red) highlight the areas with the highest concentration of crimes occurring within 1/8 mile of one another. Final results were displayed using standard deviation to represent data dispersion accurately about the mean.

Source: Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, 2013; Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, 2010,2011, 2012; PlaceWorks, 2015.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Crimes Against Persons* | Green Space | Concentration of Crimes Against Persons |
| • Gang-related | Existing Park | High |
| • Not Gang-related | Other Green Space | Low |

Note: Los Angeles County crime data included in this analysis covers a 3 year time period from January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2012. Over this time period there were a total of 1,890 reported crimes against persons within the community. *Crimes Against Persons includes the following crime categories; criminal homicides, forcible rape, both aggravated and non aggravated assaults, sex offenses, and robberies.

VACANT LAND

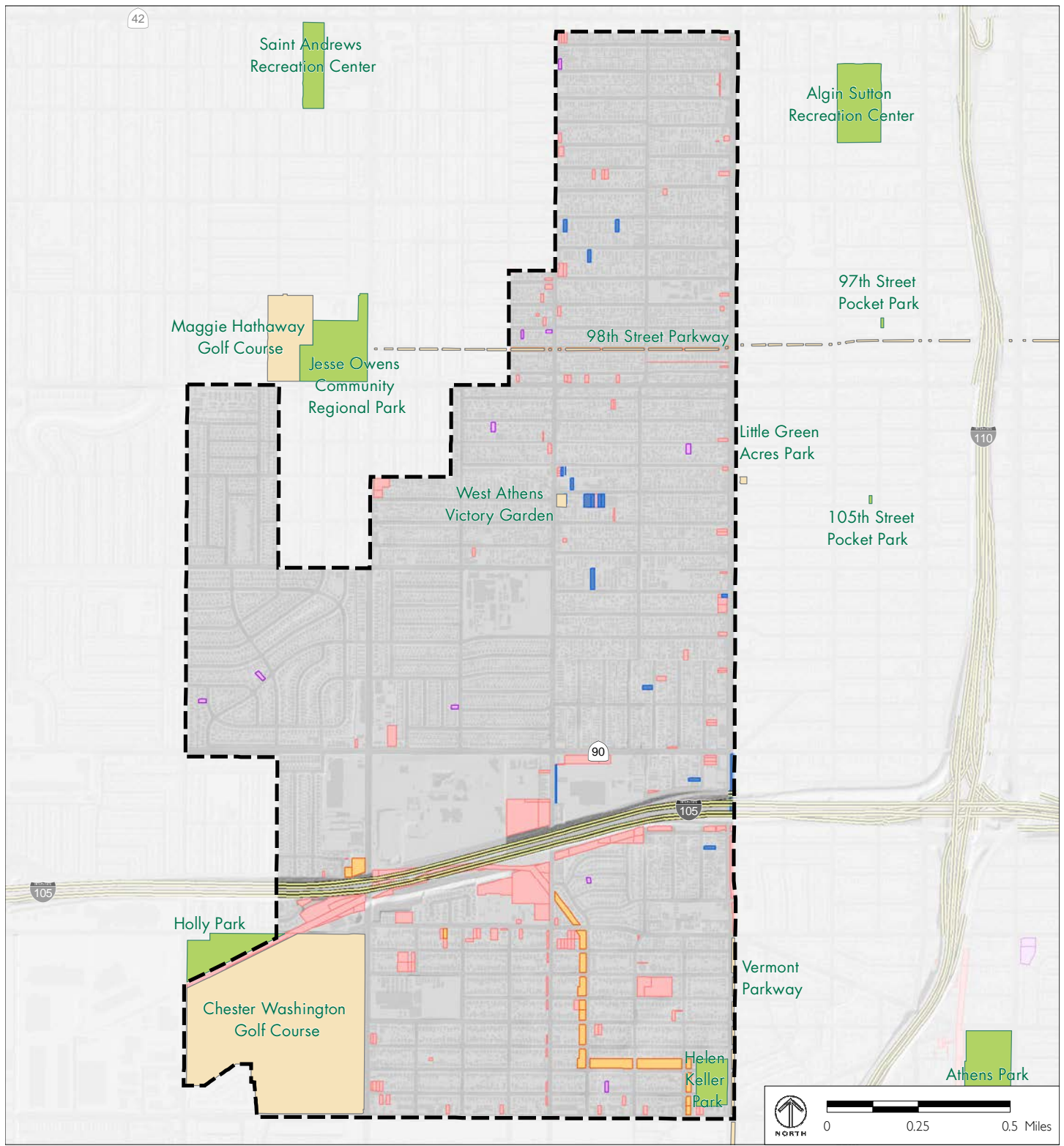
A vacant land analysis was used to preliminarily identify opportunity sites for new parks in West Athens-Westmont. Vacant land was identified using three different sources: Los Angeles County Assessor's vacant land data according to its use code; property lots with no improvement value; and input from community members, when provided. Once identified as vacant, the parcels were verified using aerial images to ensure that they were indeed vacant. Parcels were then categorized into vacant lands owned by Los Angeles County and by other public agencies. Additionally, tax-default properties were included in the analysis as they may serve as additional opportunities for parkland development. Figure 2.16 shows the location of vacant land in West Athens-Westmont.

In addition to having very few vacant parcels, not all vacant land in West Athens-Westmont is equally valuable for use as parks. Many vacant parcels or buildings or tax default properties are located in unsuitable areas, such as mid-block locations or areas with site restrictions.



Examples of Vacant Land in West Athens-Westmont

FIGURE 2.16 VACANT LAND



Source: Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation, 2013; Los Angeles County Assessor's Office, 2013; Neighborhood Land Trust, 2013; PlaceWorks, 2015.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| Green Space | Vacant Land | Other Potential Vacant Lands |
| ■ Existing Park | ■ Assessor's Data | ■ Tax Defaulted Properties |
| ■ Other Green Space | ■ Identified by Community | ■ County-Owned |
| | ■ Other Publicly-Owned | |

AIR QUALITY

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) recommends that a minimum 500-foot buffer be maintained between freeways and new parks with active outdoor facilities. Best practice mitigation measures are required for any new parks with active outdoor facilities if located within 1,500 feet of freeways.

In accordance with the DPH's recommendations, 500-foot and 1,500-foot buffers from freeways were added to analyze potential new park sites. These buffers are displayed in the air quality map in Figure 2.17.

Parks and recreational facilities provide great benefits to community residents, including increased levels of physical activity, improved mental health, and opportunities to strengthen social ties with neighbors. However, siting parks and active recreational facilities near freeways may increase public exposure to harmful pollutants, particularly while exercising. Studies show that heavy exercise near sources of traffic pollution may have adverse health effects. However, there are also substantial health benefits associated with exercise. Therefore, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health recommends the following cautionary approach when siting parks and active recreational facilities near freeways:

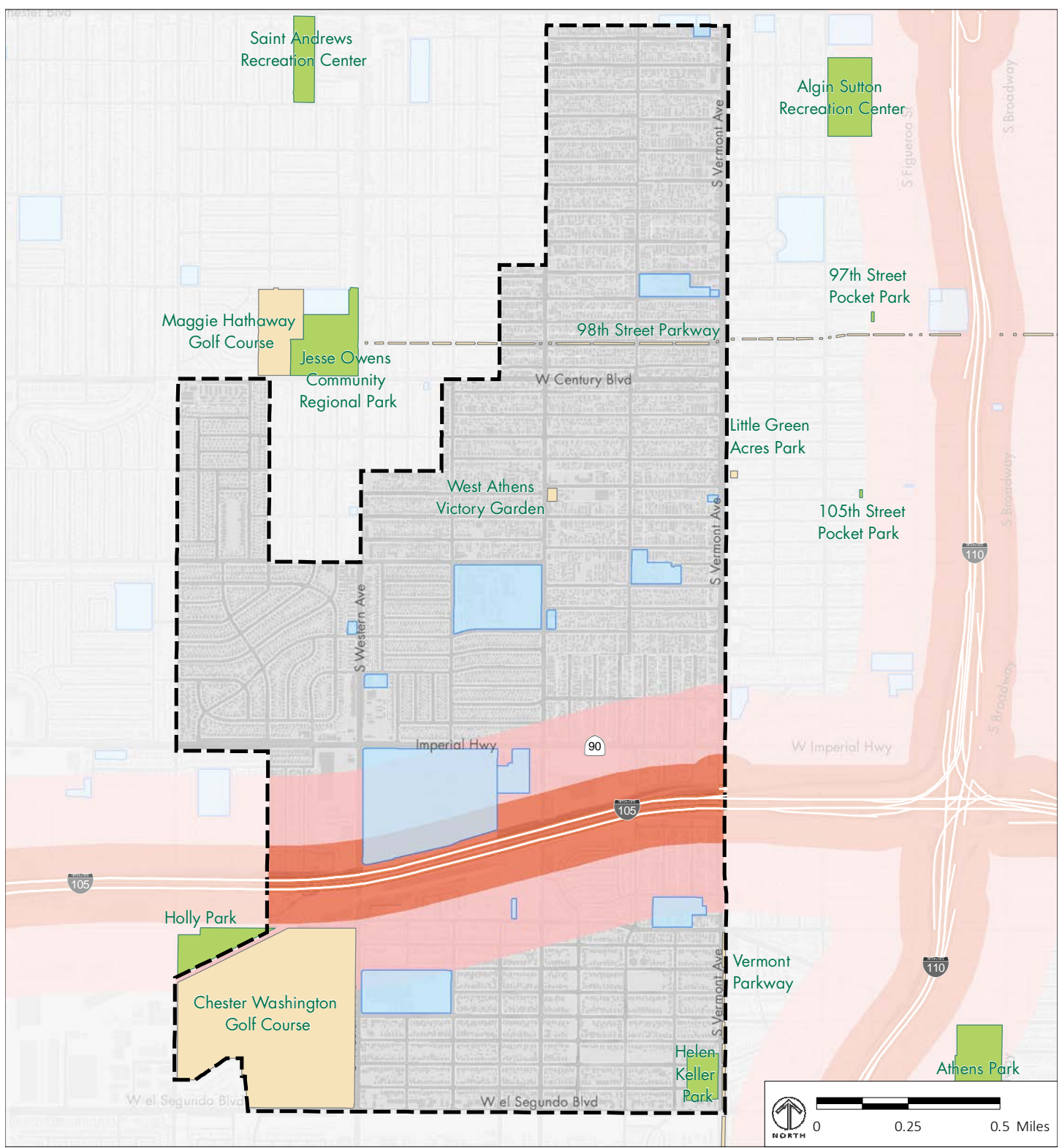
- *New parks with athletic fields, courts, and other outdoor facilities designed for moderate to vigorous physical activity, should be sited at least 500 feet from a freeway. Consideration should be given to extending this minimum buffer zone based on site-specific conditions given the fact that unhealthy traffic emissions are often present at greater distances. Exceptions to this recommended practice should be made only upon a finding by the decision-making body that the benefits of such development outweigh the public health risks.*
- *New parks built within 1,500 feet of freeways should adhere to best-practice mitigation measures that minimize exposure to air pollution. These include the placement of athletic fields, courts, and other active outdoor facilities as far as possible from the air pollution source.*

- Air Quality Recommendations for Local Jurisdictions from Los Angeles County Department of Public Health



View of 105 Freeway and Metro Green Line Vermont/Athens Station
source: Google, DigitalGlobe, 2015

FIGURE 2.17 AIR QUALITY



Sources: Los Angeles County, 2013; PlaceWorks, 2015.

- Green Space
 - Existing Park
 - Other Green Space
 - Schools
- Air Quality Buffer
 - 500 feet from Freeway
 - 1,500 feet from Freeway



3 - COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community outreach is at the heart of this planning process. The community outreach strategy was developed based on the project goals, as well as an understanding of the issues in the community. The Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust (LANLT) facilitated the outreach process in West Athens-Westmont. These efforts took place between November 2013 and August 2014, and included surveys, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, two community workshops, a community visioning and design workshop, a youth activity, and a community tour.

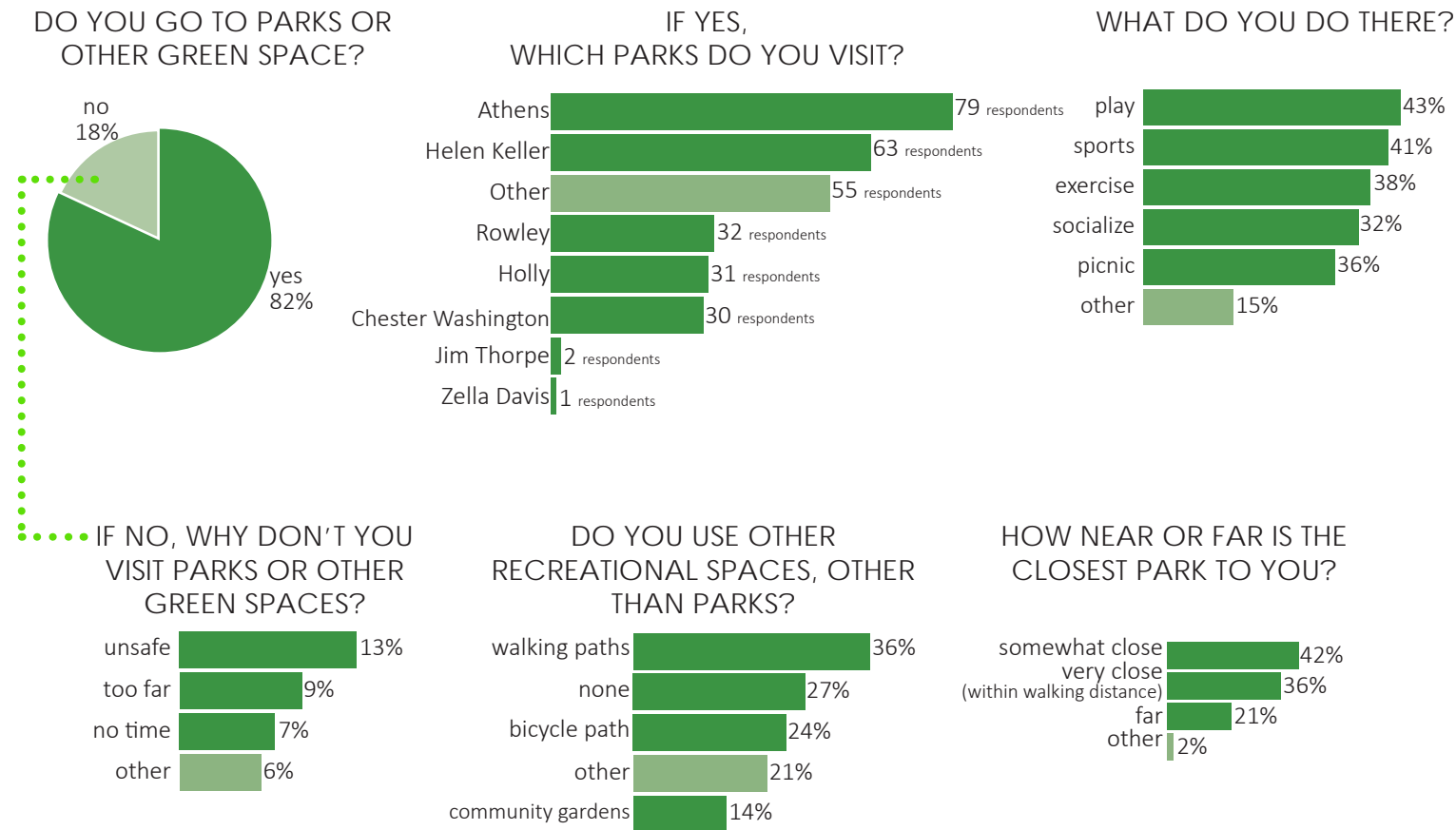
Key findings on desired park facilities, amenities, and programs are described below. Descriptions of the events and results are described more in-depth in the outreach summaries in Appendix C. Due to the variety of outreach events, responses varied from recommendations for specific projects to more general requests for new green space.

SURVEYS (MAY-OCTOBER 2013)

One hundred and eighteen (118) questionnaires were distributed while tabling at West Athens-Westmont during key community events. Results showed that more people visit Athens parks, which is located outside the West Athens-Westmont community, than Helen Keller Park, although this may be due to the temporary closure of Helen Keller Park. Another popular

park is Holly Park, located in the City of Hawthorne. Survey responses suggested that people visit parks for the playground more than any other amenity or activity. Other activities, listed in order of popularity, include sports, exercise, picnicking, and socializing. As far as recreational facilities, walking paths are used more than community gardens. Most people drive or

FIGURE 3.1 SURVEY RESULTS



respondents could select more than one answer

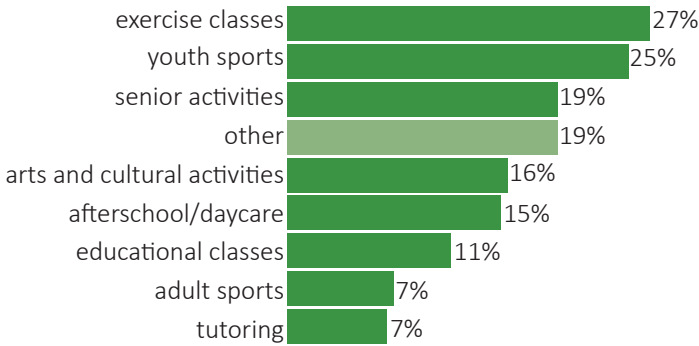
TABLE 3.1 SUMMARY OF NEEDS IDENTIFIED FROM SURVEY RESULTS

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF IN YOUR COMMUNITY?				WHAT ARE THE TOP 3 ISSUES CONCERNING PARKS AND GREEN SPACES IN YOUR COMMUNITY?	
Programs		Facilities			
Exercise Classes	51	Exercise	102	Safety/Security	40
Youth Sports	48	Walking Path	98	Maintenance	29
Senior Activities	38	Bike Paths	76	Amenities	20
Educational Classes	23	Gardens	71		
Adult Sports	15	Other	18		

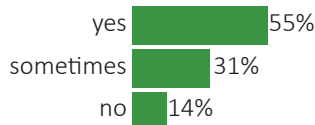
walk to get to their local park, while fewer people bike or use transit. The parks are visited more frequently in the afternoon than in the evening or morning. Many residents reported that they feel safer while traveling in groups, but some residents said that there is gang activity in the area and they feel unsafe going to the parks. Residents who feel safe in parks explained that they visit parks in a group. Residents who don't feel safe

identified gang activity in the area as the reason they feel unsafe. Overall, the top three issues identified were safety and security, park maintenance, and park amenities. Respondents wanted to see more park amenities, such as exercise facilities, picnic tables, volleyball nets, a snack bar, and walking paths.

WHAT TYPES OF PROGRAMS DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN?

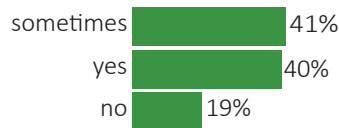


DO YOU FEEL SAFE GOING TO PARKS?



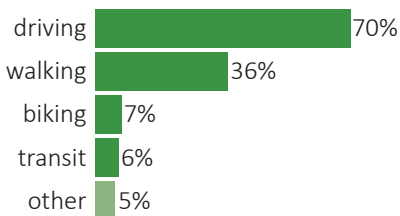
The majority of residents responded that they feel safe going to parks, citing that they travel with their families or in groups. Residents also said they feel safe because it is their community and they are familiar with the route they take to the park. Meanwhile, some residents say that there is gang activity in the area and they feel unsafe going to the parks.

DO YOU FEEL SAFE IN PARKS?

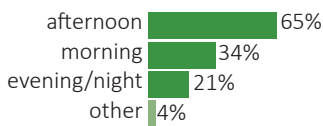


Residents who reported feeling safe in parks, explained that they visit parks with their families or with their friends, suggesting that they feel more secure when in a group. Meanwhile, residents who do not feel safe in parks attributed it to the prevalence of gang activity such as shooting, and drug use.

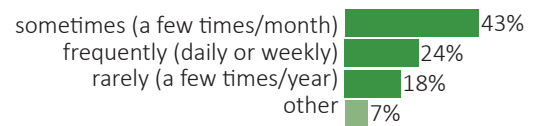
HOW DO YOU GET THERE?



WHAT TIME OF DAY DO YOU USUALLY VISIT?



HOW OFTEN DO YOU GO?



respondents could select more than one answer

FOCUS GROUPS

Three focus groups were conducted in West Athens-Westmont. There was a focus group with seniors at residential living centers in Westmont, one with parent volunteers at Woodcrest Elementary School in Westmont, and one with youth who participated in after-school activities at the South Los Angeles Youth Activities League on S. Vermont Avenue in West Athens.

Focus group participants identified three potential solutions:

- Implement strategies to create more programming and include more gardens.
- Improve park accessibility as it is a problem for families without reliable methods of transportation.
- Work to develop a new park, with concern for safety due to violent crime and gang activity.

Throughout the three focus groups, participants expressed their concerns and requests with regards to park space, needs, and safety. They discussed the absence of green space in the community and the impact it has on residents. Due to the prolonged closure of Helen Keller Park, there are effectively no parks in Westmont-West Athens.

A number of focus group participants expressed appreciation for the West Athens Victory Garden, and residents indicated that the garden has brought the community together for a common good. Given that the West Athens Victory Garden only has space for 30 gardeners, community members would like to see additional gardening projects in the area.

Residents also expressed the desire for more opportunities to engage in physical activity outdoors, including exercise stations or play equipment for children.

Furthermore, parent volunteers at Woodcrest Elementary Schools suggested that one of the projects in the area could be located on the school’s campus, which could provide a hub of activity. Youth expressed a need for more multi-use fields, basketball courts, and programming.

CBO Focus Group Representatives:

- Hale Morris Lewis Manor Senior Housing
- Encanto Court
- South Los Angeles Youth Activities League
- Woodcrest Elementary School

The importance of having nearby locations for sports and community programming was an important theme across all focus groups due to accessibility issues and transportation limitations. Many of the residents do not have access to a car and are fearful of walking outside, especially at night. Seniors and parents expressed frustration with the limitations of the bus system. This lack of transportation makes residents immobile and unable to visit parks that are further away. Therefore, it is important that programs are provided within West Athens- Westmont.

Focus group participants expressed that they do not feel safe in their community. Participants stated that violent crime, gang activity, and homicides are commonplace in the area and stressed that these dangers keep residents off the streets and in their homes. Residents did say that violent crime and homicide have decreased since the Sheriff’s station was established on Imperial Highway. One resident stressed the importance of mutual understanding that the police are striving to protect residents.

Stakeholders suggested numerous strategies for increasing recreational opportunities in the community, from increasing the number of available green spaces to redesigning and restructuring the existing green spaces.

With their local knowledge, the stakeholders identified the three primary concerns for West Athens-Westmont as:

TABLE 3.2 SUMMARY OF NEEDS IDENTIFIED FROM FOCUS GROUPS

Facilities	Programming
Community garden	Art and music for children
Play equipment for children	Gardening
Exercise stations	After-school programs
Scenic paths	Sports teams
Amenities/Elements	
Multi-use fields and basketball	
Comprehensive security lighting	
Shaded areas to sit and play	

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Nine stakeholder interviews were held with leaders from these local organizations:

1. South Los Angeles Youth Activities League
2. RACE (Reclaiming America’s Community through Empowerment)
3. St. John’s Well Child and Family Center
4. St. Francis Xavier Cabrini Catholic Church and School
5. First Christian Fellowship
6. Hale Morris Lewis Manor Senior Housing
7. Southwest Community Association
8. Department of Parks and Recreation

- **Lack of Programming:** With Helen Keller Park under construction, programs have been halted and the needs of the community are no longer being met.¹
- **Economic Development:** West Athens-Westmont has a high unemployment rate, as well as a deteriorating housing stock and gang-related crime.
- **Disorganized Efforts and Lack of Collective Understanding of Community Needs:** The slow responses and the lack of understanding have created distrust in local government.

Overwhelmingly, stakeholders identified the major problem as the lack of recreational space in the two communities. With Helen Keller Park under construction, access to green space is very limited. Stakeholders also discussed accessibility issues with regards to using recreational spaces in neighboring areas and cities. In recent years, Helen Keller has become a busy center of community activity, providing an impressive amount of programming for its size. With the park closed for construction, these programs were halted and the needs of the community were no longer being met. From interviews, it is clear that private institutions are trying to address this gap. For instance, several churches are able to utilize their private grounds for activities and events. The community is not entirely void of programs and activities for youth or seniors, but it is evident that not all residents are being provided for. Across the board, safety was consistently presented by stakeholders as the most pressing local issue affecting the communities of West Athens and Westmont. Historically, gang members with guns occupied community institutions, such as parks and schools, as well as streets. Other crimes include

¹ The community center at Helen Keller Park opened in December 2014 and now offers programs that were not available at the time of this outreach event.

Key Issues and Concerns:

- The overall lack of green space in West Athens-Westmont.
- The lack of programming means that community needs are not being met.
- Gang violence continues to be a problem, but gang intervention programs have been successful. Partnership with these groups will be helpful in the planning process.

TABLE 3.3 SUMMARY OF NEEDS IDENTIFIED FROM STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Facilities
Community garden
Gym
Walking path
Exercise equipment
Event center
Amenities/Elements
Transform eyesores and blighted areas into common areas
Comprehensive security lighting
Gang intervention specialists consulted for site location
Common area for events

break-ins and vandalism. Stakeholders discussed the positive impact of gang intervention programs in the community. A large component of gang intervention success has been cultivating pride in the community. Renovation of Helen Keller Park facilities, although not completed, has already created a new sense of community ownership. However, even with gang intervention programs, gang territories continue to put geographic limitations on youth in the communities. This is especially important, considering that gang territories do not necessarily correspond with community borders. Gang-intervention specialists should be consulted when selecting sites for projects in these communities.

One stakeholder emphasized the need for collective understanding of community needs. Stakeholders desired increased communication in order to forge partnerships among organizations with similar missions and objectives. While some partnerships between schools and organizations already exist, stakeholders view the West Athens-Westmont Community Parks and Recreation Plan as a possible avenue to expand these agreements and create joint-use plans.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP (NOVEMBER 6, 2013)

Approximately 25 community members attended a workshop held at Chester Washington Golf Course and provided input on the current and future green space opportunities in their community. The workshop began with a presentation from Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, PlaceWorks, and LANLT followed by a brief question and answer period during which residents noted these key issues:

- Residents were curious about the timeline and available funds for implementing projects.
- There is a large community concern over issues of public safety.
- The community is frustrated with the closure of Helen Keller Park.

After the question and answer period, participants engaged in collaborative planning activities that recorded their views on both current and future green space. In the first activity, **Activity Dots**, participants identified the types of activities they do at local parks, as well as what they would like to see. In the second activity, **Group Discussions**, residents described their vision for a greener and safer West Athens-Westmont. In the third activity, **Input Mapping**, stakeholders drew on a map of West Athens-Westmont to show their current sources of green space, obstacles and accessibility issues, and locations where they would like to see future green space.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

TABLE 3.4 SUMMARY OF NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Local Issues Identified	Park Management Needs
Gang activity	Trees and landscaping along streets and sidewalks
Gang territory	Increased law enforcement
Closure of Helen Keller Park	Introduce greater security measures
Lack of green space	Enhance programming
	Improve lighting
	Redesign existing features
Park Features Desired	Specific Opportunity Sites Identified
Skate park	Playground at Sheriff's Station on Vermont Avenue
Gymnasium	Lot between 122nd Street and 125th Street and Western Avenue create a mini park
Community gardens	
Walking paths	
Mini parks	
Community gardens	

Activity Dots Exercise

Using images of typical parks and recreation facilities and programs, workshop participants voted on the types of activities they currently do in West Athens-Westmont and the types of amenities that they would like to see more of in their local parks. Participants were given two stickers to vote with and were asked to choose their highest priorities.

Activities You Do:

- Exercise (5)
- Play organized sports (5)
- Swim (5)
- Picnic (4)
- Socialize (4)
- Take kids to playground (3)
- Read (2)
- Watch wildlife (2)

Things You Would Like To See:

- Exercise facility (9)
- Lighting and security (5)
- Walking paths (5)
- Natural areas or feature (3)
- Play fields (2)
- Public Art (2)
- Bicycling (0)

Residents wrote the following miscellaneous park needs and opportunities in the space provided on the boards:

- Help keep the peace with intervention such as programming and events
- Concerts in the park
- Programs for youth
- Programs for seniors
- Dog parks



Input Mapping Exercise

Using a map of West Athens-Westmont, workshop participants identified places where they currently recreate, areas they felt were dangerous or difficult to travel, and spaces where they would like to see new green space or recreation amenities. Residents identified County parks outside the community as major sources of green space, illicit activities and cars speeding along routes to parks as major obstacles to use, and vacant lots as important sites for future projects.

Where is it hard to walk?

- A general perception of streets being dangerous for pedestrians creates barriers for community members. Specific intersections were identified as particularly dangerous. Groups indicated that trees along S. Vermont Avenue in Westmont cause visibility issues, and S. Vermont Avenue and Imperial Highway is a hot spot for gang violence and shootings. Group members expressed a need for speed bumps and a stop sign at the corner of South Denker Avenue and West 122nd Street.

What parks or green spaces do you use?

- All groups identified Helen Keller Park as the most convenient park to visit and noted that its current closure impacts their ability to access green space. Athens Park, West Athens Victory Garden, and the Sheriff's Station (Youth Activities League on S. Vermont Avenue) were the most commonly visited recreational areas.

Where do you want new green space?

- Multiple groups identified potential sites for joint-use agreements, including garden projects at elementary schools. They also identified the use of the Sheriff's Station and West Athens Elementary School for shared use.



COMMUNITY WORKSHOP (JANUARY 22, 2014)

Approximately 25 Westmont residents and community leaders gathered at Woodcrest Elementary School to participate in a Community Workshop. This meeting was an opportunity for the residents of Westmont to get more involved in the West Athens-Westmont Community Parks and Recreation Plan. The workshop was open to all interested community members, but was intended to give Spanish-speakers a more in-depth understanding of this multi-agency project happening in the community. LANLT facilitated this workshop in Spanish, with English translation for those who required it, followed by a brief question and answer period during which residents noted these key issues:

- Residents wanted to know how sites would be selected.
- There was a concern about the plan addressing drug use and homelessness in the parks.
- The community wanted to bring green space to Woodcrest Elementary School.

After the question and answer period, participants engaged in the same collaborative planning activities as the workshop at Chester Washington Golf Course, recording their views on both current and future green space. In the first activity, **Activity Dots**, participants identified the types of activities they do at local parks, as well as what they would like to see. In the second activity, **Group Discussions**, residents described their vision for a greener and safer West Athens-Westmont. In the third activity, **Input Mapping**, stakeholders drew on a map of West Athens-Westmont to show their current sources of green space, obstacles and accessibility issues, and locations where they would like to see future green space.



TABLE 3.5 SUMMARY OF NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Local Issues Identified	Park Management Needs
Changing demographics	Increase safety
Safety and security	More communication between residents and County
Lack of green space	More visible police presence
	Enhance programming
Park Features Desired	
Skate park	
Gymnasium	
Exercise equipment	
Walking paths	
Multi-use space for sports	
Community room	

Activity Dots Exercise

Using images of typical parks and recreation facilities and programs, workshop participants voted on the types of activities they currently do in West Athens-Westmont and the types of amenities that they would like to see more of in their local parks. Participants were given two stickers to vote with and were asked to choose their highest priorities.

Activities You Do:

- Take kids to playground (5)
- Exercise (4)
- Socialize (3)
- Watch wildlife (3)
- Picnic (2)
- Play organized sports (2)
- Read (1)
- Swim (1)

Things You Would Like To See:

- Lighting and security (5)
- Natural areas or feature (4)
- Public Art (4)
- Exercise facility (3)
- Bicycling (2)
- Play fields (1)
- Walking paths (1)

Residents wrote the following miscellaneous park needs and opportunities in the space provided on the boards:

- Activities and spaces for kids with special needs
- Programs for all age groups

Input Mapping Exercise

Using a map of West Athens-Westmont, workshop participants identified places where they currently recreate, areas they felt were dangerous or difficult to travel, and spaces where they would like to see new open space or recreation amenities. Residents identified County parks outside the community as major sources of green space, illicit activities and cars speeding along routes to parks as major obstacles to use, and vacant lots as important sites for future projects.

Where is it hard to walk?

- Most of the groups pinpointed specific geographic areas that are particularly prone to shootings, gang violence, and other safety issues. One intersection, 109th Street and S. Vermont Avenue, is a particularly dangerous area for violence and robbery. Some groups discussed more widespread safety issues, such as a lack of community involvement and the need for increased collaboration with the Sheriff's Department.

What parks or green spaces do you use?

- All groups emphasized that they do not currently use Helen Keller Park. The majority of participants travel to parks in other communities, including Earvin 'Magic' Johnson Recreation Area in Willowbrook, Americana Park in Glendale, and parks in Whittier, such as Alondra Park.

Where do you want new green space?

- All groups discussed a need for greening S. Vermont Avenue. They would like to see a median park or other beautification efforts for the busy street. Participants also prioritized Woodcrest Elementary School as a site for future green space in the form of a joint-use agreement.



YOUTH ACTIVITY

(FEBRUARY 19, 2014)

Fifteen students from Washington Preparatory High School (WPHS) participated in a class-long activity with the goal of capturing the youth vision for the future of green space in the WPHS garden, as well as their thoughts on increasing green space in their community.

The students expressed concerns about not having a park in their community and came up with creative ideas on spaces that could be used to create more parks. The West Athens-Westmont Youth Activity served to prepare the students to participate in the 2015 Spring Community Design Workshop and get them excited to participate.

During the presentation, students were given information about parks and green space. Topics included parks in their neighborhood, the benefits of green space, and park inequities. The students expressed that they would like to see liquor stores removed from their community, vacant lots turned into parks, and more green space on the schools campus. In terms of programming, students would like to see more youth sports programs, as well arts, music and dance programs. Students expressed concerns about gang activity and gang territories, and vagrancy issues in the new green space.

The second part of the workshop was a designing exercise for the WPHS garden. Each student was given a draft frame of their garden and asked to draw their ideas of what the garden would look like. When their drawings were complete each student presented their drawings to the class. Popular elements included: a tool shed, brick walkways, fruit and vegetable garden beds, and shade trees.



TABLE 3.6 SUMMARY OF NEEDS

Amenities and Design Facilities
Skate parks
Water parks
Basketball courts
Programming
Daycare in the parks for siblings
Youth sports programs
Music and dance programs
Arts and cultural programming
Issues Identified
Gang activity
Stray dogs
Homelessness in the new green space
Lack of parks to hang out in during the summer



COMMUNITY VISIONING AND DESIGN WORKSHOP (AUGUST 19, 2014) CHESTER WASHINGTON GOLF COURSE

Approximately 90 community members participated in a design workshop to envision what new parkland space would look like and what they would include. PlaceWorks started with a presentation on the status of the West Athens-Westmont Community Parks and Recreation Plan, including an overview of the outreach completed to date, a summary of the process and analysis of parkland opportunity sites, and an overview of the sites selected as first priorities in the Plan. Sites for the community design workshop included:

- **S. NORMANDIE AVENUE POCKET PARK AT WEST 95TH STREET.** Convert a small lot, located on the corner of a residential cross street into a mini park with opportunities for garden space.
- **S. NORMANDIE AVENUE POCKET PARK AT WEST 90TH PLACE.** Create a small park with active space, and a place that is safe and free of gang activity.
- **LA CITY DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND POWER CORRIDOR (DWP).** Transform a large, linear corridor into a community park.

The community’s design of these sites formed the basis for the conceptual site designs presented in Chapter Six.

Following the presentation, many residents expressed strong opposition to the DWP corridor park and asked that it not be included in the Community Parks and Recreation Plan. Major site constraints were discussed by the group. For one, the space is not easy to supervise and it is located in close proximity to people’s homes. Residents who live along the corridor worked diligently in the past to remove elements from the site that they consider dangerous, such as trees and shrubs that provide hiding places and sidewalks that promote walking and cruising. Gang intervention groups indicated that the DWP utility corridor crosses numerous turf areas and that new park space could face the problem of being unaligned space. Because of these problems, participants were strongly against identifying the corridor park as a potential site.

Community members were then asked to select one site to work on, although some participants preferred to visit all of the groups and add feedback. Placeworks and LANLT staff facilitated four groups. The groups began by brainstorming the vision for the site, the features that they wanted to include, and the types of activities they wanted to see happen there. Following this discussion, the group began to draw on the site map, using a scale bar and scaled reference objects to ensure that the group had a realistic understanding of what could fit on the site.

Groups mentioned partnerships with local gang intervention groups or the sheriff’s department. Beyond partnerships with intervention groups, many indicated the importance of making the space kid-friendly and providing active space. Facilitators worked with the group members to lay out general circulation and major park features, incorporate planting elements; and discuss material recommendations.

Following the workshop, DPR and staff from Supervisorial District 2 met with community residents again to discuss the DWP utility corridor. Residents continue to oppose the project and it was determined that the site would not be pursued as a potential park opportunity.

Summaries of the community’s design concepts for the pocket parks are described in detail in Chapter Six, as well as their concept for a walking path around Chester Washington Golf Course, that served as an alternative to the DWP project.



SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH

KEY ISSUES

LACK OF GREEN SPACE. Helen Keller Park is the only significant park space in the community, and access and programming is now further limited due to its on-going renovation.

PROGRAMMING. Residents would like to see a more diverse array of park programs that respond to the community's needs.

LACK OF SPACES FOR YOUTH, SENIORS, AND FAMILIES. There was a strong interest in creating spaces for all types of user groups, especially youth, seniors, and families.

SAFETY. Residents expressed concerns about the safety in their community, specifically issues related to gang activity, turf wars, and theft.

RELATIONS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY. Community-based organizations and key stakeholders are interested in working more closely with the local government to implement park and recreational improvements that respond to the community's needs.

COMMUNITY SUGGESTIONS

1. Increase green space in West Athens-Westmont.
2. Address access issues, such as unsafe pedestrian routes to parks and limited public transit opportunities.
3. Address issues of gang-related activity by being sensitive to turf wars, and consult gang intervention strategists.
4. Install lighting to allow for night-time use of parkland and increase security.
5. Add more outdoor exercise equipment and create new spaces for community fitness.
6. Create more field space for soccer and football.
7. Promote additional programming opportunities for youth, seniors, and families.
8. Partner with schools to create joint-use parks.
9. Establish gang intervention programs and continue to support programs that work to cultivate pride in the community and ownership of parks.



4 - NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The West Athens-Westmont community-based needs assessment builds on the existing conditions analysis presented in Chapter Two and community outreach results presented in Chapter Three of this plan. Additionally, it incorporates recreational trends and standards, and spatial analysis to present an overall picture of parks and recreational needs in West Athens-Westmont.

Community parks and recreation needs can be categorized as facility needs and spatial needs. Facility need refers to the types of facilities, amenities, and programs that West Athens-Westmont residents want to have in their parks and recreational spaces, or what is missing in the community. Spatial need addresses the question of where are parks most needed in West Athens-Westmont.

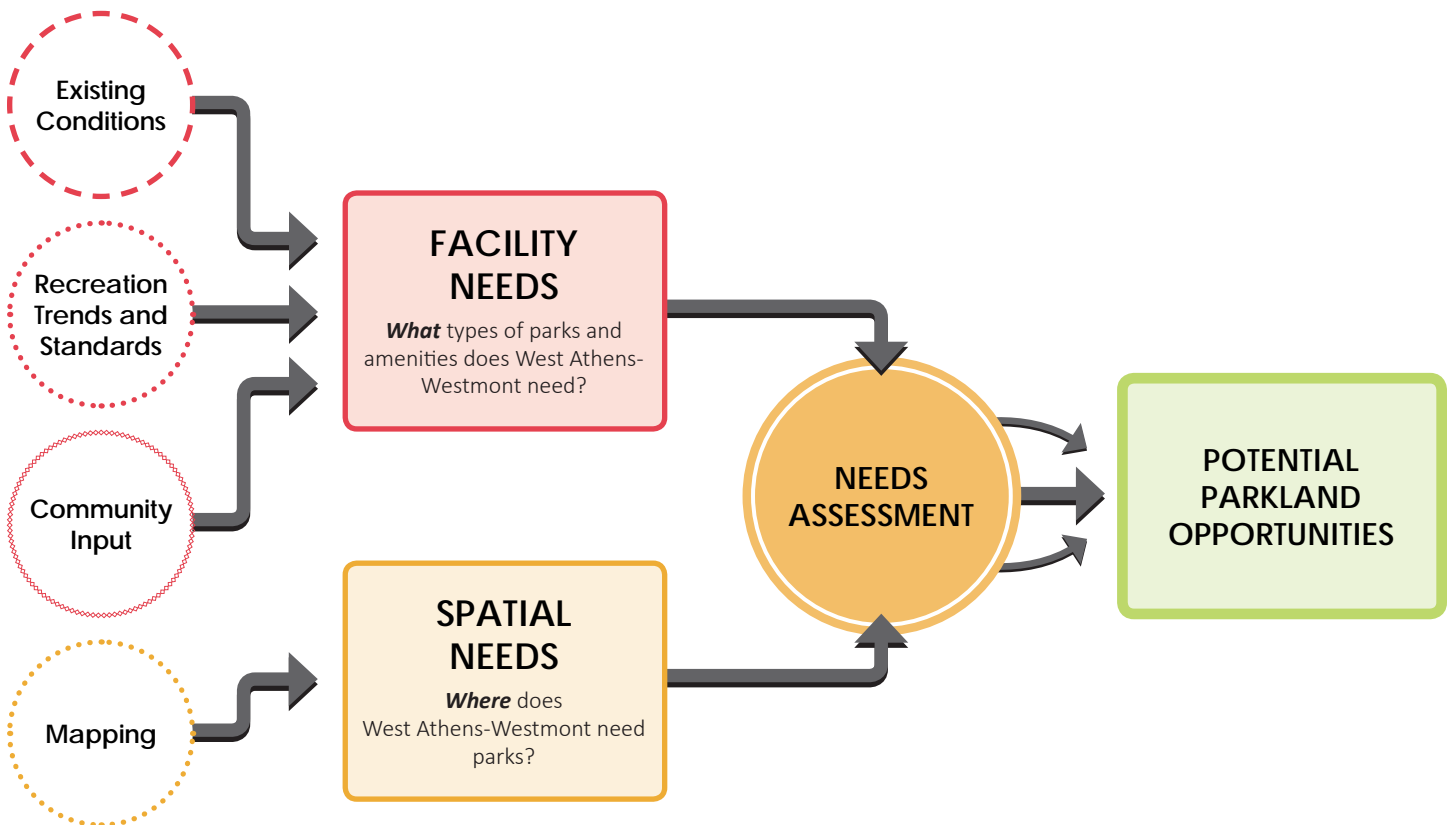
Facility need was identified through analysis of existing conditions, trends and standards in parks and recreation, and community outreach, while spatial need was developed through a geographical analysis of existing parks and green space and how easily they can be accessed by the community.

The spatial needs analysis additionally identified potential parkland opportunity sites in West Athens-Westmont. These sites have potential for new park development and serve as the basis for the green space vision presented in Chapter Five. These sites were further analyzed and ranked based on their park development potential and ability to meet identified need.

FACILITY NEEDS EXISTING CONDITIONS

As described in Chapter Two, Helen Keller Park is the only County Park located in West Athens-Westmont. The park is approximately 7 acres in size and the combined population of West Athens-Westmont is approximately 41,000 people. This translates to slightly more than 0.2 acres per 1,000 residents, which is significantly lower than the Los Angeles County General Plan goal of 4 acres of local parkland per 1,000 people. Chester Washington Golf Course adds an additional 126 acres of green space with large trees and expansive landscaped areas. Although the space can be used for community gatherings and events, the golf course offers only a single recreational use and does not meet the needs of all community members. There are other parks located near West Athen-Westmont; however, approximately 84 percent of the population is not within walking distance of a park and a difficult pedestrian environment with high levels of crime prevents many residents from accessing and using parks and green space in or around their community.

FIGURE 4.1 WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND SITE IDENTIFICATION PROCESS



PARK AMENITIES

The renovation and remediation of Helen Keller Park provides significant benefits to West Athens-Westmont residents. In particular, the new community building and theater expands the popular recreational and event program at the park, and the renovated facilities restore opportunities for sports at the park. However, even after renovation, Helen Keller Park still lacks some key facilities that are common in parks throughout the County, such as **indoor recreation facilities or gyms, splash pads, soccer fields, tennis courts, volleyball courts, skate and bike skills parks, walking tracks, and senior centers**. Additionally, the facilities that are in the park are not sufficient to provide space for all nearby residents nor provide expanded programs. In particular, the community needs more field space and sports facilities. Due to limited space at Helen Keller Park, new parklands and recreational facilities will likely be necessary to accommodate other amenities.

SAFETY

High crime rates discourage residents from using parks and public spaces in West Athens-Westmont. Facilities that emphasize public safety and facilitate community gathering could potentially decrease crime levels. Partnership with local gang intervention and violence prevention groups to create community outposts for these organizations to meet or hold events could promote positive activities in public spaces and discourage illicit ones.

Gang-related crimes prevent people from traveling through certain areas and effectively cut residents off from parks and other community amenities. Unsafe streets create a cycle of disuse and decay as residents are afraid to use the streets due to crime. This creates spaces that lack “eyes on the street,” or people watching activity to discourage crime, which in turn keeps residents from wanting to use the streets. Partnerships to create safe routes to public spaces are necessary for the successful use of park spaces.

Within West Athens-Westmont, these partnerships could include the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department (Sheriff) and other violence prevention groups that could patrol key corridors, including S. Vermont Avenue and S. Normandie Avenue. New parks along these streets could increase public activity in these areas, potentially increasing public supervision and discouraging illegal activities. Creating parks along these corridors must be in tandem with other safety measures to ensure that the spaces are safe rather than secluded places for crime.

There are numerous factors that influence crime levels in a community, many of which are far beyond park boundaries. However, crime levels significantly impact park use and the beneficial outcomes of park spaces. Partnership with public agencies and community groups to improve socioeconomic conditions and increase access to public services could have the long term effect of improving parks and recreation facilities in West Athens-Westmont. These improvements could lead to

reduction in crime and improve mobility within the community between parks and other amenities. Non-traditional park partners in this area could be job creation programs, youth development initiatives, health care providers, and education centers.

CONNECTIVITY

In addition to crime, the street environment, including pedestrian and bicycle amenities, is not well developed in West Athens-Westmont. Streetscape improvements along S. Vermont Avenue are intended to increase pedestrian and bicycle activity along this corridor through the addition of trees, benches, and bike lanes. However, other streets in the community have degraded sidewalks and unsafe crossings. Partnership with Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (DPW) to improve street conditions could potentially improve park access.

Additionally, proposed bicycle routes in West Athens-Westmont will create an alternative transit network within the community. Parks along these routes could benefit from having safe bicycle access. Enhancing these bikeways with separated cycle tracks and pedestrian improvements could create a more dynamic and multi-beneficial green network through the community.

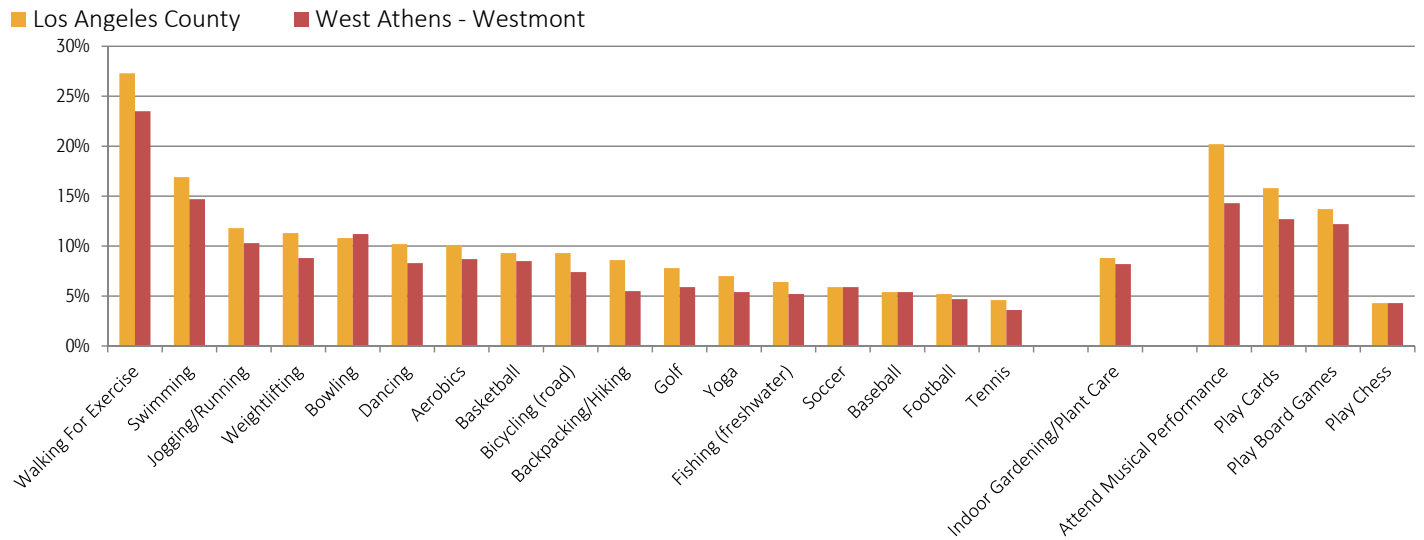
ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Parks and urban greening provide important ecological services, such as air quality improvements, stormwater runoff treatment, and wildlife habitat. Additionally, green spaces and plants have public health benefits in the form of air quality improvements, increased opportunities for physical activity, and stress reduction. High crime areas are typically associated with high levels of stress for residents.¹ Although many factors impact stress levels, increased urban greening and opportunities to spend time in nature could improve psychological health.

In particular, as noted in Chapter Two, the urban forest, and specifically the park forest in nearby parks, provide significant environmental and public health benefits, including improved air quality and decreased urban heat island effect. Outside of Helen Keller Park and Chester Washington Golf Course, West Athens-Westmont has relatively low urban tree canopy as compared to other areas in Los Angeles County. Additionally, nearby freeways, including the 105 which divides West Athens and Westmont and the 110 located to the east of the community, contribute to poor air quality in the area. Urban trees can help mitigate this issue by filtering particulates and reducing noise.

1 Kuo, Frances, and William Sullivan. “Aggression and Violence in the Inner City: Effects of Environment via Mental Fatigue.” *Environment and Behavior* 33, no. 4 (July 2001): 543–71.

FIGURE 4.2 SUMMARY OF PARTICIPATION RATES FROM ESRI BUSINESS ANALYST



To further strengthen ecological services in West Athens-Westmont, Helen Keller Park, Chester Washington Golf Course, and new parklands could incorporate more green infrastructure features, such as low-impact design strategies to treat more stormwater runoff, provide potential habitat space, and sequester greenhouse gases. Some parks in the County are utilizing green techniques, such as reduced irrigation strategies, energy production through solar panels, or water conservation facilities. Helen Keller Park nor Chester Washington Golf Course are currently taking part in any of these initiatives.

Walking for exercise is the dominant form of physical activity for adults in West Athens-Westmont and Los Angeles County. This is consistent with current trends in the State of California and was also evident in the results from the community outreach, discussed below. Swimming is the second most popular recreational activity in West Athens-Westmont, although there is only one public pool in the community. This further suggests a need for a pool, splash pads, or additional water-based activities in the West Athens-Westmont. Bowling and jogging are also popular activities in West Athens-Westmont.

PARK USER DEMOGRAPHICS

Several demographic factors have potential impacts on the types of facilities needed in West Athens-Westmont. This community has a significantly larger African American population (51 percent) as compared to the rest of Los Angeles County (9 percent), as well as a growing Latino population, increasing 7 percent between 2000 and 2010. Approximately 29 percent of the population is under 18 years old and 32 percent of households in West Athens-Westmont have children.

STATE AND NATIONAL TRENDS

Several State and national studies discuss the impact of population and demographic trends on outdoor recreation. An understanding of these trends and their most-likely implications is essential as the population increases and the rate of demographic change accelerates. Understanding the most likely direction of change may enable providers to position their services and respond more quickly to market changes.²

Compared to the County as a whole, West Athens-Westmont has a higher percentage of residents who commute by public transit (12 percent versus 10 percent), as well as a higher percentage of residents without access to a vehicle (17 percent versus 7 percent), making pedestrian or non-motorized access to parks particularly important. Compounded by the unsafe street conditions, West Athens-Westmont residents are severely limited in term of park access.

Studies by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and California State Parks report several trends and survey results which have implications for park and recreation planning in West Athens-Westmont.

- Recreation patterns will be greatly influenced by California’s rapidly increasing Latino population. When surveyed, many Latino residents indicated a desire for parks that feel safe, a preference for features and amenities that support day-long outings with extended family, and the need for parks nearby and in urban areas.³

**RECREATIONAL TRENDS AND STANDARDS
ESRI BUSINESS ANALYST**

ESRI’s Business Analyst software provides a breakdown of market potential for sports and leisure activities. This report presents the percentage of the adult population of an area that currently participates in these types of activities. Figure 4.2 shows high ranking activities in West Athens-Westmont and Los Angeles County that impact parks and recreation development.

2 California State Parks, 2005, Parks and Recreation Trends in California.
3 California Department of Parks and Recreation, December 2003, Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California – 2002: An Element of the California Outdoor Recreation Plan.

- Future park users will have a greater range of physical abilities, speak a wider array of languages, and represent more diversified age groups.
- Park proximity plays an important role in promoting higher levels of park use and physical activity, particularly for youth. Youth who reside close to parks and open space were found to be approximately two to three times more likely to take a walk within a two-day period than their counterparts that had no parks near their homes. Similarly, adults who reside within a half-mile of a park were found to exercise five or more times a week, more than those who reside further away from parks.
- Urban populations are typically associated with higher density, lower levels of vehicle ownership, and increased reliance on public transportation. As the urban population continues to increase over time, proximity to mass transportation should be considered when siting outdoor recreation areas.
- There are specific types of facilities that promote higher levels of physical activity than others. For example, park users engage in higher levels of physical activity in parks that have playgrounds, sports facilities, and trails, compared to those without these facilities. Walking is expected to continue to be the most popular activity for Californians; to support this, an expanded network of pedestrian facilities is needed to connect parks and green space.

FIGURE 4.3 ADULT RESPONSES TO USUAL ACTIVITIES ENGAGED AT PARKS

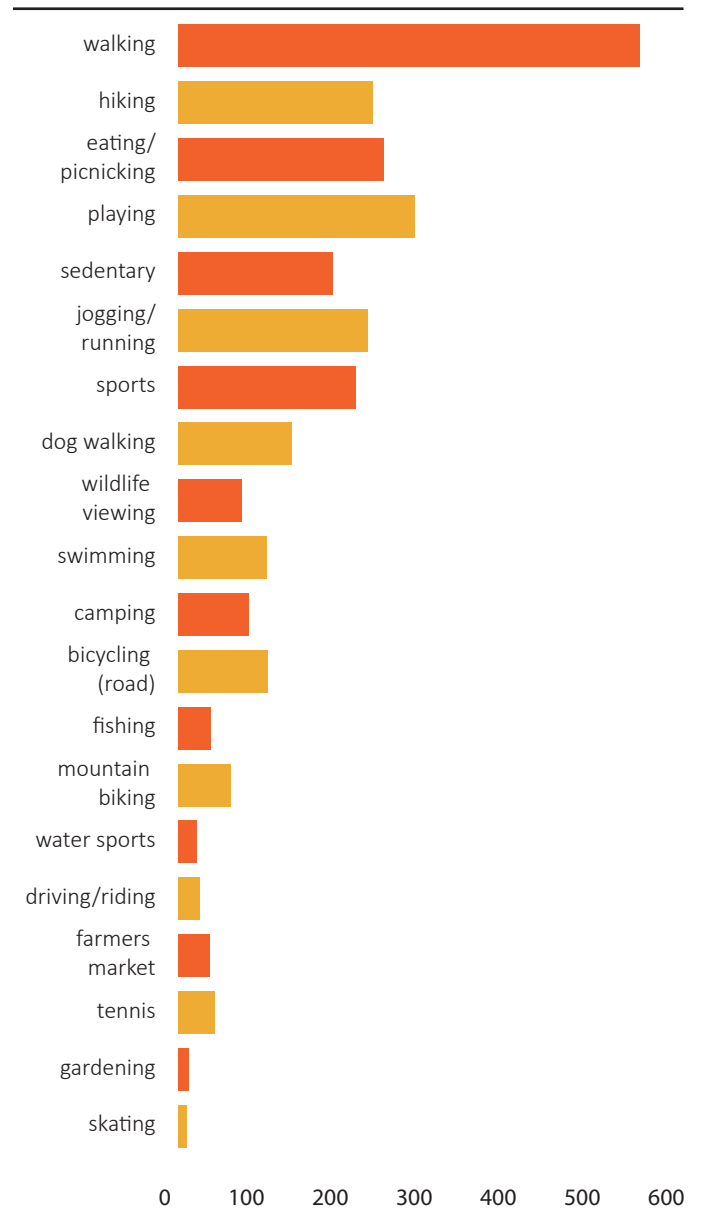
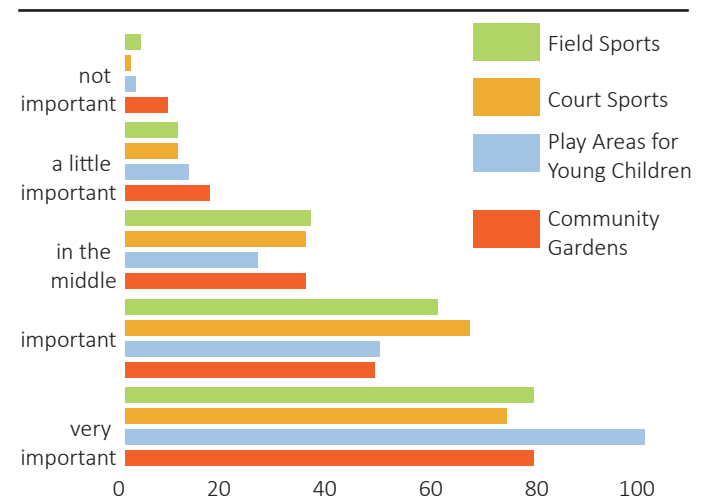


FIGURE 4.4 ADULT RESPONSES TO IMPORTANCE OF FACILITIES



CALIFORNIA STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN (SCORP)

California State Parks released a statewide assessment of recreation in September 2015. As part of this process, the state completed a Survey of Public Opinions and Attitude on Outdoor Recreation (SPOA) in California.⁴ Through phone interviews and mail or online questionnaires with adults and youth, California State Parks compiled information on how residents were using park facilities and what they would like to use them. Although many California State Parks are not located in urban environments and provide significantly different services than Los Angeles County parks, the results of this survey can be beneficial in determining public perception on park use.

Adult responses were categorized by region and 29 percent were from the Los Angeles region.⁵ Youth responses were for the state as a whole. In both the mail or online questionnaires and phone surveys, adults were asked what types of activities they participated in at parks. Figure 4.3 illustrates findings from the phone survey. Similar to other recreational trends in the

4 State of California. California State Parks. Natural Resources Agency. Survey on Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California 2012: Complete Findings. Sacramento, CA: California State Parks Office, 2014.

5 Responses are available at: <http://www.parks.ca.gov/SPOA>

FIGURE 4.5 AGE GROUPS OF YOUTH RESPONDENTS

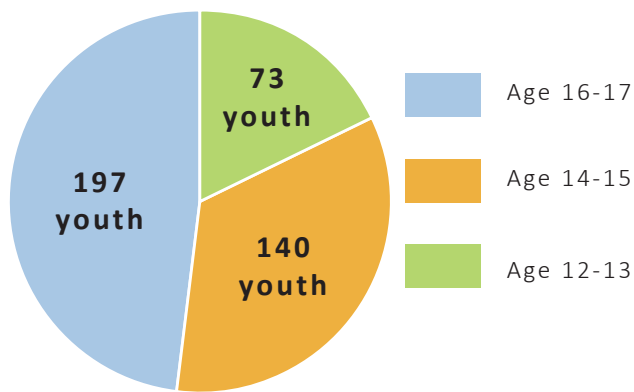
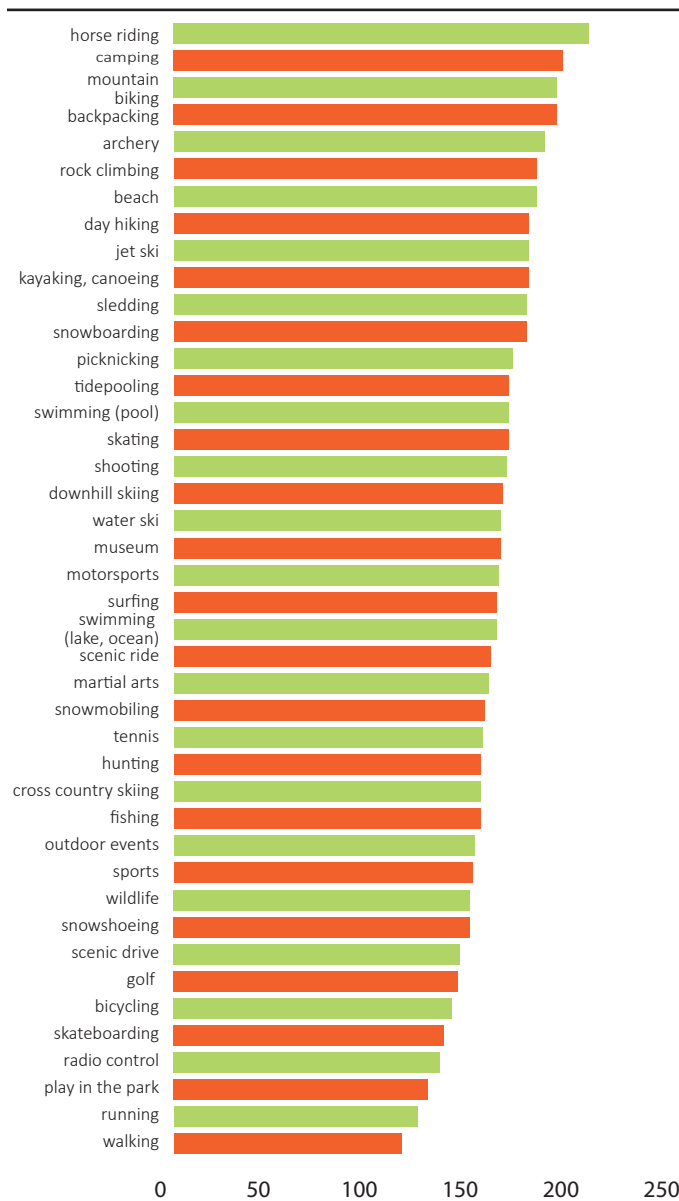


FIGURE 4.6 YOUTH RESPONSES TO WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO DO IN PARKS



state, walking or hiking is by far the most popular use of parks. Other highly common activities include eating/picnicking, playing, sedentary activities, jogging/running, sports, and dog walking.

In the phone survey for adults, respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of various recreation facilities at park spaces. Figure 4.4 presents some of these findings. The complete list includes outdoor areas and facilities, field sports, court sports, multipurpose buildings, play areas for young children, day youth camps, facilities for overnight camping, dog parks, swimming pools, skateboard parks, picnic sites, single use trails, multi-use trails, paved trails, RV facilities and sites, rustic lodging facilities, commercial visitor services, areas for dirt bikes and ATVs, areas for driving, wilderness areas, developed fishing areas, public hunting areas, boating facilities, water-side recreation facilities, and community gardens.

The survey engaged youth participants through online engagement and a youth-focused survey. In total, 410 youth were questioned about their use patterns in parks and preferences for facilities. Figure 4.5 illustrates the age groups that participated in the survey. In addition to responding about what they would like to do in parks (Figure 4.6), youth were asked about how they access parks, their thoughts about the purpose of parks and open space, why they spend time outdoors, and attitudes that they have about parks and nature.

The mail or online questionnaire for adults additionally asked respondents to evaluate the importance of various trail types, including paved trails, multi-use trails, and single-use trails. Most respondents indicated that all trail types were “important” to “very important.” Respondents could weigh the importance for all trail types but were not asked to provide a preference, although single-use trails and paved trails received slightly higher “very important” scores than multi-use trails. The results suggest that the public both values trails and would like to see different types of trails.

COMMUNITY INPUT

Major issues for West Athens-Westmont residents are safety and the general lack of green space and park facilities. The community recognizes that there is a need for more parks, but is highly concerned about the safety of these spaces. Many residents are particularly concerned that new parks will attract crime, as parks have been crime hot spots in the past. Community members worked extremely hard to improve safety conditions at and around Helen Keller Park, but are hesitant to believe that new parks would be as successful without extensive programming to activate them and keep people engaging in crime and unsafe behavior. Residents are specifically concerned about gang activity, “turf” issues, and theft. Residents feel that gang intervention strategies could work to counteract gang influence and also help to cultivate pride in the community and instill a feeling of ownership in the parks: that they belong to the people and not to gangs. Furthermore, residents stressed the importance of

understanding gang territories before deciding on a location or placement of park facilities. Some residents expressed a need to install extensive security lighting or have extra park patrol for some areas due to its sensitive location within disputed territory.

Regarding facilities, the community acknowledges that there is a significant lack of usable park space and green amenities. When Helen Keller Park closed for remediation, there were effectively no parks within the community boundary and many residents were concerned about the long process to reopen the rest of the park and the limited park alternatives to utilize during its closure. The opening of the community building at Helen Keller Park is considered to be a significant milestone in the return to uses at the park as many residents see these events as having a significantly positive influence on the area, which they want to continue.

Residents believe that parks and green space could give the community places to gather, exercise, and play. Specifically, residents often pointed to the need for more fitness and health opportunities in the community, such as walking tracks and workout stations. Some youth in the community pointed out the need for more diverse exercise opportunities, such as a skate park. Youth also felt that there needed to be more multi-use fields such as soccer, as well as basketball courts. Many residents shared the need for community gardens.

Some residents expressed distrust with local government due to extended delays in the Helen Keller Park renovation. Community-based organizations and key stakeholders are interested in helping to rebuild this relationship by working more closely to implement park and recreational improvements that respond more to the community's needs.

For purposes of the needs assessment, outreach responses relating to activity spaces or facilities needed were accumulated and synthesized to provide a picture of the types of green space and public amenities that residents would like to see in their community; these are shown in Table 4.1. Community input focused on four topics:

- **COMMUNITY-WIDE GREENING** includes strategies to approach greening for the entire community or high priority areas.
- **PARK ELEMENTS** include features that residents would like to see in park spaces or other places in the community.
- **ACTIVITIES/EVENTS** include suggestions for specific activities or events.
- **PARK MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY NEEDS** include suggestions for specific safety interventions or elements.

TABLE 4.1 COMMUNITY INPUT SUMMARY

Community-wide Greening

- Green spaces that people can be proud of
- More green spaces within walking distance
- Safer streets
- Scenic paths
- Trees and landscaping along streets

Park Elements

- Multi-use fields for sports
- Indoor recreation facility or gym
- Community gardens
- Exercise and fitness space
- Places to walk
- Skate parks
- Community Room
- Basketball courts
- Water parks
- Security lighting
- Play equipment for children
- Shaded areas to sit and play
- Event center

Activities/Events

- Day care in the park for siblings during programs
- Youth sports programs
- Music and dance programs
- Arts and cultural programs
- Senior focused programs
- Gardening programs

Park Management and Safety Needs

- More visible police presence
- Control stray dogs
- Deal with the homeless problem
- Understand gang activity and territories
- Improve lighting

PROGRAM FEEDBACK

Community residents indicated that there is a significant lack of programming in West Athens-Westmont. Residents would specifically like to see senior programs, as well as adult programming. Youth in the community expressed interest for more arts programming, in particular music, dance, and art. Since the community outreach events took place, the Community Center at Helen Keller Park has opened, and provides an arts and crafts program for seniors and dance classes for youth. Many residents felt that community gardens would be a great amenity and that a beginner's gardening program would be helpful for those who are new to growing food. The outreach was completed before the West Athens Victory Garden opened, which may help to accommodate this need.

SUMMARY OF FACILITY NEEDS

Facilities help define a park or recreational space. The following is a summary of the facilities that West Athens-Westmont residents want to see in their parks and recreational spaces, as well as facilities that are currently missing or could add to the overall sustainability of Helen Keller Park, Chester Washington Golf Course, and potential future parks.

Generally, West Athens-Westmont needs more parkland. Specific facilities needed are:

1. Safe Facilities and Safe Corridors

West Athens-Westmont residents need to be confident that they will be safe visiting and traveling to parks in their community. Safe places are well supervised, well maintained, and well lit. Safe routes are pedestrian friendly, free of violence, and easy to travel. All new projects in West Athens-Westmont should include strategies to improve community safety and avoid creating unsafe conditions.



2. Indoor Recreation Facility/ Gymnasium

There are currently no public indoor recreation facilities in West Athens-Westmont. To provide space for indoor programming and sports, the community needs an indoor facility.



3. New Field Space and Sports Courts

To accommodate more sports activities and programming, West Athens-Westmont needs additional field space and sports courts.



4. Exercise Facilities and Opportunities to Walk

West Athens-Westmont residents would like to see more opportunities to exercise in their community. New facilities were integrated into the renovation of Helen Keller Park and additional exercise facilities could be provided throughout the community to provide additional opportunities to stay healthy. This could include new walking and running paths, exercise equipment, or programs for adults and youth.



5. Peaceful Places and Spaces for Stress Relief

Residents of West Athens-Westmont are more likely to suffer from high levels of stress due to high levels of crime in the area. In partnership with crime reduction strategies, parks and green amenities can help to mitigate the psychological and physiological impacts of stress. Creating a natural environment where people can view plants, wildlife, and natural processes can have a calming impact on park users. Other relaxing features such as water elements and fragrant landscaping could be beneficial in these spaces.



6. Play Spaces, Tot Lots, and Spaces for Teens

Approximately 9 percent of West Athens-Westmont's population is under five years of age and approximately 29 percent is under eighteen. Safe places to play within close proximity to homes is a popular idea with community residents and an important attribute of a park system. In particular, facilities dedicated to teens are particularly valuable, as these spaces are safe places for older kids to spend time in a supervised environment.



7. Pool or Splash Pad

Swimming is a popular activity among West Athens-Westmont residents. The only public pool in the community is located at Helen Keller Park. Weingart YMCA on S. Vermont Avenue has an indoor pool, but it is primarily used for swimming for exercise. There are no splash pads or water parks in the community. These facilities provide relief from hot weather and can be an excellent form of exercise. Although more dedicated to play, splash pads can provide benefits in smaller space. To ensure that DPR meets other sustainability goals, these facilities will need to be constructed with attention to water conservation practices.



8. Public Art and Arts Programs

Youth in the community would like to see more opportunities to engage with arts in their community through public art installations and programs in dance and music. Public art can activate gathering spaces and help to build pride in a community space.



9. Senior Center

There are no senior centers in West Athens-Westmont and limited programs at Helen Keller Park. A senior center could provide space for senior activities.



10. Green Infrastructure

Trees and plants provide vital ecological services. Tree canopy coverage in West Athens-Westmont is low and other green infrastructure, such as rain gardens or bioswales, is uncommon. These amenities can filter stormwater and air particulates, provide habitat, and enhance residents connections with the natural world.



11. Energy Conservation and Production

Helen Keller Park does not produce any energy on-site through solar panels or other alternative means. New infrastructure could increase sustainability potential at parks and recreation spaces.



within residential communities. The common objective of all neighborhood parks is to bring people together to recreate and socialize close to home. Ease of access and walking distance uninterrupted by major roads and other physical barriers are important factors in locating neighborhood parks. Neighborhood parks should be well-connected to other public facilities, such as schools and libraries. Amenities for neighborhood parks can include informal open play areas, children’s play apparatus, picnic tables, picnic shelters, barbecues, practice sports fields, basketball, tennis and volleyball courts, public restrooms, information kiosks, recreation offices, and onsite parking.

- **POCKET PARKS** are less than three acres in size, and serve residential or business areas within a quarter mile radius or within walking distance. They are best used to meet limited or specialized recreational needs. Pocket parks can provide landscaped public use areas in industrial and commercial areas, scenic overlooks, linkages to a community pathway system, and urban infill sites in park poor communities. Pocket parks generally do not have onsite parking. Amenities for pocket parks can include both active and passive features, depending on the community’s setting and needs, such as children’s play apparatus, picnic areas, fountains, and seating areas. Due to the limited amenities included in pocket parks, they are typically not included in the service radius analysis.
- **PARK NODES** are small pieces of open space that serve as public destinations, connections, and community defining spaces. Nodes provide physical and visual breaks to the urban landscape and connect various spaces,

CONNECTING FACILITY NEEDS TO PARK TYPES

The Parks and Recreation Element from the Los Angeles County General Plan defines the County’s classification for parks and recreation facilities, outlined in Table 4.2. Following are descriptions of the parkland facilities from the General Plan:

- **COMMUNITY PARKS** are typically 10 to 20 acres, and serve several neighborhoods within a 1 to 2 mile radius of the park. Community parks that are located in residential neighborhoods serve both the needs of the community park service radius and neighborhood park service radius. Community parks provide opportunities for a wide variety of active and passive recreation activities. The amenities programmed into a community park are focused on meeting the needs of several neighborhoods or large sections of the community. They allow for group activities and recreational opportunities that may not be feasible in neighborhood parks. Amenities for community parks can include informal open play areas, children’s play apparatus, group picnic areas with overhead shelters, barbecues, lighted sports fields, basketball and tennis courts, public restrooms, concession buildings, maintenance buildings, onsite parking and information kiosks.
- **NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS** are typically 3 to 10 acres, and serve residents living within a half-mile radius of the park. Neighborhood parks provide space, programs, and recreation activities to create healthy social networks

TABLE 4.2 PARKLAND CLASSIFICATION

System	Facility	Suggested Size/Width
Local Park Types	Community Park	10-20 acres
	Neighborhood Park	3-10 acres
	Pocket Park	< 3 acres
	Park Node	¼ Acre or less
Regional Park Types	Community Regional Parks	20-100 acres
	Regional Park	>25 acres
	Special Use Facility	Varies
Trails	Type A Urban/Suburban	6’-10’ wide
	Type B Rural	4’-8’ wide
	Type C Primitive	2’ or less
	Type D Shared Pathway/Service Road	10’-12’
Other	Multi-Benefit Parks	Varies
	School Sites	Varies
	City Parks and Facilities	Varies
	Private Recreational Facility	Varies
	Greenways	Varies

such as waterways, streets, trails, and greenways. Park nodes are used as gathering and rest areas, and serve as opportunities for social and cultural exchange. Examples of park nodes include equestrian and hiking trail heads, bike rest stops and stations with lockers and repair areas, neighborhood focal points, and passive amenities, such as plazas, rest areas, playgrounds, landmarks, and public art installations.

- **COMMUNITY REGIONAL PARKS** are typically 20 to 100 acres, and have a service radius of 20 miles. Community regional parks protect and conserve natural resources, preserve open spaces, and provide recreational facilities that are not available in neighborhood or community parks. Amenities for community regional parks can include a jogging exercise course, informal open play areas, children’s play apparatus, group picnic areas with overhead shelters, barbecues, lighted sports fields, basketball courts and tennis courts, information kiosks, public restrooms, concession building, recreation offices, maintenance buildings, and onsite parking. Community regional parks may also have one or more of the following features: multiple sports facilities, aquatics center, fishing lake, community building and gymnasium, and scenic views and vistas.
- **REGIONAL PARKS** are typically greater than 100 acres in size, and have a service radius of 25 miles or more. They include unique areas such as lakes, wetlands, auditoriums, water bodies, and campgrounds, in addition to the active recreational facilities offered in community and community regional parks. Many of the recreation activities are associated with experiencing the natural environment. A regional park may also perform important ecological and environmental functions, including serving as wildlife habitats. The connection of these parks to natural areas is often vital to ensuring a healthy ecological system. Amenities for regional parks can include picnic areas, nature centers, trail systems, scenic drives, campgrounds, water areas for swimming, fishing and boating, and in some cases, sport fields.
- **SPECIAL USE FACILITIES** are generally single purpose facilities that serve greater regional recreational or cultural needs. One notable example is the Hollywood Bowl. Special use facilities require adequate public access and sufficient buffers to protect adjacent residential users and to insulate the park from commercial or industrial development. Special use facilities can meet both passive (e.g., historic and cultural facilities, natural areas, habitat preservation areas, arboreta and botanical gardens, and nature centers) and active (e.g., golf courses and driving ranges, equestrian centers, off-highway vehicle parks, water parks) needs within the region. There are no size criteria or service radius areas associated with special use facilities.
- **MULTI-BENEFIT PARKS** and open spaces are created through collaborative efforts among city, county, state, and federal agencies; private organizations; schools; private landowners; and industries. These parks are characterized as having more than one function and contributing to multiple program goals. There are a number of applications of multi-benefit parks, including: utility corridors and flood protection basins that can serve as areas for active or passive recreation; school sites located adjacent to parks that can share facilities, such as parking and park amenities; watershed areas that can protect critical wildlife habitats, preserve open space, provide trails for recreation, and contribute to water conservation objectives; and water districts, where trails can be located adjacent to flood protection channels and trailhead parks.
- **SCHOOL SITES.** The County works with school districts to organize, promote, and conduct joint recreational and educational programs. These community recreation agreements are a form of joint use agreement where either a school or park facility may be put to some recreational use by the other party in exchange for some facility improvement and/or maintenance. A park does not have to be adjacent to a school (i.e., share a common boundary) for an agreement to be viable.
- **CITY PARKS AND FACILITIES** that are located close to the borders of the unincorporated areas are enjoyed by city and County residents alike. Similarly, local County parks that are located within or close to the borders of cities provide recreational amenities for both populations. This overlap in local park service radius is an important factor to consider in the placement of new local County parks.
- **PRIVATE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES** play an important role in meeting recreational needs. The network of private recreational facilities consists of churches, health and fitness clubs, and other organizations that offer a variety of programs and facilities. This Plan does not include an inventory of private recreational facilities. Since the County does not control, maintain, or program private recreational facilities, these resources are not credited toward the County’s acreage goals for public parks.
- **GREENWAYS** provide a linear area along natural corridors, and often follow features such as rivers, man-made waterways, drainage channels, and utility easements. Greenways can accommodate various modes of uninterrupted pedestrian travel on pathways, including walking, jogging, and bicycling, and can include recreation areas and natural landscape features.

Considering the needs identified through this process, Table 4.3 demonstrates which types of parklands are needed in West Athens-Westmont. In addition to the parkland classification types, the table also includes existing park improvements, as some needs can be met within existing facilities.

TABLE 4.3 TYPES OF PARKLAND TO MEET NEED

		Improvements to Helen Keller Park	Community Parks	Neighborhood Parks	Pocket Parks	Park Nodes	Trails	Multi-Benefit Parks	School Sites	City Parks and Facilities	Private Facilities	Greenways
Safe Facilities and Safe Corridors		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Indoor Recreation Facility/ Gymnasium			●	●					●		●	
New Field Space and Sports Courts			●	●								
Exercise Facilities and Opportunities to Walk		●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●
Peaceful Places and Spaces for Stress Relief		●	●	●	●	●	●	●				●
Play Spaces, Tot Lots, and Spaces for Teens			●	●	●	●	●		●			●
Pool or Splash Pad			●	●	●*	●*						
Public Art and Arts Programs		●	●	●	●	●	●		●			●
Senior Center			●	●							●	
Green Infrastructure		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Energy Conservation and Production		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

* Pocket parks and park nodes are likely too small to accommodate pools but could include splash pad or water play feature

SPATIAL ANALYSIS

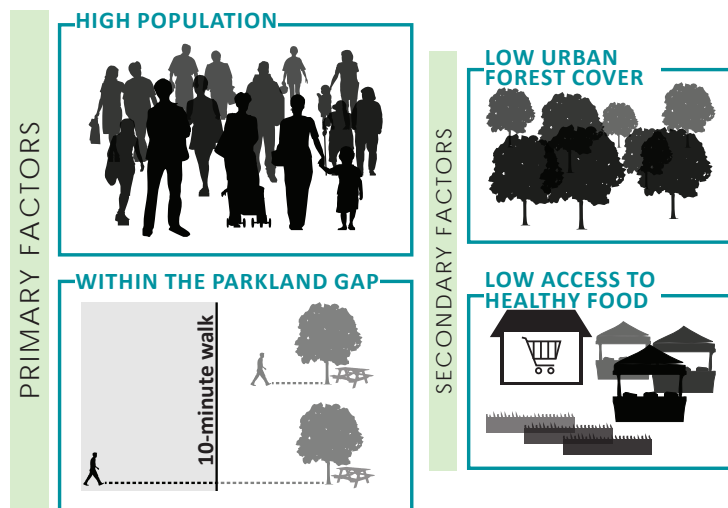
The spatial need analysis takes into account all land within West Athens-Westmont and identifies those areas with park development needs ranked from highest to lowest. These need areas were derived by calculating multiple factors within proximity of each land unit. A one-acre hexagon grid was used to capture all spatial relationships across the community. An example of this methodology for one grid cell can be found in Appendix D.

Population is the highest weighted factor for determining spatial park need in West Athens-Westmont. Population was calculated in two ways in order to best capture the need of each area. First, total population in West Athens-Westmont was summed for areas within one-half-mile of each grid cell. Second, unserved population residing in the parkland gap areas in West Athens-Westmont was calculated. Parkland gap areas are the areas of the community that are not within a 10-minute walk of a park. This methodology utilizes the existing street network to calculate walking distance and takes into account any barriers to reaching the park, such as impassable freeway crossings or dead end streets.

Ranking was determined using ArcGIS 10.3 to create five equally distributed ranking categories for both population measures. These categories were given rankings from 2 to 10, with 2 representing areas with the least population and 10 representing areas with the most population. This ranking was applied to each grid cell for both measures.

Healthy food access and urban forest cover were also factored into the park needs equation. Access to healthy food was similarly calculated but given less weight relative to other factors. If the grid cell has access to a full service grocery store or farmers market it received a ranking of 0, if it does not have access it received a ranking of 2.

FIGURE 4.7 SPATIAL FACTORS THAT DETERMINE AREAS OF HIGH PARKLAND NEED?



For urban forest cover, the percent of tree canopy coverage was calculated within one-quarter mile of each grid cell. A ranking value of 1 to 4 was given to each cell based on the percent of canopy coverage, with 1 representing areas with the most tree cover and 4 representing areas with the least.

The final need value was calculated by summing Total Population Rank, Total Unserved Population Rank, Healthy Food Access Rank, and Urban Forest Cover Rank. Higher values indicate higher need. Figure 4.8 shows the map resulting when the methodology is applied to the entire study area. Park need is displayed as a gradient of orange with the areas of the highest need displaying the darkest color.

PARKLAND OPPORTUNITIES

A major factor limiting new park development in urban areas is the ability to acquire new land. There are limited opportunities in West Athens-Westmont available for new park development. Following is a summary of the opportunity types in West Athens-Westmont. Figure 4.9 illustrates these potential opportunity types.

VACANT LAND OR BUILDINGS

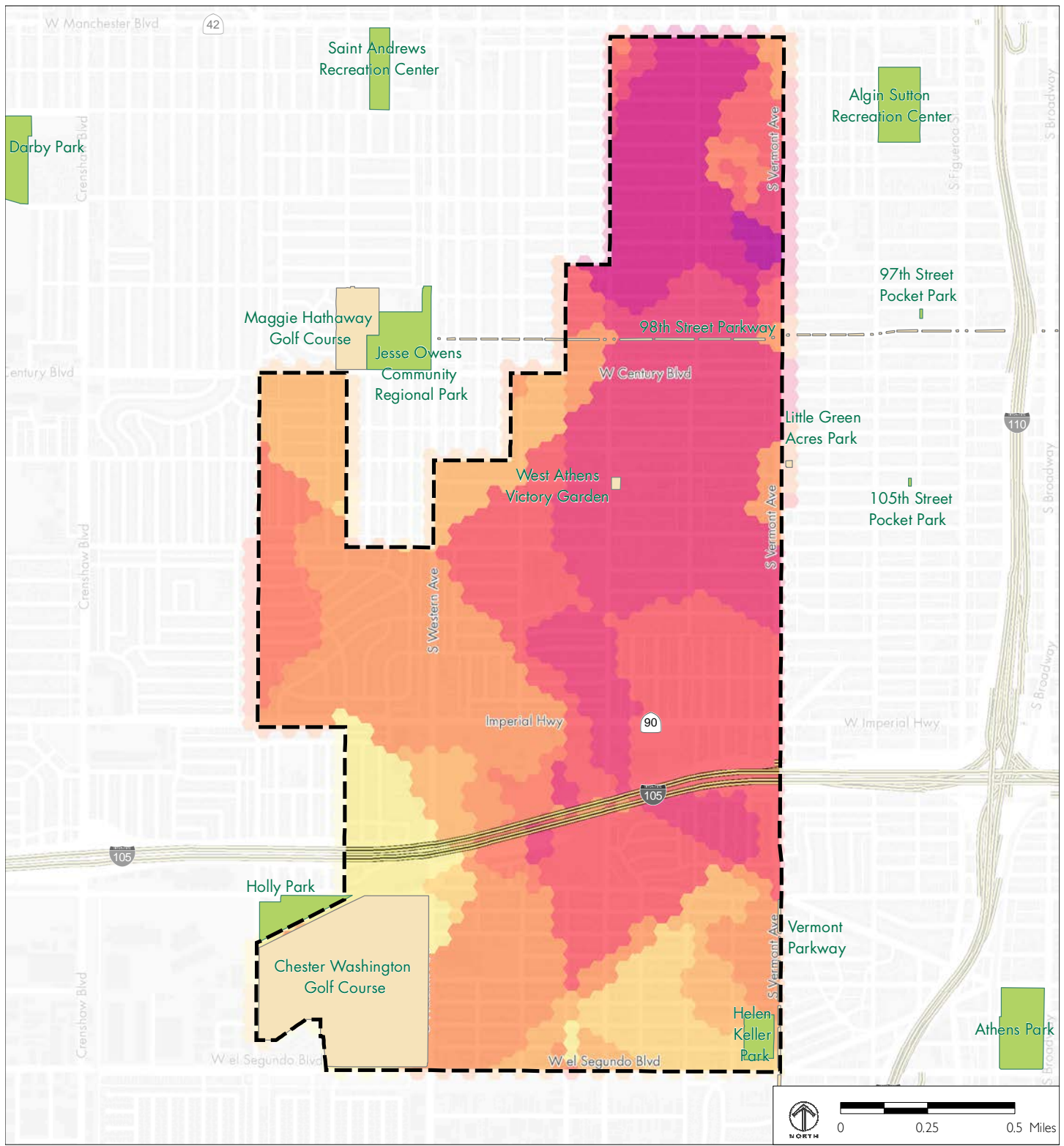
The Los Angeles County Assessors Office classifies vacant land on assessment roles. These sites, along with sites and buildings identified as vacant by the community, are shown in Figure 4.9. There are few large sites in West Athens-Westmont and all of the largest sites are near the freeway. Most of the vacant sites are very small parcels, each with an area less than half an acre. Corner lots are more desirable for park development than sites located on the interior of blocks, as these sites are easier to access and patrol for law enforcement. Approximately 30 percent of the vacant lands are located on corners.

Many of the vacant lands are located along major commercial corridors, including S. Vermont Avenue, S. Normandie Avenue, El Segundo Boulevard, and Imperial Highway. Transforming these lots into green space could have a dramatic effect on these corridors as it could help to improve the perception of vacancy along these streets. Some of the parcels identified as vacant are used as parking lots, vehicle storage, or car sales. Although not truly “vacant,” an abundance of these types of lots in an area can create a sense of underutilization or inactivity and they could be considered an opportunity for conversion to green space.

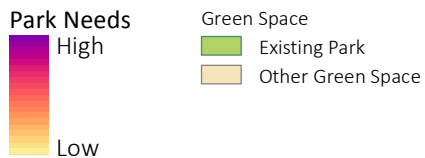
SCHOOL SITES

There are three public elementary schools, one public middle school, one public high school, two private elementary schools, four private preschools, and one charter high school in West Athens-Westmont. Additionally, Los Angeles Southwest College has a large campus in Westmont just north of the 105 Freeway. There are currently no joint use agreements with any schools in the community, although residents noted that they use the walking track at Southwest College to exercise. Washington High School has a large football stadium with a

FIGURE 4.8 WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT SPATIAL NEEDS MAP



Source: Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, 2013, PlaceWorks, 2015.



NEEDS ASSESSMENT

walking track, a baseball field, and a softball field. The campus is typically closed to the public after school hours due to safety concerns, which may pose an issue for joint-use at this school in the future. West Athens Elementary School and Henry Clay Middle School both have multipurpose fields that could benefit from renovation that could potentially be completed through a joint-use agreement.

Staff and administration from Woodcrest Elementary School in Westmont are very engaged in community development and host community events. During outreach events, residents expressed interest in joint-use at the school, which currently only offers a blacktop play area for students. In 2015, the school partnered with The Kitchen Community to install a “Learning Garden” on their campus as a way to have students learn about growing food and interact with plants.

PUBLIC AGENCY LANDS

Various public agencies, including the Sheriff, Los Angeles County Department of Social Services (DPSS), DPW, and the State of California, own property in West Athens-Westmont that are either entirely or partially underutilized. Many of these properties are located near the 105 Freeway or along the steep embankment to the Freeway, making them potentially most useful for green infrastructure, such as tree planting to filter particulates. A large property near Southwest College could potentially provide space for a park in Westmont. These sites are near the Sheriff’s office, making them easily patrolled by law enforcement. These spaces could need to include air quality mitigation if used for any recreational uses since they are close to the freeway. Park development of these sites could require partnership with the Department of Public Health to ensure that comprehensive mitigation measures are taken.

The Sheriff also manages two Youth Activity League (YAL) program centers in West Athens-Westmont. The Irma Youth Center on S. Vermont Avenue has limited outdoor amenities, including a small futsal court. Potential partnership with YAL could expand park amenities for youth at the center and provide urban greening benefits: most of the site is currently paved and introducing trees and impervious materials could reduce stormwater runoff and provide shade. Similarly, the South Los Angeles Station on Imperial Highway does not have outdoor facilities, but includes outdoor space that could be used for meetings or classes.

Caltrans owns a detention basin adjacent to the 105 Freeway near the DPSS office in West Athens. This basin is located at the end of a dead-end residential street and may not be suitable for active park recreation; however, modifications to the plantings could provide a more robust wildlife habitat and potential environmental education facility.

TABLE 4.4 POTENTIAL ADDITIONS TO PARKLAND INVENTORY

Potential Parkland Opportunity Type	Parcels	Acres
Vacant Land or Buildings	111	23
Vacant Land or Buildings on Corner	32	18
School Sites*	13	138
College Campus	1	64
Public Agency	20	28
Utility Corridors and Sites	35	24
Rail Corridors*	22	24
Freeways	n/a	n/a
Sidewalks and Street Right-of-ways	n/a	n/a

*The acreage for schools and rail corridors include acreage to accommodate school buildings and rail lines, respectively.

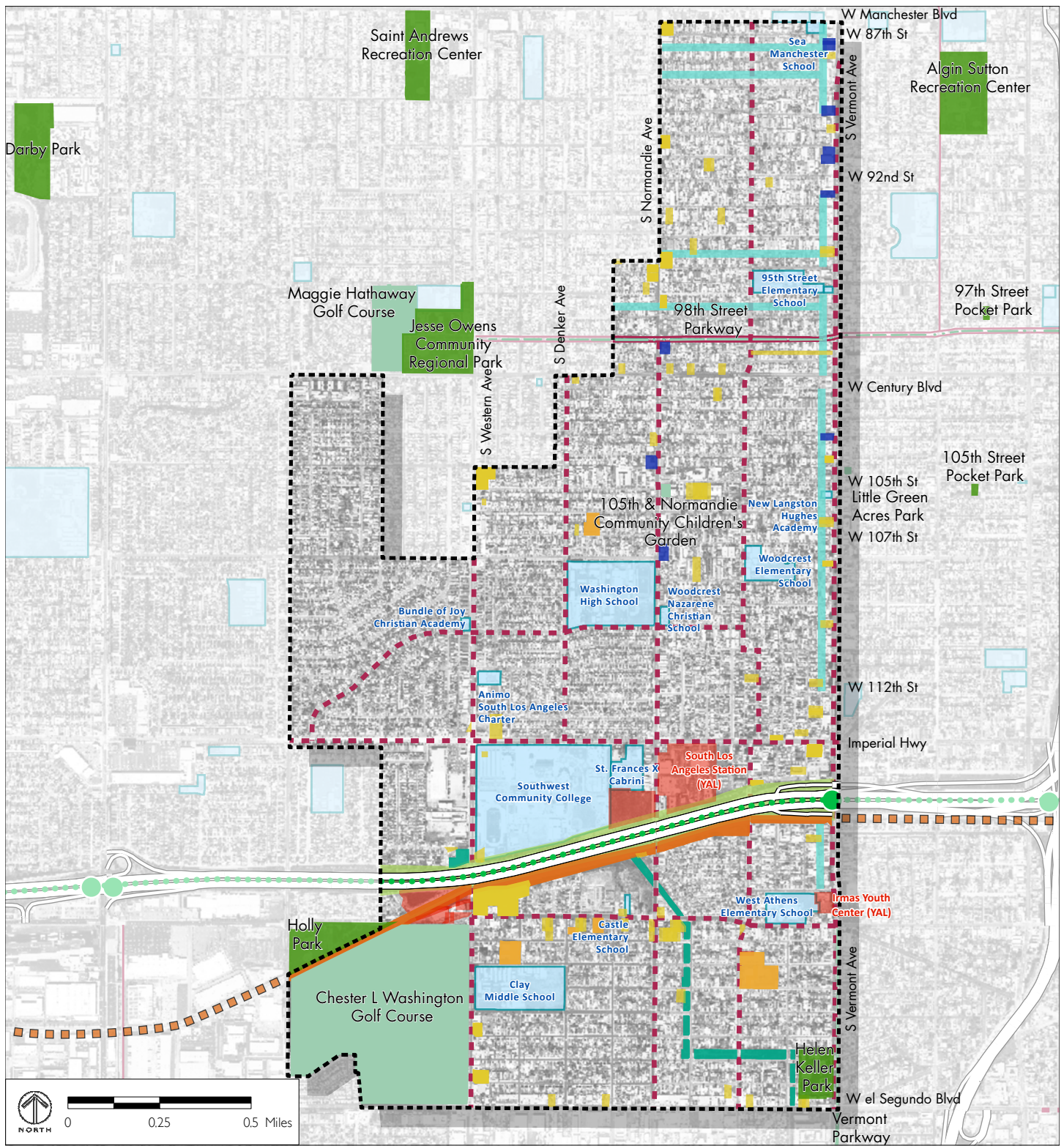
UTILITY PROPERTIES

Partnership with local utilities, such as power and water companies, can expand potential parkland opportunities, as typically these utility providers own properties dedicated to utility use that could also be used for greening or recreational benefit. Los Angeles City Department of Water and Power (DWP) owns a corridor in West Athens and a corridor in Westmont running along the median in 98th Street. Both corridors contain large towers with overhead lines. Other communities in Los Angeles County have partnered with DWP to create parklands along similar corridors. However, during community outreach, residents of West Athens specifically indicated that they were not interested in utilizing the corridor for this purpose and asked that it not be considered for a future park. The utility corridor along the median of 98th Street is planted with low trees. Since the corridor is so narrow, creating a usable park or trail would require expanding the median into the street.

Southern California Edison owns a substation in West Athens. A portion of the site contains high voltage equipment, which could limit potential park use, although with proper fencing and signage other sections of the site could potentially be transformed into a park.

Southern California Water Company owns a number of water tanks at sites throughout West Athens-Westmont. Some of the sites are entirely occupied with tanks, while other have more underutilized areas of open space around the tanks. These sites are also opportunities for drought-tolerant demonstration gardens or public art on the tanks.

FIGURE 4.9 POTENTIAL PARKLAND OPPORTUNITY TYPES



NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- Sources: Los Angeles County, 2013; Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Agency, 2012; PlaceWorks, 2015.
- West Athens-Westmont
 - Proposed Bike Routes
 - Vacant Land
 - Freeway Buffer
 - Existing Parks
 - Existing Bike Routes
 - Vacant Land on Corners
 - Rail Corridor
 - Existing Other Green Space
 - Green Line / Station
 - Vacant Building
 - Continuation out of Community
 - Schools
 - Public Agency Partnership
 - Power Line Corridor
 - Alleys
 - Utility Site

RAIL CORRIDORS

Rail lines create linear corridors and unique opportunities for creating community connections. Active rail corridors can be used for multi-use projects with adjacent trail features, while inactive rail lines could potentially be converted into pedestrian and cycling routes. Southern Pacific Rail currently has an active freight rail line that runs east to west adjacent to the 105 Freeway in West Athens. Like the 105 Freeway, the rail line is located below the surrounding community and separated from residential areas with a steep berm. This condition creates a canyon effect which could potentially be perceived as dangerous if the trail was not well lit and well supervised.

The trail corridor includes the active rail line and adjacent vacant land which could be used to create a multi-use trail. The rail corridor continues to the west through the City of Hawthorn and on to Manhattan Beach and the Pacific Ocean. The rail line continues to the west into Willowbrook and Watts and intersects with another rail corridor at the Watts Tower Arts Center.

FREEWAYS

The 105 Freeway divides West Athens and Westmont. The freeway is below grade and separated from the community with a steep berm. The berm and buffer area between the freeway and the community is inconsistently planted. This space could be enhanced with more tree planting that could more effectively filter air particulates and create a more aesthetically pleasing edge to the freeway.

An additional way to use freeway space to create parkland is the development of freeway cap that crosses above the freeway. This option is utilized in places where land is limited, although the cost of creating the cap is typically extremely high. The City of Los Angeles is currently exploring options to create a cap over freeways in Downtown Los Angeles to create a new park. This initiative may built momentum for new freeway cap parks in the Los Angeles region in the future.

SIDEWALKS, STREET RIGHT-OF-WAYS, AND ALLEYS

Public streets offer important opportunities for green infrastructure, such as street trees and stormwater retention facilities. Additionally, safe and comfortable sidewalks can significantly increase a resident's desire to walk in their community. Improvements could include wayfinding and sidewalk surface enhancement, as well as street furniture to promote community gathering, or exercise equipment to create fitness circuits within neighborhoods. Residents expressed interest in integrating public art into the community and street right-of-ways can also provide space for this use.

The Los Angeles County Bicycle Master Plan serves as a guide for improving bicycle connectivity. There are planned bikeways along the north-south corridors of Western Avenue, Denker Avenue, S. Normandie Avenue, Budlong Avenue, and S.

Vermont Avenue; and along the east-west corridors of Imperial Highway and 120th Street. DPW is additionally planning to create "bike boulevards" along Longrin Street and 110th Street. In addition to bicycle infrastructure along these routes, there could be enhancements to improve the overall functionality of the street network.

There are a number of alleys in Westmont that run behind residential and commercial properties. There are initiatives in Los Angeles to transform these spaces into green corridors.⁶ Although these could potentially be opportunities in the future, existing crime levels, utility maintenance needs, and the limited supervision that is possible within alleys may make them infeasible for parkland in the near future.

EVALUATION

To determine which sites could have the highest potential for parkland development, vacant and underutilized parcels were analyzed for their feasibility to become new green spaces. These spaces were scored based on their potential for meeting needs in terms of location and parkland type. Each site was evaluated based on nine criteria including:

PARKLAND GAP. Sites that are located within the high spatial need area were prioritized as opportunities to provide walkable parkland to residents who do not currently have green space near their residence.

POPULATION. Parts of West Athens-Westmont are more populated than others. Sites in denser areas were prioritized over areas that were less dense, in order to serve a greater population.

SIZE. Larger sites were prioritized over smaller ones based on the anticipated uses for the sites.

OWNERSHIP. Sites owned by public agencies were generally considered more desirable than privately owned sites due to the increased ease of acquiring these sites for park use.

VACANCY. Sites that were identified as vacant or underutilized were prioritized over ones with non-vacant land uses.

TRANSIT. Sites located in areas of high public transit ridership were considered more desirable than ones where public transit ridership was low.

AIR QUALITY. Sites outside of the 500-foot buffer from freeways were more desirable than ones inside the buffer area, although sites within the buffer area were considered for urban forestry or air quality improvement projects.

PROXIMITY TO SCHOOLS. Sites in closer proximity to schools were prioritized over ones that were farther away from schools.

PARCEL AGGREGATION. Some sites were composed of a number of adjacent lots. Sites composed of fewer parcels were prioritized over ones that were composed of many parcels.

6 "Green Alleys." Trust for Public Land. Web. 11 Sept. 2015. <<https://www.tpl.org/green-alleys>>.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The sites with the highest potential and the sites selected by the community were visited and further analyzed through research on ownership and historic uses. The resulting Potential Parkland Opportunities Map, Figure 4.11, shows the recommended sites for park or trail development in West Athens-Westmont in the future. The map is accompanied by Tables 4.5 and 4.6, which summarizes site conditions and identifies the type of trail or parkland that could be created.

Sites were ranked using the same evaluation criteria above; however, additional preference was given to projects that could potentially be implemented in the short term, as well as those that could meet an identified facility need regardless of its location in the neighborhood. Sites were categorized as high, medium, or low priority. Potential uses at these sites are described more in depth in Chapter Five.

Major factors impacting final prioritization included:

- **NEED.** Sites located in areas with the highest park need were prioritized over sites near existing facilities, as well as sites that could provide the facility needs identified earlier in this chapter.
- **SIZE.** Larger sites are preferred due to their ability to provide more green space resources. Even though the majority of the opportunity sites in West Athens-Westmont fit within the category of pocket parks, larger sites were still prioritized.
- **TIMING.** Sites that could be developed sooner were prioritized over sites that had impediments to development, such as site contamination, existing structures, or use restrictions.
- **OWNERSHIP.** Sites owned by a public agency or utility company were prioritized over privately owned sites. Sites owned by a Los Angeles County agency were prioritized above all other sites.

FIGURE 4.10 SITE SELECTION PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA

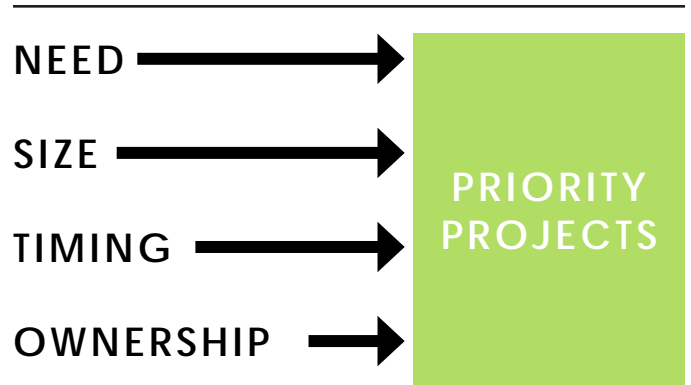
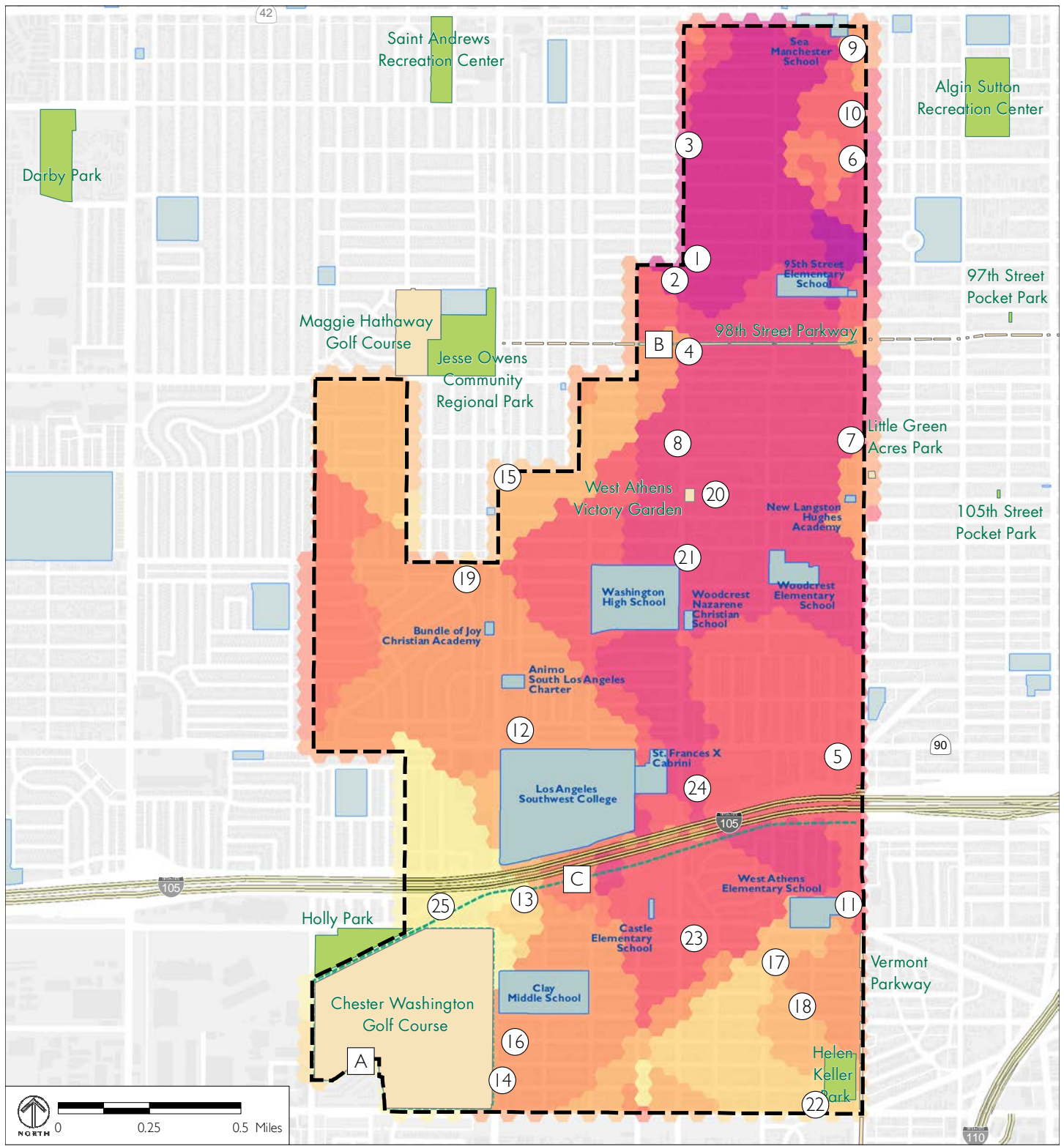


TABLE 4.5 SUMMARY OF WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT POTENTIAL TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES

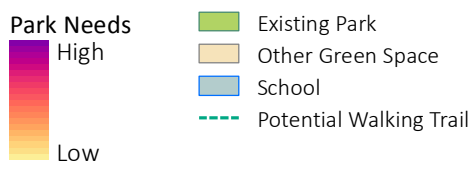
Priority Level	Trail	Publicly Owned	Privately Owned	Length (miles)	Type A Urban/ Suburban	Type B Rural	Type C Primitive	Type D Shared Pathway/ Service Road
High	A	●		1.9	●			
	B	●		0.6*	●			
Low	C		●	1.6*	●			

* Trails B and C continue beyond the West Athens-Westmont boundary. The length shown above is for the section of the trail within the community.

FIGURE 4.11 WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT POTENTIAL PARKLAND OPPORTUNITIES MAP



NEEDS ASSESSMENT



Source: Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, 2013, PlaceWorks, 2015.

TABLE 4.6 SUMMARY OF WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT POTENTIAL PARKLAND OPPORTUNITIES

Priority Level	Site	Publicly Owned	Privately Owned	Size (acres)	Existing Parks Improvements	Community Parks	Neighborhood Parks	Pocket Parks	Park Nodes	Trails	Multi-Benefit Parks	School Sites	City Parks and Facilities	Private Facilities	Greenways
High	1		●	0.5				●							
	2		●	0.2					●						●
	3		●	0.3				●							
Medium	4		●	0.3				●							
	5		●	0.5				●							
	6		●	0.6				●							
	7		●	0.2					●						
	8		●	0.2					●						
	9		●	0.4				●							
	10		●	0.3				●							
	11	●		1.2										●	
	12		●	0.9				●							
	13		●	5.1			●								
Low	14		●	0.6				●							
	15		●	1				●							
	16		●	0.25					●						
	17	●		1*							●				
	18	●		2.2*							●				
	19		●	0.7										●	
	20	●		1.3				●							
	21		●	0.4				●							
	22		●	0.3	●			●							
	23		●	1.3				●							
	24	●		2.2				●							
	25	●		6			●								
	26	●		3							●				

* The area calculation for Sites 17 and 18 includes water tanks, which could not be usable for park space.

5 - VISION PLAN

Based on the needs assessment and parkland development opportunities in West Athens-Westmont, a community plan for new, near-term parkland development evolved. This chapter explores the vision and goals of the West Athens-Westmont Community Parks and Recreation Plan, a strategy for community-wide urban forest enhancement, and potential long-term benefits of implementing the projects identified here.

SAFE & GREEN

A parks and recreation strategy for expanding green space, public health, and safety in West Athens-Westmont

VISION AND GOALS

The green space vision and goals are driven by community needs and input. The theme of “Safe & Green” emphasizes the need for community green space within West Athens-Westmont that is safe and accessible for all residents. Residents recognize the severe lack of green space in their community but are cautious about developing new spaces due to safety concerns related to high crime rates and high levels of gang activity. This plan highlights opportunities for new parks and recreation facilities and integrates creative strategies for ensuring that these spaces remain safe and become valuable community assets.

Parks and urban greening should be ubiquitous throughout West Athens-Westmont. The intrinsic value of nature to human health cannot be underestimated. Research has shown the multiple benefits provided by close proximity to tree canopies and green open space, including reduced stress, improved attention span, decreased at-risk behavior among inner-city youth, and improved recovery from illness or injury. Therefore, increased green space for exercise and recreation, expanded walking trails, and the creation of a healthy urban forest, as described in this Plan, will improve the quality of life for West Athens-Westmont residents in multiple ways.

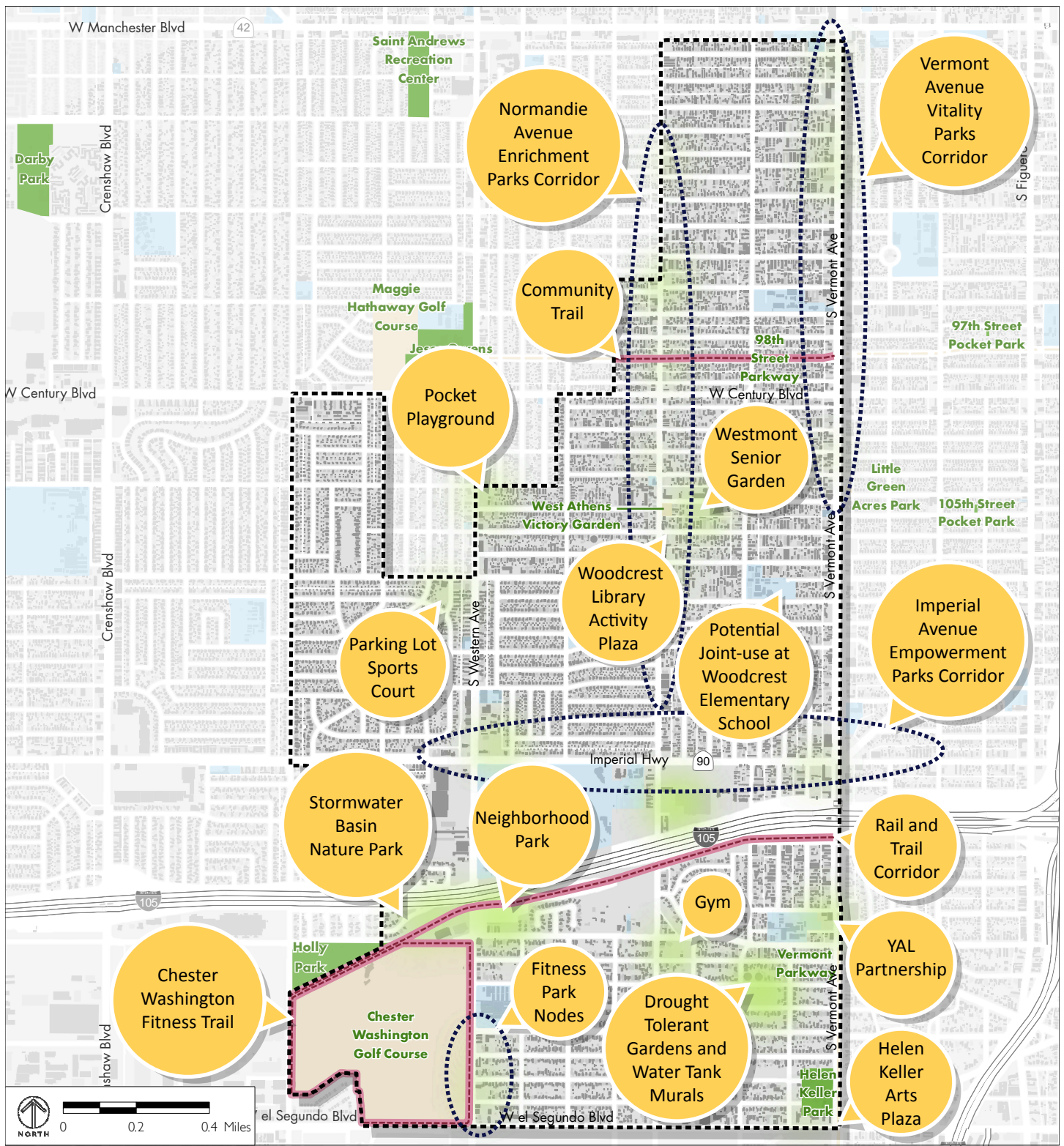
“This principle holds that a reconnection to the natural world is fundamental to human health, well-being, spirit, and survival.”

- Richard Louv, *The Nature Principle: Human Restoration and the End of Nature-Deficit Disorder*

GOALS

1. Increase overall green space and expand recreational opportunities for people of all ages, including youth and seniors.
2. Ensure that all parks and recreation facilities improve community safety and do not create new security issues.
3. Utilize park development as a catalyst for improving public health and safety community-wide.
4. Provide new places for exercise and safe places to walk.
5. Foster public participation in park projects and ensure that the community is included in decision-making processes.
6. Maintain and enhance West Athens-Westmont’s urban forest.
7. Focus on multi-benefit urban greening projects that optimize environmental services.

FIGURE 5.1 WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT GREEN VISION MAP



Source: Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, 2013, PlaceWorks, 2013.

- West Athens-Westmont
- Existing Parks
- Other Existing Green Space
- Schools
- Potential Parkland Opportunities
- Potential Trail Opportunities



*Play and Sports Facilities at Carver Park
Willowbrook , CA*



*Exercise Equipment at MLK Fitness Garden
Willowbrook, CA*



*Drought Tolerant but Colorful Planting
Dills Park, Paramount*

The Green Vision Map in Figure 5.1 shows a mix of park types, community trails, and green infrastructure projects. This range of sites could help to meet the variety of needs identified in Chapter Four. The plan accommodates the community’s desire for new parks, while considering the need for supervision and security within these new facilities. The Vision Map includes a number of new parklands that could work in tandem to create green network that activates larger areas and improves safety by increasing the overall number of “eyes on the street,” or people watching public space.

PARKLANDS

The Green Vision Map shows a variety of potential parkland types including:

- **NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS.** Larger vacant or underutilized parcels in Westmont-West Athens that could be developed as Neighborhood Parks, providing space for community events and sports programs. In particular, larger sites north of the 105 Freeway are valuable as they could provide park space to residents with the most need for green space. Park amenities at these sites could include multi-purpose fields, sports courts, playgrounds, pools, or skate parks, among others. These spaces could additionally accommodate indoor facilities, such as a gym or senior center.

- **POCKET PARKS / PARK NODES.** The Green Vision Map identifies potential pocket parks and park nodes throughout West Athens-Westmont and particularly along the major corridors of S. Normandie Avenue, S. Vermont Avenue, and Imperial Highway. Pocket parks throughout the community will increase local park coverage to residents and provide smaller spaces to exercise, to gather as a community, and for children to play. Typically, these spaces will have one central element, such as a playground, picnic area, or garden space. Following are some potential uses of pocket parks and park nodes in West Athens-Westmont:

- **Fitness and Health.** Parks can offer a variety of exercise and fitness amenities and West Athens-Westmont residents noted that this is significantly lacking in their community. Small fitness-based pocket parks can augment larger facilities and offer residents unprogrammed fitness opportunities, such as exercise stations.

These exercise parks are best sited near popular walking routes or along a planned community trail. These fitness stations can be utilized while people complete their walking circuits.

In addition to providing space for exercise, parks and green amenities, such as plants and trees, can provide psychological benefits in term of stress relief and cognitive improvements. Pocket parks can be particularly well-suited to provide small pieces of nature within an urban environment. Typically, these spaces would be

serene, quiet places to “get away,” however in West Athens-Westmont, it will be important to ensure that the space is not isolated and that people feel protected when they are visiting it. Utilizing naturalistic landscape patterns in active spaces and planting trees along park edges can achieve many of these benefits while retaining other parts of the space for active use. Utilizing green infrastructure, such as bioswales and raingardens can also integrate green, calming elements into the community.

West Athens-Westmont residents expressed a strong interest in community gardens and other means of bringing healthy food into the community. The Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust (LANLT) developed the West Athens Victory Garden on S. Normandie Avenue with community support. Partnership with LANLT and other garden advocacy groups to develop small lots for community gardens and orchards could help provide more resources in this area. These sites do not need to be located on heavily trafficked pedestrian routes as they are typically dependent on active gardeners as their primary users. However, in West Athens-Westmont where green space is so limited, placing community gardens within active corridors could be beneficial as it could provide residents the opportunity to see “green,” which can provide the psychological benefits described above.

- Creative Play Areas or Splash Pad.** About 32 percent of West Athens-Westmont households have children under 18, and 9 percent of the overall community population is under five years of age. Places to play are important recreational assets in the community. Small pocket playgrounds within close proximity to a child’s home can serve as a treasured destination, providing opportunity to spend time outside, play with other children, and exercise.

Pocket play areas could be integrated throughout the community. If located on busier streets, the play area should be set back from the road. The play area should emphasize dynamic play that can engage a child for numerous visits. Play areas should be shaded with trees or shade structures to provide comfortable play at all times of year. Adult fitness equipment could be integrated into the site design where feasible to provide caregivers with an opportunity to exercise while children play.

Helen Keller Park does not currently have a splash pad, nor are there any outdoor water parks in the community. These features are commonly associated with a pool; however, water features can also be integrated into smaller sites and create a dynamic and lively space during hot days. Due to concerns about water conservation, these facilities should be constructed with minimal water waste and should incorporate water reuse for irrigation whenever feasible.



Nature Play Area
Vista Hermosa Park, Los Angeles, CA
source: Frances Anderton; KCRW



Nature Play Area
El Sereno Arroyo Park, El Sereno
source: Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative



Artistic Play Equipment
Benito Juarez Park, Maywood, CA
source: Edison International on Trust for Public Land website



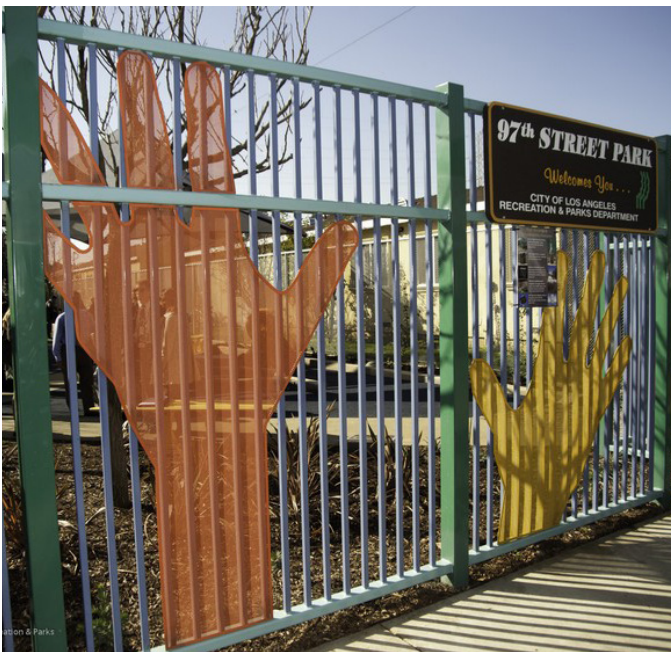
Splash Pad at Atlantic Avenue Park
East Los Angeles



Skate Plaza
Stoner Recreation Center, West Los Angeles, CA
source: Katherine Peach; Santa Monica Mirror



Public Art Plaza
El Sereno Arroyo Park, El Sereno
source: City Parks Alliance



Art Fence
97th Street Park, Los Angeles
source: City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, 50 Parks Initiative Gallery

- **Teen Space.** Safe space for teens is extremely important in areas with high levels of gang activity, as there is increased pressure to join gang culture as young people grow up. Many intervention groups working in South Central Los Angeles work to find alternative activities for the community’s teens as a method for avoiding gang participation. Park programs can be an important alternative activity. Unprogrammed park activities can also serve to be a positive alternative for teens. These could include active spaces like skate or bike parks, parkour facilities, or basketball courts, or more passive ones, such as recreation centers and supervised gathering plazas. Well-supervised pocket parks could be an excellent place for teens to “hang out” to gain some sense of autonomy while not engaging in genuinely dangerous behavior.

- **Arts Plazas.** Creative spaces help to define the unique quality of a community. Park and plazas serve as excellent venues for displaying public art. Additionally, performance art can activate a public space. Art plazas are best suited for sites along major corridors with high foot traffic where the art work is highly visible. Nodes along the major corridors of S. Normandie Avenue, S. Vermont Avenue, and Imperial Highway could become corridors of public art with installations along them. Additionally, Helen Keller Park is a community landmark for its events and programs, including its film events. There is currently a mural at the pool building, but no other artworks to distinguish the park as a community landmark. Underutilized areas of the park or nearby vacant lots could be converted into an arts plaza and gateway into Helen Keller Park, used to display artwork that reflects the community’s preferred aesthetic style and heritage.

Pocket parks and park nodes are important features in a park network as they create a community connection to the greater park system. Importantly, many of the elements outlined above could be combined in pocket park scenarios; however, this list illustrates the opportunities and needs specific to the West Athens-Westmont community.

- **RECREATION FACILITY.** West Athens-Westmont lacks an indoor recreation facility. There are some vacant or underutilized parcels within the community that could be used for this purpose. An indoor sports facility with a gym would allow for sports events and programs after dark. Although it would require staffing, this type of facility would be easier to monitor and supervise than outdoor space, potentially making it a safer place to exercise for community residents. A recreation facility could potentially be located in one of the larger neighborhood parks or be a stand-alone structure on a smaller lot.

- **JOINT USE AT LOCAL SCHOOLS.** There are currently no joint use agreements with schools in West Athens-Westmont. Community members would like to see joint-use at Woodcrest Elementary School in Westmont,

which is located in one of the highest need areas of the community. The school’s only usable outdoor space is a blacktop play area. Joint-use could be used to enhance this space with turf play areas, playground equipment, or landscape features. DPR could also partner with the school to improve overall environmental efficiency at the site. Potential upgrades could include installation of solar panels or smart water meters, conversion to drought-tolerant plant species, or utilization of Low Impact Design (LID) stormwater management techniques.

Additionally, there is a portion of underutilized land on the Los Angeles Southwest College campus that could potentially be used for new parkland. DPR does not have any joint-use agreements with higher education facilities; however this could serve as a prototype for colleges in other communities.

• **YOUTH ACTIVITY LEAGUE (YAL) PARTNERSHIP.**

Similarly to local schools, the two YAL facilities are active nodes in the community. Irmias Youth Center on S. Vermont Avenue has limited outdoor facilities and a large parking area. Recreation and urban greening amenities could be incorporated into the site to create a more dynamic and park-like space. Similarly, there are no outdoor facilities at the South Los Angeles Center on Imperial Highway, although there are areas of underutilized land that could be used for park facilities. Amenities at these sites would be focused on YAL programs, such as youth sports and enrichment, although these would also be important opportunities for urban greening and restorative park spaces. Due to their association with the Sheriff’s Department, these centers will potentially be considered protected space where people could visit and feel secure enough to relax.



*Indoor Exercise Class
Salazar Park, East Los Angeles, CA*



*Learning Garden
Woodcrest Elementary School
source: Woodcrest Elementary School Students Page; Los Angeles Unified School District*

- **ACTIVATED CORRIDORS.** As noted above in the discussion of potential new pocket park development in West Athens-Westmont, the Green Vision Map includes groups of pocket parks along three major corridors north of the 105 Freeway: S. Normandie Avenue, S. Vermont Avenue, and Imperial Highway. These streets are some of the most dangerous streets in Los Angeles County due to high crime levels and frequent gang-related incidents. Adding new pocket parks or other elements such as interpretive art that can unify the spaces and begin to address the need for green space and corridor cohesion. Creating parks along these corridors will not alleviate crime without additional intervention; however, activating these corridors and bringing people into the public realm will help to discourage illicit activity. Some intervention strategies for designing and managing safe parks are described below; however, in terms of planning these facilities, they could be considered one community asset with similar themes and a unified approach to design, supervision, maintenance, and programming:

- **Normandie Avenue Enrichment Parks.** Many of the facilities for teens and older youth are located along S. Normandie Avenue, including Washington High School and the South Los Angeles YAL Station. The parks along this corridor could be focused on creating a safe network of parks for this age demographic that offer active sports

CONNECTIONS AND CORRIDORS

With limited available land for new park development, the space between parks becomes an important opportunity for green infrastructure and park access improvements. Creating corridors of smaller parks can create a green network of facilities in which each individual park has greater benefit by being part of a larger system. Similarly, enhancement of city streets and the development of new trails can expand the pedestrian network and create new recreational options for residents. These types of improvements could also potentially improve the pedestrian experience to commercial centers and provide economic advantage to business owners.

Figure 5.2 illustrates key corridors and connections in West Athens-Westmont. These connections build off previous planning efforts and on-going infrastructure development projects.

and creative arts amenities. Partnership with local youth organizations to develop site designs and public art along this corridor would help to instill a sense of ownership with young people of the area. Additionally, there are community bike and skate shops along S. Normandie Avenue where youth informally congregate. Partnership with these small businesses to become informal overseers of public space could have valuable safety benefits.

- **Vermont Avenue Vitality Parks.** Informally labeled “Death Alley,”¹ this segment of S. Vermont Avenue has an extremely dangerous reputation that leaves many community members wary of using the street. Streetscape improvements by DPW and community gardens installed by the City of Los Angeles were recently constructed as a part of an initiative to transform the conditions of this difficult street. New pocket parks along this corridor could be added to this network and build on the momentum of transformation along this route. These parks should emphasize life and vitality. They should be designed for excellent supervision and well-patrolled. Although, as noted, new green space will not reduce violence on its own; however, there are benefits to increased green space in terms of reduced aggression and stress relief, which are extremely important in high crime areas.²
- **Imperial Empowerment Parks.** Imperial Highway is a wide street that is mostly dedicated to vehicular traffic; however, it holds many important community amenities, including Los Angeles Southwest College and the South Los Angeles YAL Station. Imperial Avenue is also one block from the Vermont/Athens Green Line Metro Station and is the closest commercial street to the station. Parks along this corridor could act as gateway parks for the community with design features that distinguish Westmont from other communities. Partnership with the college or other community organizations to develop these concepts could help to empower the community to create their own style of public space.

Partnership with DPW to do streetscape improvements would help to formalize these corridors as green networks. These streets could be developed a “green streets.” Green Streets include increased planting along a street, the addition of new street trees, and stormwater treatment basins. Green Street improvements can also include traffic calming elements such as bulb outs, improved crosswalks, and lane width reductions. With the exception of S. Vermont Avenue, where new street trees were recently added, tree canopy is extremely low along these corridors. Increasing shade and plants could improve public perception of the streets and have psychological benefits in terms of stress relief.

- **COMMUNITY TRAILS.** West Athens-Westmont residents want more places to walk safely in their community. The Green Vision Map includes three new trails: a fitness trail around Chester Washington Golf Course, a walking path along the utility corridor along 98th Street, and a multi-use trail along the Southern Pacific rail corridor.

The fitness trail around Chester Washington Golf Course could include a pedestrian-friendly surface material, such as rubber or decomposed granite, and could include fitness stations to expand exercise options along the trail. A potential concept for this trail is presented in Chapter Six.

The walking path along the corridor requires an expansion of the median to accommodate the trail and the utility towers that are located along the corridor. There is currently a bike lane along 98th Street. Potentially the roadway could be reconfigured to create a separated bicycle and pedestrian route along the median. Existing trees planted in the corridor could be augmented with additional low-growing trees and native vegetation to provide more robust habitat space for wildlife and opportunities to engage with nature for residents.

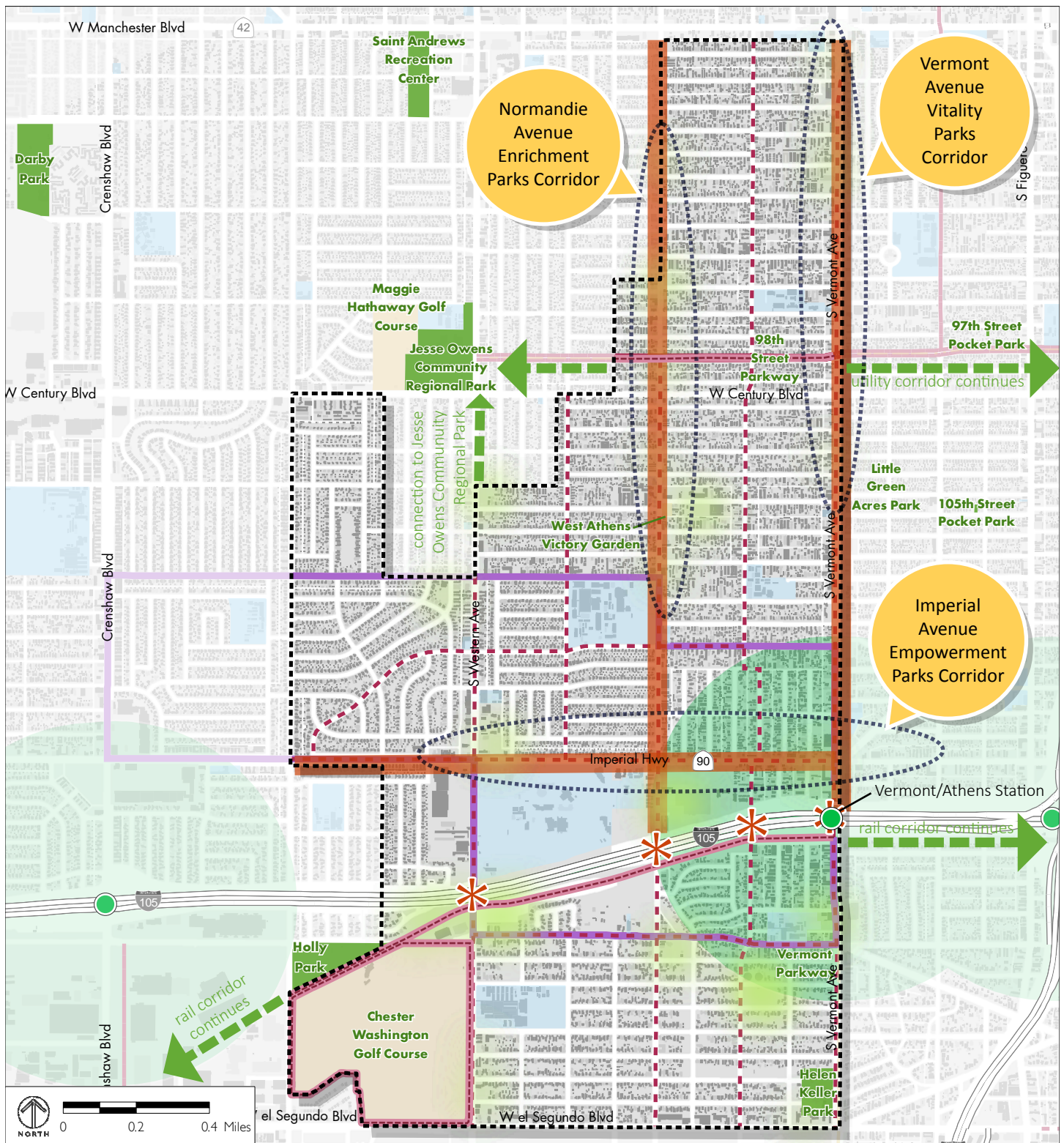
The trail along the Southern Pacific rail line could include a multi-use trail alongside the rail. The rail continues beyond the West Athens-Westmont boundary and could serve as a regional connection to the Pacific Ocean from eastern communities. Planting and landscaping would be necessary to create a greenway feel. Additionally, trail users must be separated from the active rail line with fencing.

- **FREEWAY CROSSINGS.** The 105 Freeway divides West Athens-Westmont. Major north-south streets include large overcrossings which are unpleasant pedestrian experiences. Partnership with DPW to improve these crossings, particularly the one at S. Vermont Avenue that passes the Vermont/Athens Green Line Metro Station, could improve pedestrian mobility within West Athens-Westmont.

1 Santa Cruz, Nicole, and Ken Schwencke. “South Vermont Avenue: L.A. County’s ‘Death Alley.’” *Homicide.latimes.com*. Los Angeles Times, 19 Jan. 2014. Web. 15 Sept. 2015. <<http://homicide.latimes.com/post/westmont-homicides/>>.

2 Kuo, Frances, and William Sullivan. “Aggression and Violence in the Inner City: Effects of Environment via Mental Fatigue.” *Environment and Behavior* 33, no. 4 (July 2001): 543–71.

FIGURE 5.2 CURRENT AND POTENTIAL FUTURE CORRIDORS AND CONNECTIONS



Source: Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, 2013, PlaceWorks, 2013.

- West Athens-Westmont
- Existing Parks
- Other Existing Open Space
- Schools
- The Link Shuttle
- Existing Bike Lanes
- - - Proposed Bike Lanes
- Metro Green Line
- Metro Green Line Station
- 1/4 Mile Buffer from Station
- Potential Parkland Opportunities
- - - Potential Trail Opportunities
- Activated Corridors
- * Freeway Crossing

VISION PLAN

SAFE PARKS AND SAFE COMMUNITIES

Existing crime levels and community concerns for public safety require that new park and recreation projects thoroughly consider community safety as part of the development and implementation process. Following are design strategies that can be incorporated into future site designs and programs and partnerships to ensure that spaces are active and well-supervised. These strategies should be considered, implemented, and enhanced for any new project in West Athens-Westmont.

DESIGN

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a crime prevention philosophy based on the theory that the proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, as well as an improvement in the quality of life. CPTED emphasizes understanding and changing the physical environment in an effort to reduce crime at particular locations.

DEFENSIBLE SPACE

CPTED is effective because of the concept of “defensible space.” This concept suggests that all space in the human environment is defensible; a guardian can take responsibility for the space and take action to defend it from non-legitimate, criminal, or unintended use. Alternately, space can be undefended; when there is no one who takes responsibility for the space, it is left exposed to criminal use.

CPTED works because criminals avoid committing crime in the presence of legitimate users. Properly defended property suggests to a criminal that a legitimate user (guardian) may be near to witness the crime and call the police. Undefended property communicates to the criminal that no one is watching and it is safe to commit a crime. Undefended places that are safe for criminal activity are unsafe for legitimate users. Alternately, places that are defended and safe for legitimate users cause the criminal to fear detection.

STRATEGIES

To help defend a location, there are four overlapping CPTED strategies that need to be employed: 1) Natural Surveillance, 2) Territorial Reinforcement, 3) Access Control, and 4) Maintenance. Each strategy employs a slightly different method of sending a clear message to criminals that a responsible person is nearby and criminal activity is not welcome. These strategies are not exclusive. They may be applied concurrently and will provide greater crime prevention potential as a result.

- **NATURAL SURVEILLANCE.** Natural surveillance is the design of an area that places physical features, activities, and people in locations that maximize the ability to see what is occurring in a given space.

Examples of territorial reinforcement are:

- *A properly trimmed and maintained landscaping, which allows visibility and use of appropriately scaled lighting, which highlights the pedestrian environment.*

- **TERRITORIAL REINFORCEMENT.** Territorial reinforcement is the design of an area that clearly defines its boundaries and ownership. All space can be defined as public, private, or semi-public/semi-private. The underlying principle of territorial reinforcement is that the transition between spaces should be clearly identifiable for both the user and others in the area. Territorial reinforcement allows legitimate users to develop a sense of ownership over a space and act as guardians against criminals and criminal acts.

Examples of territorial reinforcement are:

- *Having proper signage that communicates the ownership of the park, hours of entry, and various rules and regulations of its facility.*

- **ACCESS CONTROL.** Access control is the physical guidance of movement to and from a space by the placement of entrances, exits, fencing, landscaping, locks, and other barriers. This CPTED strategy not only limits and guides movement, but it also causes improper access to be noticed more readily.

Examples of access control are:

- *Well-marked pedestrian pathways near parking lots close to the park, which give direction to its users and create a safer path of travel by alerting drivers to the concentrated presence of pedestrians.*
- *Bollards placed near the entrance of a park to prevent vehicle entry but allow pedestrian entry.*

A component of access control is to deny access to a protected area. This is accomplished through physical or mechanical means, such as fences, gates, locks, or alarms. Access control has mistakenly been thought of as only denying access. Unfortunately, this mistake can result in the creation of a “fortress” mentality in communities that rely on gates and fences to deny access to parks completely. It is important to balance territorial reinforcement with proper access control so that parks do not become spaces where users feel “trapped” or fenced in from the rest of the community. During outreach events, community members acknowledged that fenced spaces do not inherently make them feel safer in the space.

- **MAINTENANCE.** Maintenance refers to the upkeep of an area. It demonstrates that someone cares about a space, is watching, and will defend the property against crime. A property near a park that is run-down or in disrepair is likely to attract non-legitimate activities. Routine maintenance or clean-up of a park can have a great deal of impact in making an area unattractive to offenders.

This strategy works because it is based on what is known as the “Broken Windows Theory.” The theory suggests that a neglected space will bring additional mistreatment and crime while a maintained space will bring proper treatment. This strategy can reduce fear of crime in a community by creating perceptions of responsibility and caring in neighborhoods.

Examples of maintenance are:

- *Ensuring that park amenities such as benches, playgrounds, and sports facilities are not broken. Also, it is important to ensure that sidewalks in the park and leading to the park are in good condition and not full of trash.*

PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Public agencies and community organizations throughout Los Angeles County and around the United States are implementing violence prevention programs to improve public safety and ensure the safe use of public spaces. Following are key initiatives that could be implemented in new projects.

GANG INTERVENTION GROUPS

There are many gang intervention programs that provide training, and support formerly gang-involved and previously incarcerated men and women. These programs help to redirect the lives of those who were involved in illicit, dangerous activities. Recidivism among youth offenders is extremely high, and these programs help to make sure these crimes are not repeated again. A Better LA is an umbrella organization that helps to organize gang intervention programs throughout Los Angeles and could serve as an important liaison for partnership opportunities. Some of these programs operating near or around West Athens-Westmont are highlighted below.

Reclaiming America’s Communities through Empowerment (R.A.C.E.) works in West Athens and was awarded the “Los Angeles Greater Peace Award,” for their gang intervention work which has contributed to a significant drop in murder rates in West Athens. The group focuses on youth sports, park safety programs, job training and placement, and girl and young women’s mentorship.

Advocates for Peace & Urban Unity (APUU) works on creating safe passage programs for children through the reduction of street violence. The group also offers before, during, and after school programs for at-risk youth and enrichment classes aimed at increasing peace and the reduction of violence in South Central Los Angeles.

Soledad Enrichment Action Inc. (SEA) is a non-profit organization that helps at-risk-youth, families, and communities in underserved areas in Los Angeles. SEA charter operates seventeen education centers, which helps enable high-risk individuals to earn their high school diploma. One of their schools is located in the northeast corner of West Athens-

Westmont on Manchester Avenue west of S. Vermont Avenue. SEA provides high school educational services as well as other support services. SEA was founded in 1972 by mothers in East Los Angeles who had lost their sons to gang violence.³

Homeboy Industries helps previously incarcerated men and women, and each year over 10,000 former gang members from Los Angeles are helped by the program. Full-time employment is offered for more than 200 men and women at a time through an 18-month program that offers job training. In addition to job training, Homeboy Industries provide trauma-informed therapy, education, tattoo removal, substance abuse treatment, and legal assistance and job placement services.⁴

Homies Unidos was founded to address the problems of violence and the internationalization of gangs. In the mid-1990’s, a group of youth, mostly gang members, came together in El Salvador to discuss ways to diminish violence and gang activity internationally. This group reached out to youth across the world, including Los Angeles, where the group has been active since 1997, predominately working in Central American communities. Homies Unidos provides parenting programs, job skills and education, and advocacy to gang at-risk and gang involved youth.⁵

Many gang intervention groups do not have formal meeting or office space. There is potential to partner with these groups and offer “clubhouses” in small parks. These partnerships could ensure that the space is monitored and protected for safe use.

SHERIFF YOUTH ACTIVITIES LEAGUE (YAL)

“The Sheriff’s team of deputies, civilian employees and volunteers help at-risk youth throughout the country to grow, be healthy and develop the necessary tools to become successful adults.”⁶ The Youth foundation has seven different programs which include 999 for kids, bear, share, star, start, Vida and YAL.

Program goals include teaching bicycle safety, providing educational supplies, teaching respect, educating youth on the dangers of drugs, gangs and violence, providing education to at-risk teens, and organizing youth activities leagues focused on homework help, and a safe haven.

3 “Holistic Intervention For High Risk Youth.” SEA Charter Home Page. Web. 10 Sept. 2015.< <http://www.seacharter.net/>>.

4 “About.” Homeboy Industries. Web. 10 Sept. 2015. < <http://www.homeboyindustries.org/>>

5 “Homies Unidos.” Homies Unidos RSS. Web. 10 Sept. 2015. < <http://homiesunidos.org/>>

6 “South Los Angeles YAL - Sheriff’s Youth Foundation.” Sheriff’s Youth Foundation. Web. 10 Sept. 2015. <<http://sheriffsyouthfoundation.org/programs/youth-activities-league/south-los-angeles-station/>>

TRAUMA GROUPS

Crime elevation strategies are integral to a safer community, but trauma programs and wellness programs are just as important. It is necessary to leverage existing city-wide efforts already engaged in health promotion work to include issues of violence and trauma. Framing violence as a public health issue rather than a social or criminal justice issue is important because a direct exposure to violence - either as a victim of violent crime or act of aggression is associated with many adverse health outcomes, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, psychological distress, increased anxiety, increased risk of suicide, and impact on cognitive functioning. Having programs that address the after-effects of violence will help communities heal and understand one another, and not be prompted to retaliate.

NIGHT-TIME PROGRAMMING

Programs and spaces that provide members a safe place to be at night have the potential of reducing at-risk behaviors by providing youth and families with recreational activities in their communities. Having programs, staff, and visitors who are involved and active at night in and around these parks deters criminal activity from taking place because there are more eyes watching the streets and more people are aware of their surroundings.

Parks after Dark (PAD) is a program run by the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, in partnership with the Department of Public Health. The Parks after Dark program has a focus on youth and families and offers surrounding communities extended park hours and activities on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings. These programs have the potential of reducing at-risk behaviors by providing youth and families with recreational activities in their communities. As a component of the County's Gang Violence Reduction Initiative, this program transforms areas that have been affected by gang activity into community centers that provide health resources in places where residents feel safe and welcome.



Soccer Game at Parks After Dark Event
source: Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

PAD has been successful at reducing violent crime. Serious violent crime in the communities surrounding the original three parks declined 40 percent during the summer months between 2009 and 2012. This compares to a 5 percent increase in serious and violent crime during the period in nearby communities with parks who did not have participants in the PAD program. Having programs, staff, and visitors who are involved and active at night in and around these parks, deters criminal activity from taking place because there are more eyes watching the streets and more people are aware of their surroundings.

COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT

Programs that address safety and provide jobs are not only benefiting the local economy, but also helping to ensure that safety is a priority. Several programs in other cities have been successful at increasing local economic activity as well as lowering perceptions of crime in many areas. While issues in West Athens-Westmont may be different than in other cities, it is important to look towards successful programs that have dealt with the lack of job opportunities, as well as the increased amount of crime.

Block by Block members, called ambassadors, are men and women who beautify and improve Oakland by providing critical services such as pressure washing, litter removal, and graffiti abatement. Many of these ambassadors are Oakland residents. These services result in increased economic activity, a lower perception of crime, and a greater sense of pride in the community. Crime is proven to decrease when people feel that the area is being monitored, and that there are more eyes on the street.⁷

Ready, Willing and Able is a program in New York City that has helped individuals enter the workforce and out of cycles of homelessness, crime and addiction. The program provides transitional work where trainees can earn \$8.95-\$9.70 an hour working in Community Improvement Projects and social enterprises, as well as housing, and food, case management, drug relapse prevention, life skills curriculums, occupational training, educational offerings, career development class, and job readiness skills. The program not only provides benefits to individuals who have struggled with homelessness, addiction, and crime, but also provides 170 miles of cleaned streets every day. Much like the Block by Block program, Ready Willing and Able's programs have resulted in increased economic activity and have lowered perceptions of crime in many areas of New York City.⁸

7 "Downtown Oakland Association (CBD) - SERVICES." Downtown Oakland Association (CBD) - SERVICES. Web. 10 Sept. 2015. <<http://downtownoakland.org/SERVICES>>

8 "Ready, Willing & Able | The Doe Fund." The Doe Fund. Web. 10 Sept. 2015. <<http://www.doe.org/rwa.cfm>>

CITIZEN TASK FORCE

While formal gang intervention programs and other programs focus on providing jobs, and empowering the community, there are other, informal ways of addressing safety issues. Local business owners can become an informal citizen taskforce that taken inventory of the park, and surrounding neighborhood around the park. Because they are more familiar with the community, they can offer better judgments of suspicious activities than outside members. Local homeowners can also be effective taskforce members as well. This type of taskforce does not necessarily need to be organized, but in order for it to work, citizens must have mutual trust, and respect, and be aware of disturbances in community patterns. In addition to providing informal park patrol, citizen task forces can provide event staffing, programming coordination, and clean-up of the park. These actions can help park space look more maintained and more supervised: key features in creating safe parks.

The BRITE Business Alliance, or Bayview Residents Improving their Environment, is comprised of a group of business owners in the Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood in San Francisco. These members' mission is to invigorate Bayview's commercial areas and strengthen economic opportunities in the area. BRITE is also concerned with ensuring safe and livable corridors and areas for residents to enjoy.⁹

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

Provide features that communities are proud of, feel safe, and honor those who have lost their lives to violence. Community identity is key for all aspects of a neighborhood, including parks. Providing features that commemorate innocent lives that were lost from violence would commemorate the importance of those lives, but also remind people that violence has an effect. Communities could vote on a particular feature, such as a memorial wall or other art feature.

CREATIVE STRATEGIES TO INCREASE ACCESS TO RECREATION

West Athens-Westmont's park and recreational needs are significantly greater than the space available in the community. Although the green corridors could help to meet some of the recreational needs and green the community, there will likely continue to be a need for additional recreational resources. In addition to new park and trail developments in West Athens-Westmont, DPR could expand their capacity in West Athens-Westmont by developing new initiatives to bring temporary recreational activities into the community.

- **POP-UP PARKS.** A “pop-up” park is a temporary park space that occupies a site for a period of time. Commercial parking lots or public streets could provide space for this type of project. Through an agreement with property owners or DPW, DPR could utilize these spaces for recreational activities, such as sports days, concerts, or farmer's markets, for a temporary amount of time with portable elements like mobile exercise stations and movable street furniture.
- **GREEN SPACE SHUTTLES.** Los Angeles County utilizes free and reduced-price shuttles to provide access to public spaces for residents without vehicles. In West Athens-Westmont, the Link connects people through the community. In other communities, the County provides shuttles to destinations outside of the community, such as the Beach Bus that shuttles residents of Altadena, Castaic, Charter Oak, Duarte, East Los Angeles, La Cañada Flintridge, La Crescenta, Lancaster, Palmdale, and Topanga Canyon to the beach in Santa Monica. DPR could potentially partner with DPW to expand this route to include pickup locations in West Athens-Westmont. Alternatively, routes to other recreational locations, such as the Santa Monica Mountains or the Hollywood Bowl, could be considered.



Bradley Avenue Plaza
Paicoma, Los Angeles, CA
source: People Street; photo by LADOT/Jim Simmons



Farmer's Market at Sunset Triangle Plaza
Silver Lake, Los Angeles, CA
source: People Street; photo by LADOT/Jim Simmons

9 “Britesf.” Britesf. Web. 10 Sept. 2015. < <http://creativewiz.wix.com/britesf> >

URBAN GREENING

Parks and trails serve the public not only as recreational amenities, but also provide valuable ecological services through the landscape elements and infrastructure they contain. These “green” features can significantly benefit urban areas by improving air and water quality, providing habitat areas for wildlife, and improving comfort levels for local residents. For example, trees in parks absorb carbon dioxide, pollutant gases, and filter out particulates. In addition to urban forestry, urban greening can include efficiency measures, such as energy and water use reductions, stormwater treatment, and transportation initiatives to increase walking and biking to reduce vehicular emissions and improve health.

It is important that parks serve as a model for urban greening in the community where they are located, utilizing efficient technologies, maximizing ecological potential, and advocating for sustainable actions community-wide. Helen Keller Park and Chester Washington Golf Course have good tree coverage and a substantial amount of permeable surfaces. However, to maximize benefits, additional measures could be implemented at County facilities, as well as in potential new parks and trails. Partnerships with other agencies, local non-profits, and residents could expand the greening potential for the community as a whole. Following are areas where change could be implemented to improve urban greening in West Athens-Westmont.

WATER

Water in California is valuable and limited. As of 2015, the State is in the fourth year of an extreme drought, which is considered to be one of the most severe in the last 30 years. Actions are being taken across the State to conserve and protect water resources. Local actions include both water conservation to prevent overuse, as well as water treatment and management to protect water quality.

WATER CONSERVATION

In April 2015, California Governor Jerry Brown declared a statewide State of Emergency due to severe drought conditions and issued an Executive Order requiring a 25 percent reduction in water use from 2013 water use levels through February 2016. The State Water Resources Control Board placed water providers in different tiers of water reduction based on existing water conservation strategies. West Athens-Westmont’s water is provided by the Southern California Water Company, which was placed in a tier that was mandated to reach a 25 percent reduction of 2013 levels.

WATER QUALITY

Limited water capacity, stormwater capture and aquifer recharge are important services. Furthermore, soil and plants filter pollutants out of stormwater, reducing the amount of polluted runoff into creeks and waterways. Such capture and treatment can be achieved through implementation of bioretention basins and swales.

AIR QUALITY

Greenhouse gas emissions in urban areas can have negative impacts on human health, including cancer and respiratory disease, and negative environmental impacts, such as increased heat island effect or plant growth stagnation. West Athens-Westmont is located within the South Coast Air Basin, which has some of the most polluted air in the nation. Pollutants typically come from two sources: ozone and particulate matter (PM). Ozone (or smog) is created by chemical reactions and sunlight. Pollutants like nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are called “ozone precursors.” They combine in the presence of hot, stagnant, sunny weather to create ozone (or smog). Ozone precursors in Los Angeles County come from cars, trucks, ships, buses, petroleum production, and waste disposal.

Parks and recreation facilities in West Athens-Westmont can affect air quality by reducing the need for vehicular access to these spaces, increasing tree canopy within the community to filter air pollutants, and maintaining healthy soil ecosystems.

ENERGY

Although significant progress has been made to increase renewable sources of energy, the majority of electricity in California comes from fossil fuels, with natural gas making up 44 percent of the total power supply.¹⁰ Energy needs at parks can be substantial, including lighting for sports fields, walkways, and indoor facilities; irrigation meters; heating and cooling systems; computer labs and technical equipment; as well as day-to-day use of electrical equipment by office and program staff.

In 2010, DPR initiated a pilot project to install solar panels at Obregon Park in East Los Angeles. The project reduced electricity consumption by 20 percent at the park and reduced carbon dioxide emissions by 40,000 pounds. Neither Helen Keller Park nor Chester Washington Golf Course produces energy on site through solar panels or other alternative means.

WILDLIFE AND HABITAT

Parks, green space, and other green infrastructure serve as sanctuaries for birds, animals, reptiles, amphibians and insects living within an urban area. These species add life to a green space and give residents the opportunity to engage with creatures outside of the human race. Continuous green spaces serve best for a habitat, as it allows species to move freely in a protected environment. This is particularly important in urban areas where there is limited green space and species can be trapped. For many species, these spaces do not need to be extremely large and small elements, such as street trees, and can provide valuable foraging and habitat resources.

10 2013 Total Electricity System Power. Energy Almanac. California Energy Commission. <http://energyalmanac.ca.gov/electricity/total_system_power.html>

Green connections within West Athens-Westmont can serve as both corridors for humans as well as urban wildlife. Modifications to the streets in West Athens-Westmont, including more native plants and more trees, can enhance habitat potential.

PUBLIC HEALTH

In addition to being beneficial for the environment, clean air and water benefits humans living nearby. Urban conditions, such as high levels of vehicle exhaust and low levels of trees and landscape, can be difficult on human respiratory and neurological systems and detrimental to psychological health. Parks and green infrastructure can help offset these negative physiological and psychological conditions.

Furthermore, people are more likely to exercise when there are safe places to do so near their homes. Increased exercise can help reduce or prevent obesity and related diseases. Additionally, exercise is important for cardiovascular health and can help counteract the impacts of stress on the body.

URBAN FORESTRY

The urban forest represents a significant component of urban greening and its quality and diversity has a direct effect on how the public perceives the environment of their community. Specifically, residents of West Athens-Westmont considered addressing the urban forest as an important phase in developing the Community Parks and Recreation Plan.

The vision for West Athens-Westmont's urban forest is to increase existing canopy coverage throughout the community by creating greener streets that encourage people to walk and exercise, establishing green buffers from adjacent industrial uses, and focusing on other multi-benefit greening opportunities. Within existing parks, the vision is to increase the canopy coverage while maintaining visibility and existing park uses, and to transition the park forest into one which provides optimal benefits for the community.

Realization of this vision will maximize environmental, social and economic benefits associated with the urban forest, thereby enhancing the quality of life and public health enjoyed by the West Athens-Westmont community. Potential benefits of the urban forest are identified below based on research by the United States Department of Agriculture and the Alliance for Community Trees.^{11 12}

11 Southern Center for Forest Benefits and Benefits of Urban Trees, USDA Tree Benefits brochure. <<http://www.urbanforestrysouth.org/resources/library/benefits-of-urban-treesbooklet>>

12 Alliance for Community Trees, Benefits of Trees and Urban Forests (Resource List), http://www.actrees.org/files/Research/benefits_of_trees.pdf, accessed February 25, 2014.

URBAN GREENING TARGETS

1. Provide at least **15 percent** canopy coverage within Helen Keller Park and new parks.
2. Work with other jurisdictions, agencies, and property owners to increase tree plantings outside of parks, working towards a community-wide canopy coverage target of **25 percent**.
3. Reduce water usage at all existing parks by **25 percent** of 2013 use levels.
4. Capture **100 percent** of stormwater runoff onsite at existing and potential future parks.

CANOPY TARGETS

As discussed in Chapter Two, tree or shade coverage within Helen Keller Park is approximately 14 percent; however, the community as a whole has an overall canopy coverage of 10 percent due to low coverage within street corridors, residential areas and other land uses. This is far less than the 21 percent coverage maintained within the City of Los Angeles or the 25 percent recommended by American Forests as appropriate for urban areas in temperate and arid climates.

It is recommended that DPR replace any trees damaged or removed during the remediation and renovation of Helen Keller Park and increase canopy coverage to 15 percent. It is also recommended that DPR work with other departments, organizations, and agencies towards a 25 percent community-wide canopy coverage target, with the understanding that increases will be incremental and the target represents a long-term goal. This target is based on American Forests' recommendations and adjusted based on existing land uses within the community. Reaching this target requires more than doubling the number of trees in the community. As it is not feasible or desirable for parkland to support all new plantings, community-wide efforts are needed to increase canopy in non-park areas, including residential areas and along streets.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCING THE URBAN FOREST *WITHIN* PARKS

Canopy coverage could be increased at Helen Keller Park. Opportunities for increasing canopy include the two parking lots and along S. Vermont Avenue. Existing trees should be monitored and maintained as a resource for the community.

The development of new parks provides great opportunity for new trees. The number of trees and their location depends on the programming and design of the site. Gathering places, plazas, playgrounds and pathways all benefit from shade provided by trees. For other types of programming, such as community gardens and sports fields, trees need to be located to complement these uses, such as not to cast shade on gardens or out of the field of play.

Within Helen Keller Park, Chester Washington Golf Course, and any new parks, the replacement of existing trees and planting of new trees are central to enhancing the trees within the “Park Forest.” Trees that are either unhealthy or do little to contribute to the urban forest should be replaced with species that provide greater urban forestry benefits, such as trees with larger and fuller canopies. New trees should be located where they could have the most benefit in existing parks; for example, planting trees around gathering areas or in open areas where the tree canopy is lacking. Trees should be arranged so that they do not conflict with programming, such as sports fields.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCING THE URBAN FOREST *BEYOND* PARK BOUNDARIES

Due to the low canopy coverage throughout the neighborhood, expansion of the Park Forest is not sufficient to improve the overall urban forest. Some opportunity sites to plant trees in non-park areas include along public street right-of-ways or sidewalks and in private residential yards. Although these areas are typically beyond the jurisdiction of County Parks, DPR can plant new trees in partnership with Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (DPW) and can encourage private property owners to plant trees on their respective properties.

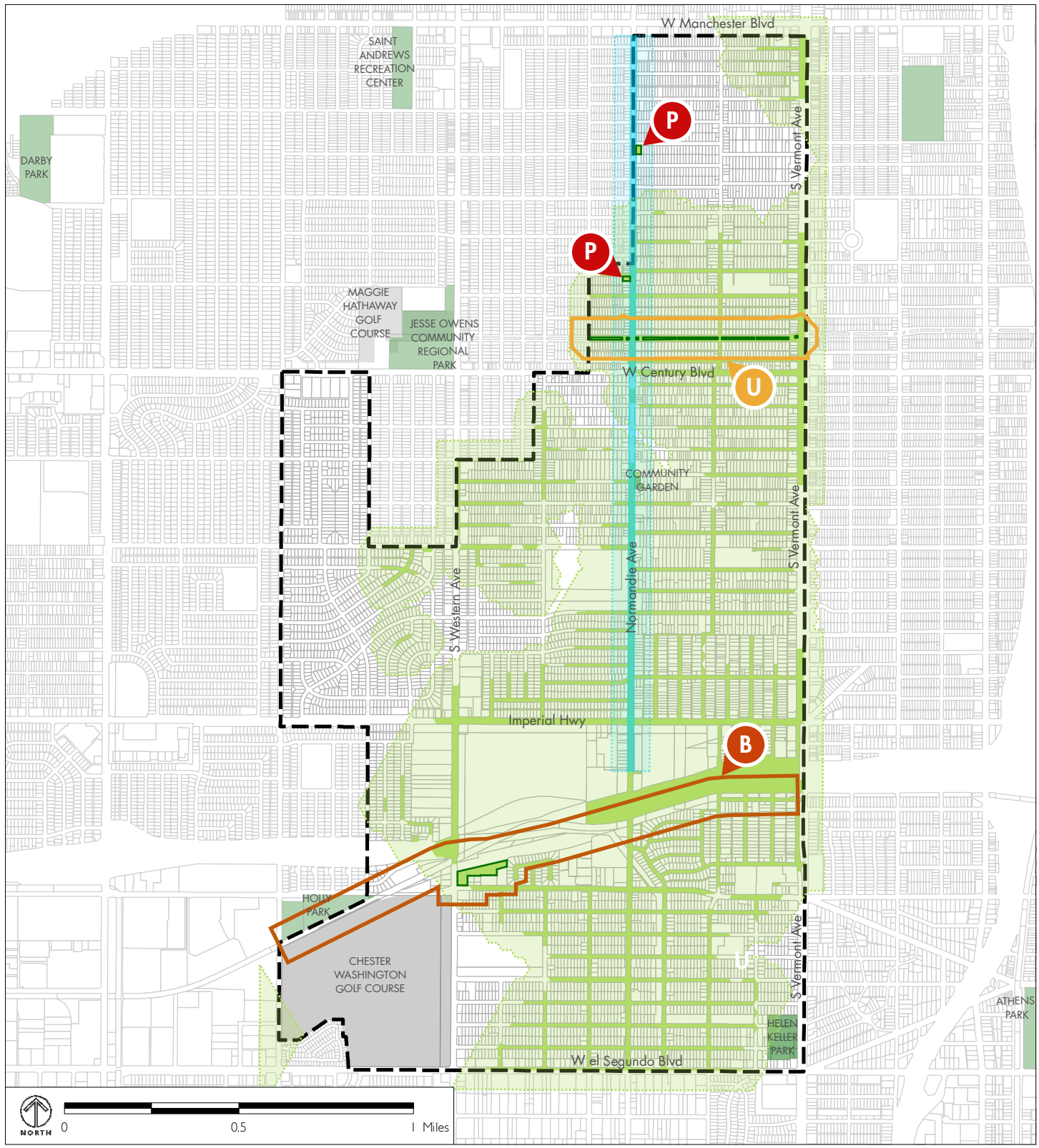
Areas that were identified as having a high need for additional street tree plantings and specific opportunity sites, including potential future parks that could include new trees, are identified in Figure 5.3 and described below. The Preferred Tree List in Appendix E identifies species that are appropriate for each of the opportunity types identified.

- **STREET CORRIDORS.** Increasing canopy coverage on urban streets can significantly improve pedestrian conditions by creating a cooler and more aesthetically pleasing walking and cycling environment. In particular, increased street tree planting should occur along the streets with high priority of better urban canopy (identified in Figure 5.3) and along the corridors that connect parks and major community amenities, such as schools, churches, and recreational facilities. The activated corridors discussed previously, particularly S. Normandie Avenue, could benefit from increased street tree planting. Trees along these streets could enhance the pocket park network and give the streets a cohesive quality. Due to community concerns about safety with urban landscaping, it will be important to select species that both allow for visibility and help to define the community.
- **UTILITY AND RAIL CORRIDORS.** Utility and rail corridors have potential to create new pedestrian and bicycle connections in West Athens-Westmont and in surrounding communities. Providing tree canopy along trails in the corridors will significantly enhance the user experience and encourage residents to use these routes. Height restrictions should be considered for the utility corridor to prevent interference with overhead utility lines. Additionally, since the rail corridors are limited in width, trees with straight trunks and high branching are preferred.
- **FREEWAY BUFFERS.** The 105 Freeway divides West Athens-Westmont. Planting trees or enhancing existing planting along the space adjacent to these freeways would offset the noise and pollution from



S. Normandie Avenue
source: Google, DigitalGlobe, 2015

FIGURE 5.3 POTENTIAL URBAN FORESTRY OPPORTUNITIES IN WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT



Source: Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation, 2013, PlaceWorks, 2015.

- West Athens-Westmont
- Existing Parks
- Street Opportunities (street corridors with low existing tree canopy)
- Pocket Park Corridor Opportunities
- Site Opportunities
- B Freeway Buffer
- U Utility Corridor
- P Potential Future Park

the freeway, and beautify the area. Trees that are known for pollution reduction and that have high canopies should be selected for these spaces. See trees designated as suitable for freeways in the preferred tree list in Appendix E. Additionally, the stormwater basin adjacent to the 105 Freeway could be planted with species specified for riparian areas in Appendix E.

- **RESIDENTIAL YARDS AND PRIVATE PARKING LOTS.** Private individuals can have a significant effect on the public urban forest. Educational resources and incentive programs can encourage residents or property owners to plant trees on their property or request planting from their landlord. The California Urban Forests Council (CAUFC) has numerous resources available to businesses and homeowners regarding enhancing the urban forest.¹³

GREENSCORE

Achieving the vision and expanding West Athens-Westmont's parks and recreation system will take time, long-term investment, and political will. There are a wide range of project types and site conditions with different levels of feasibility. As noted in Chapter Four, projects with the highest potential for park development that could meet the most need were prioritized for consideration and possible implementation in the short-term.

Parks with high priority were used in the Greenscore analysis to examine the potential effect of new parkland and trail development. The potential high-priority park projects used in the analysis are shown in Figure 5.4. The potential high-priority trails are also shown in Figure 5.4; however, these projects do not increase total acreage of parkland in the community.

Following are discussions and illustrations of how these new potential parks and trails could affect service areas, spatial need, and population served. Greening benefits of the development of new parks as well as meeting urban greening goals community wide, such as meeting the target canopy coverage of 25 percent, are additionally discussed.

IMPACT ON SERVICE AREAS

Figure 5.5 displays the service areas of existing parks and new parks identified as high priorities based on DPR's standard service area buffers.

As seen in the figure, with the addition of new potential parks, there is only a slight increase of service in the northern part of the community.

IMPACT ON PARKLAND GAP AND WALKABILITY

METHODOLOGY

Using Esri ArcGIS's network analyst, the service areas for potential park sites were calculated. The threshold used was an average 10-minute walking distance (half-mile radius). The existing street network and pedestrian conditions as well as potential trails proposed were used to calculate distance and create the service area to determine each potential future park site's walkable service areas. The US Census Bureau's American Community Survey's 2012 5-Year Estimate data was used for the community characteristics analysis. The community's characteristics data needed to be adjusted due to the irregular shape of the walkable service area, which did not correspond with the block group polygons. The ratio of the block group acreage and clipped block group acreage were calculated and applied to the demographics data to estimate the park served population.

PARKLAND GAP

As shown in Figure 5.6, the parkland gap area in the northern part of the community could be reduced with the implementation of the high-priority park projects. Much of this area could be within a 10-minute walk to a park. Additionally, when potential trail opportunities are added to the street network, pedestrian access routes to existing and potential future parklands are increased.

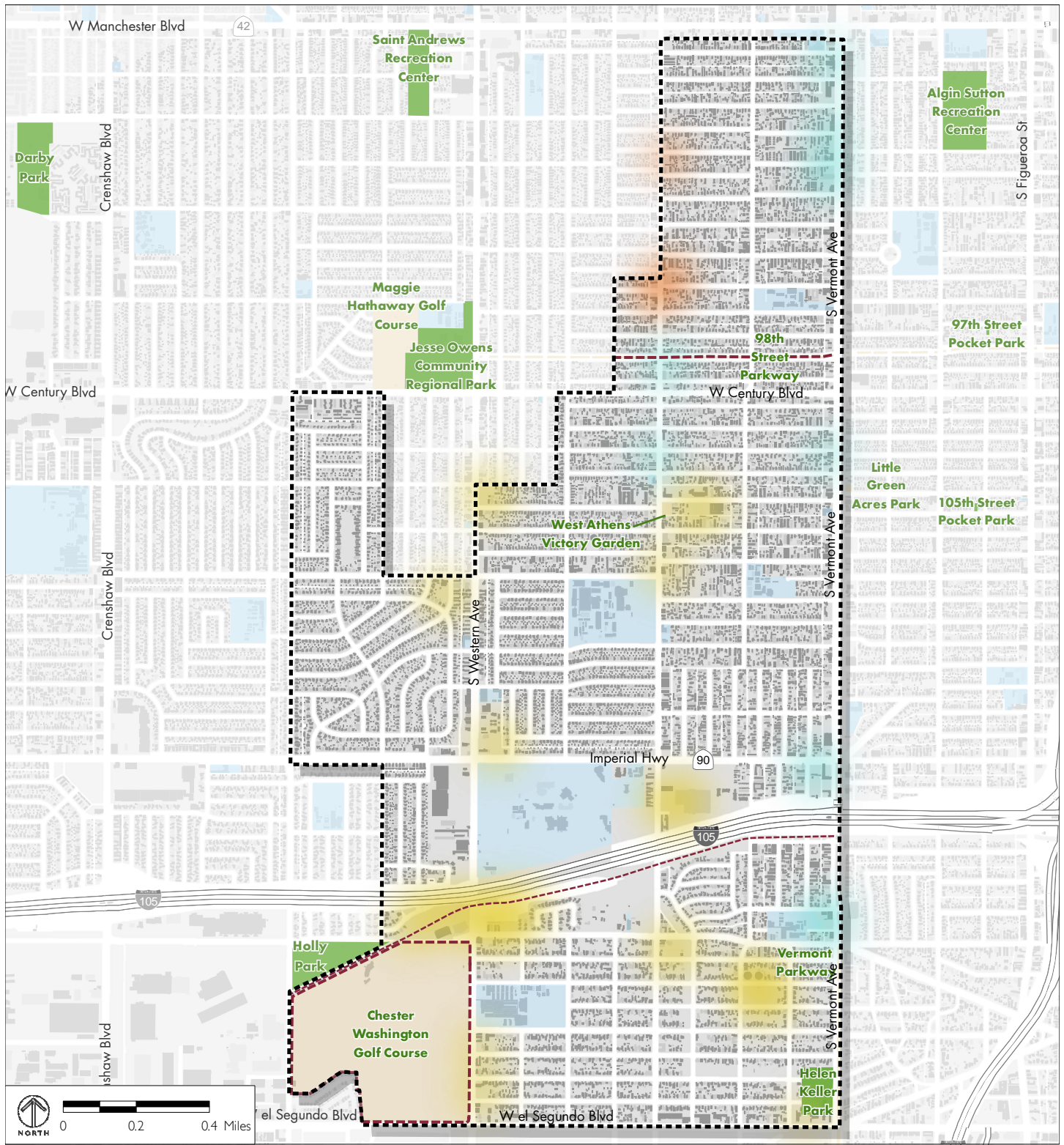
IMPACT ON SPATIAL NEED

With the size of its current population, West Athens-Westmont needs approximately 157 acres of local parkland to fulfill the General Plan standard of 4 acres of parklands per 1,000 residents; however, Helen Keller Park, the only existing park in the community, is only 7 acres. The development of the identified high-priority sites would only add approximately 1 acre of new parkland, which would signify only a minor improvement in park acreage needs.

Although there is still need for additional acres of parks and recreation facilities, the overall community need, particularly in the northern part of West Athens-Westmont, could be lessened with the addition of the recommended new parkland. This area has some of the highest residential density of the community. The park resources in this area could potentially provide parks to people who were previously not within walking distance of a park. Figure 5.7 illustrates the change in spatial need with the potential creation of the high priority projects.

13 <http://www.caufc.org/>

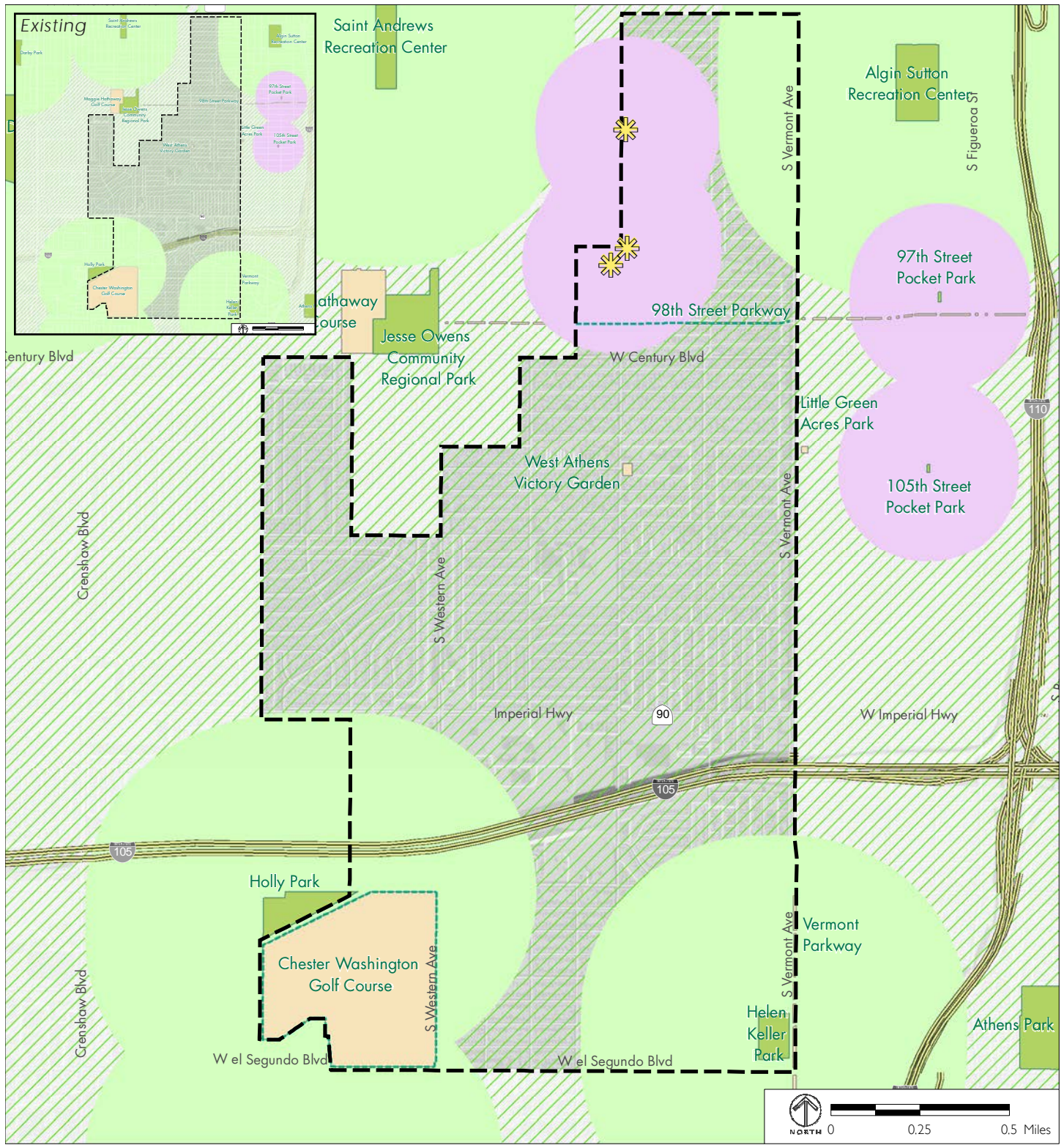
FIGURE 5.4 WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT PRIORITY PARKLAND AND TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES



Source: Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, 2013, PlaceWorks, 2013.

- West Athens-Westmont
- Existing Parks
- Other Existing Open Space
- Schools
- High Priority Parkland Opportunities
- Medium Priority Parkland Opportunities
- Low Priority Parkland Opportunities
- High Priority Trail Opportunities
- Low Priority Trail Opportunities

FIGURE 5.5 SERVICE AREAS - EXISTING AND POTENTIAL FUTURE PARKS

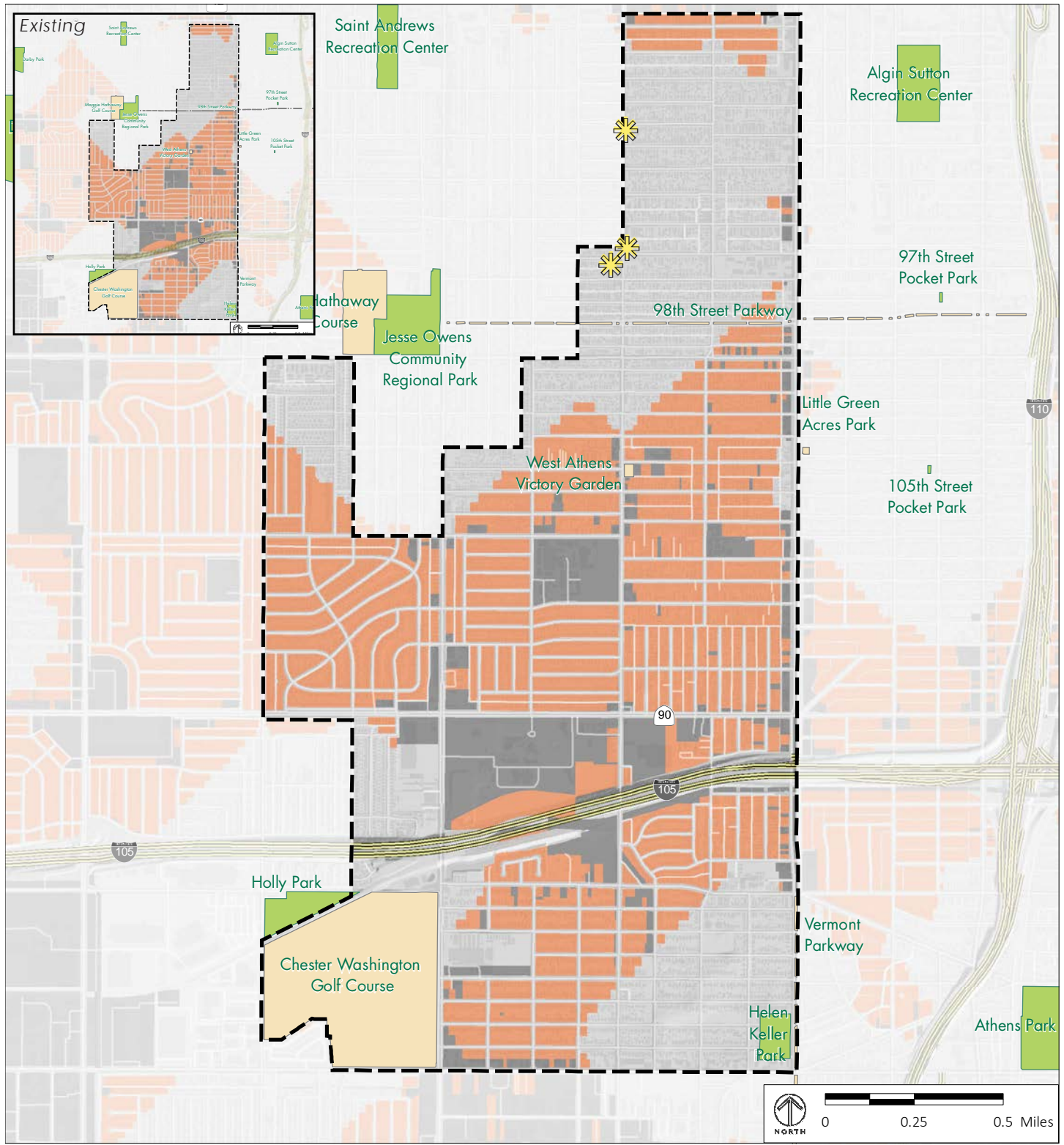


Source: Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, 2013; PlaceWorks, 2015.

- Green Space
- Existing Park
- Other Green Space
- Potential Future Parkland Included in Analysis
- Potential Future Trail
- Quarter Mile Pocket Park Service Radius
- Half Mile Neighborhood Park Service Radius
- 20 Mile Community Regional Park Service Radius
- Area Not Within Any Park Service Area

Note: Athens Park and Jessie Owens Community Regional Park are Community Regional Parks that have service areas that extend to West Athens-Westmont.

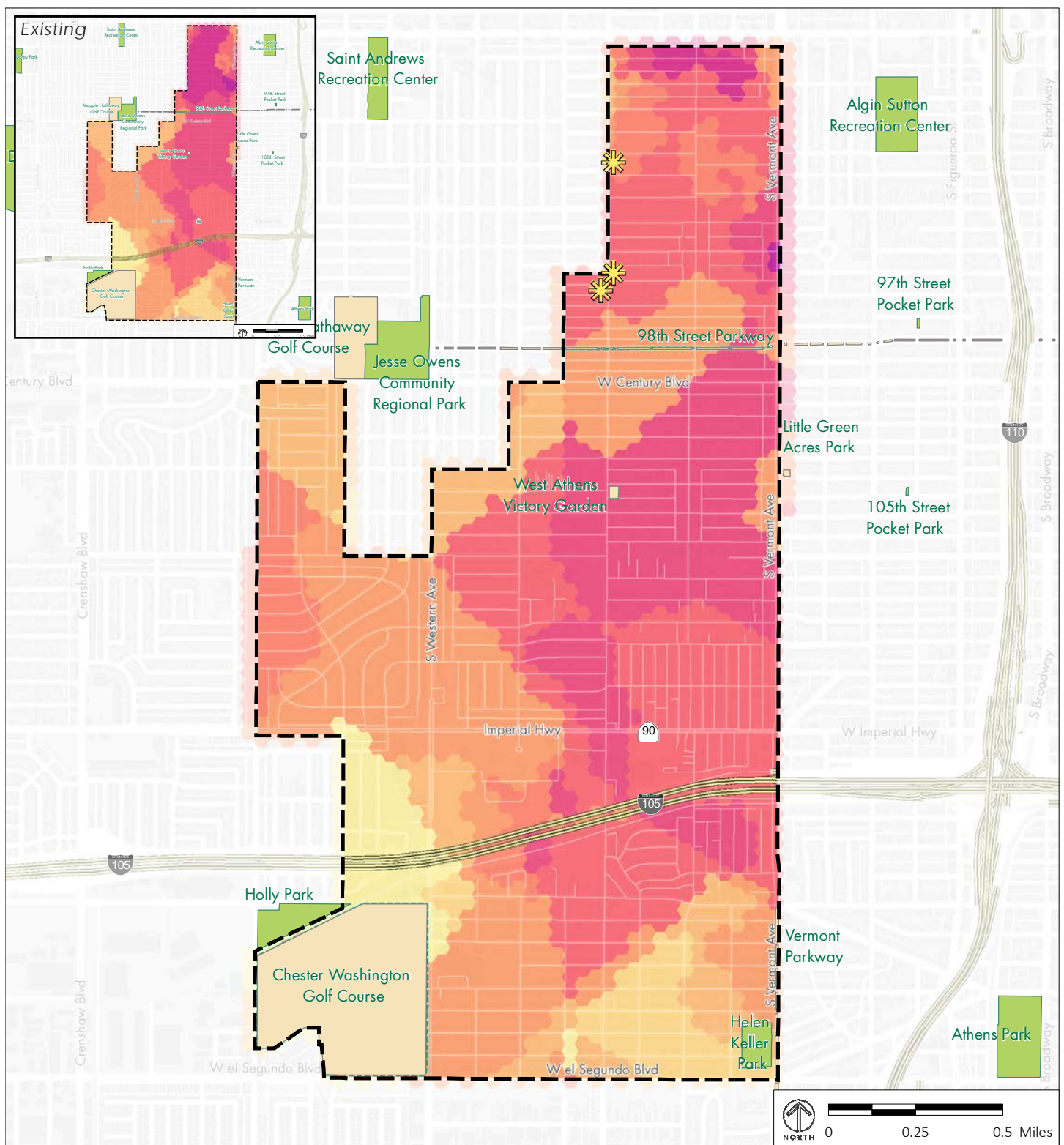
FIGURE 5.6 PARKLAND GAPS/WALKABILITY - EXISTING AND POTENTIAL FUTURE PARKS



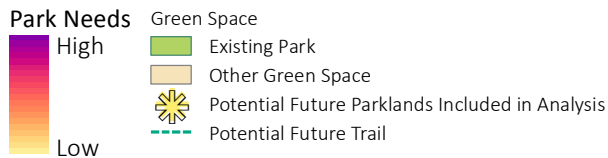
Source: Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, 2013, PlaceWorks, 2015.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>Park Access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas Within 1/2 Mile (10 minute walk) of a Park Non-Residential Areas Not Within 1/2 Mile (10 minute walk) of a Park Residential Areas Not Within 1/2 Mile (10 minute walk) of a Park | <p>Green Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing Park Other Green Space Potential Future Parklands Included in Analysis |
|---|--|

FIGURE 5.7 SPATIAL NEED - EXISTING AND POTENTIAL FUTURE PARKS



Source: Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, 2013, PlaceWorks, 2015.



VISION PLAN

POPULATION SERVED WITH NEW PARKLAND

Meeting the overall park need in West Athens-Westmont is challenging due to the limited availability of vacant land and the high-level of need. The total area of West Athens-Westmont is only 2,048 acres so in order to achieve this parkland acreage goal of 164 acres, 8 percent of the community would need to be converted to parkland, which is unlikely given the development realities in the community.

However, the addition of even one acre of parkland could have a noticeable effect on parks and recreation service to West Athens-Westmont residents, as shown in Figure 5.8. With the addition of potential future park sites, the population within walking distance of any parks could increase by 123 percent from approximately 6,550 to 14,580 residents. Within that group, the population under 18 years old could increase from approximately 1,900 to 4,560, representing a 140 percent increase from the existing population served. This indicates that the addition of potential future park sites could increase the possibility of providing more access to the parks and green spaces to the overall population, especially for residents under 18 years old.

IMPACT ON STORMWATER INTERCEPTION

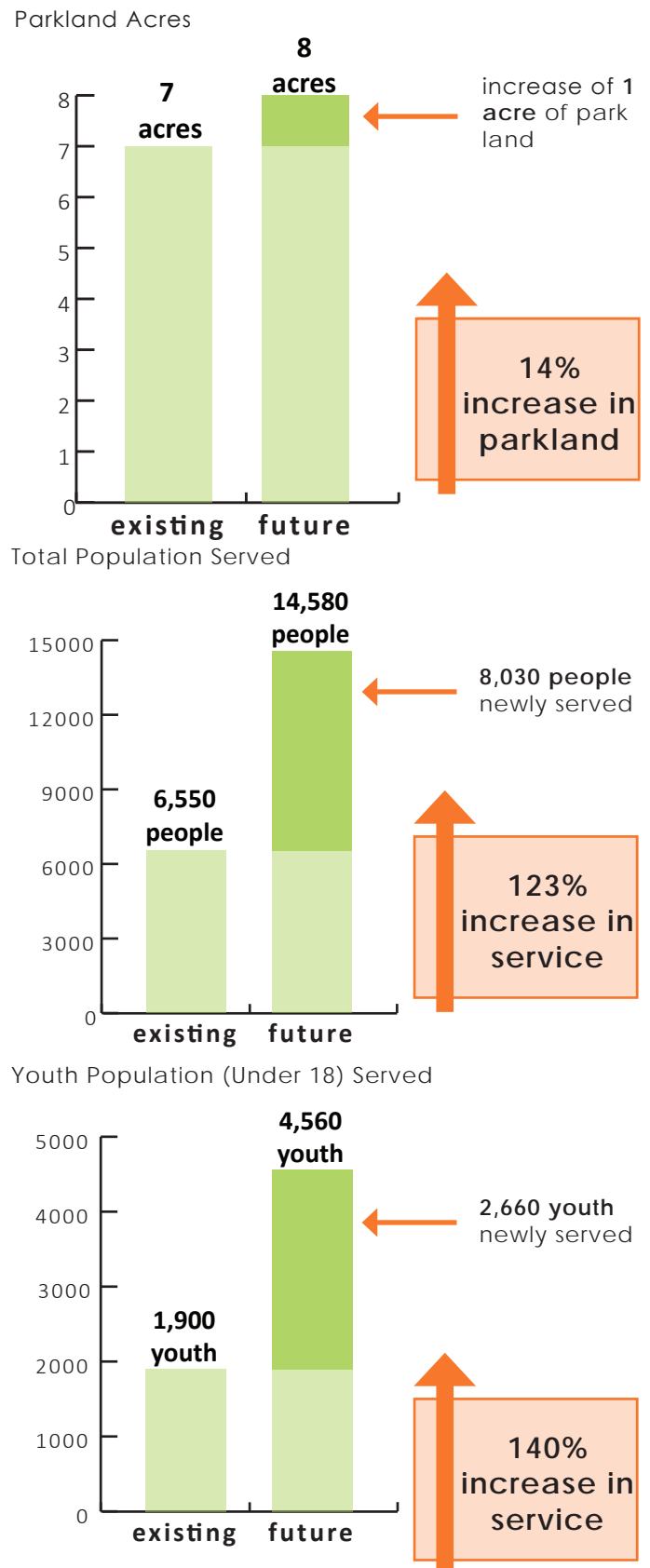
Utilizing Low Impact Development (LID) technologies, such as stormwater swales, bioretention basins, or green roofs to intercept water runoff within existing parks and in potential future parks, could provide significant benefits to water storage and improve water quality running into nearby waterways.

Increasing the community-wide tree canopy to 25 percent could store and treat significant quantities of stormwater outside of the parks' boundaries, reducing impacts to existing stormwater infrastructure.

Although current rain levels are below normal, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) estimates the average rainfall for downtown Los Angeles to be 14.93 inches per year. Utilizing this estimate for the 1 acre of additional parkland in West Athens-Westmont, annual rainfall in these areas could equal more than 400,000 gallons.

A significant amount of this volume could infiltrate into the parks' pervious surfaces; however, a presumed runoff of 10-20 percent is expected in the typical park or open space resulting in approximately **80,000 GALLONS** that could be intercepted and treated with LID.

FIGURE 5.8 SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS WITH THE ADDITION OF POTENTIAL NEW PARKS



*The graphs only show improvements based on the addition of high priority park projects.

IMPACT ON WATER CONSERVATION

Changes to maintenance and landscape installation within existing and potential future parks can provide dramatic water conservation. Key water saving strategies include:

- Utilizing **DRIP IRRIGATION** instead of spray heads (estimated 16% water savings)
- Planting **LOW WATER USE PLANTS** and replacing high water use ones (estimated 62% water savings)
- Applying **COMPOST** in planting areas and in turf areas (estimated 10-13% water savings)
- Utilizing **MULCH** regularly to retain soil moisture (estimated 20% water savings)

Figure 5.9 demonstrates how these savings could be applied to a 10,000 square foot sample park project in West Athens-Westmont.

FIGURE 5.9 SAMPLE PARK PROJECT WATER SAVING

<i>project size</i>	<i>10,000-square feet</i>
<i>project description</i>	<i>conventional high water use lawn with spray</i>
<i>estimated water use (gallons per year)</i>	<i>349,994</i>

Action	Estimated water use (gallons per year)	Estimated Water Savings (gallons per year)
Switch spray heads to drip irrigation	292,348	57,646
Switch high water use plants to low water use plants	131,248	218,746
Add 3.5% or 5% organic matter content compost	307,995	41,999
Add 3 inches of mulch to planting areas	279,995	69,999

IMPACT ON GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION

Implementing the vision plan and urban greening goals in West Athens-Westmont could include many actions that could reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon sequestration.

- Improving the pedestrian network that encourage more people to walk more could **DECREASE VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED** and reduce emissions.
- Utilizing **ON-SITE ALTERNATIVE ENERGY PRODUCTION**, could limit dependence on fossil fuels for energy needs.
- Increasing **TREES** in the urban environment would improve capacity to “sequester” carbon by removing it from the atmosphere and storing it in their wood and in the soil.

It is also possible to quantify the benefits of new trees in West Athens-Westmont. As described in Chapter Two, Helen Keller Park’s Park Forest (existing trees with parks only) is estimated to sequester 10,329 pounds (4.7 Metric tons) of carbon annually. Since Helen Keller Park is close to achieving its target canopy coverage, increasing tree canopy there will only minimally increase carbon stored. Adding additional parks with healthy urban canopy coverage is one strategy to increase the overall carbon stored by the park forest. However, the complete benefits of the urban forest are best understood at the neighborhood scale, rather than limited to trees within parks. As described in Table 5.1, it is estimated that the current forest sequesters 882 Metric Tons of carbon dioxide per year, and that approximately 1,765 Metric Tons would be sequestered by the target canopy.

It is important to consider that the planting of trees along streets, at parks, and throughout communities can contribute to greenhouse gas reduction in ways other than carbon sequestration, including but not limited to: providing shade for buildings, thus reducing air conditioning usage; reducing the urban heat island effect; and creating streets and paths that encourage people to walk or bike, thus reducing vehicle trips.

Minimally increasing canopy coverage at Helen Keller Park to 15% and ensuring coverage of at least 15% for new parks will ensure sustained or increased carbon sequestration by the Park forest. In addition, selecting trees that have high capacity for carbon sequestration, especially for sites near freeways and other sites that have high levels of air pollution, can improve the contribution of the urban forest to greenhouse gas reduction.

TABLE 5.1 WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT CARBON SEQUESTRATION UNDER EXISTING AND TARGET CANOPY COVERAGE

Land Use ¹	CANOPY COVER		ANNUAL CARBON SEQUESTRATION (CO ₂ METRIC TONS) ²	
	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed
Low Density Residential	115	385	546	1,836
High Density Residential	25	59	119	279
Commercial/Institutional	22	32	104	154
Industrial/Utilities/ Transportation	5	2	25	10
Open Space ¹	30	27	143	128
Total	197	505	937	2,407

1 Land use areas are based on land use of tax parcels and adjacent streets and canopy coverage was calculated using LiDAR data from 2006. The land use designation of “Open Space” was applied to Helen Keller Park, Chester Washington Golf Course, West Athens Victory Garden, and adjacent streets. Canopy coverage estimates are higher than data collected through iTrees sample (described above), which only inventoried trees at Helen Keller Park.

2 Increase in carbon storage resulting from increased canopy coverage was estimated using the following assumptions: (1) 150 pounds stored/tree/year, based on the average iTrees estimates for existing trees in East Los Angeles parks (East Los Angeles was selected as the sample measurement due to the diversity of the existing park forest in that community); (2) 70 trees per acreage of cover, assuming approximate spacing of 25 feet between trees. Based on these assumptions, it is estimated that 10,500 pounds of carbon could be sequestered for each additional acre of canopy coverage, regardless of land use.



6 - CONCEPTUAL SITE DESIGNS

New parks and recreation amenities in West Athens-Westmont should consider the vision set forth in this plan and incorporate the feedback of community members who participated in the planning process. To begin to illustrate the vision, conceptual site designs and implementation strategies were created for two prototypical parks and one trail. These conceptual ideas are intended to help move the vision forward into realization and create a park system that is more responsive to the needs of West Athens-Westmont residents.

COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKSHOP

As described in Chapter Three, a community design and visioning workshop was held at the Chester Washington Golf Course in August 2014. The intent of the workshop was to develop a programmatic approach to selected parkland opportunity sites and develop design concepts for these spaces. During the meeting, three potential sites were presented to the community: two pocket parks along S. Normandie Avenue at currently vacant lots and a linear park within the Department of Water and Power (DWP) corridor in West Athens. During the meeting, workshop participants expressed strong opposition to the DWP corridor and asked that it not be considered for a future park due to safety concerns. Follow-up meetings between community members and representatives from Los Angeles County led to this site being removed from the potential parkland opportunities list for West Athens-Westmont.

During the workshop, community members collaborated with DPR and the consultant team to develop a programmatic approach and design concept to both the pocket parks and the linear corridor. The conceptual designs for the pocket parks, as well as comments regarding safety and crime prevention, were used to develop the conceptual site designs presented in this chapter. Some elements were eliminated from the design based on infeasibility or other site constraints; however, where possible, the design reflects the community's vision for the site. To incorporate community voices that were not present at the design workshop, elements were added to the sites to accommodate other needs identified in the community, as well as to help meet DPR's own sustainability goals.



West Athens-Westmont residents participating in community design activity

To replace the utility corridor, two additional projects were considered: a playground plaza at Woodcrest Library in Westmont and a fitness trail around Chester Washington Golf Course. Both projects were selected because they could help meet the community's identified need for more places for children to play safely and for places to walk and exercise.

CONCEPTUAL SITE DESIGNS

The designs generated at the community design workshop and presented in this chapter are intended to guide new park and infrastructure development. Although the specific project may not be implemented due to a variety of factors (land availability, political, etc.), concepts and amenities from these designs may be incorporated into different projects at other locations in West Athens-Westmont, where applicable.

Conceptual site designs include the following site types:

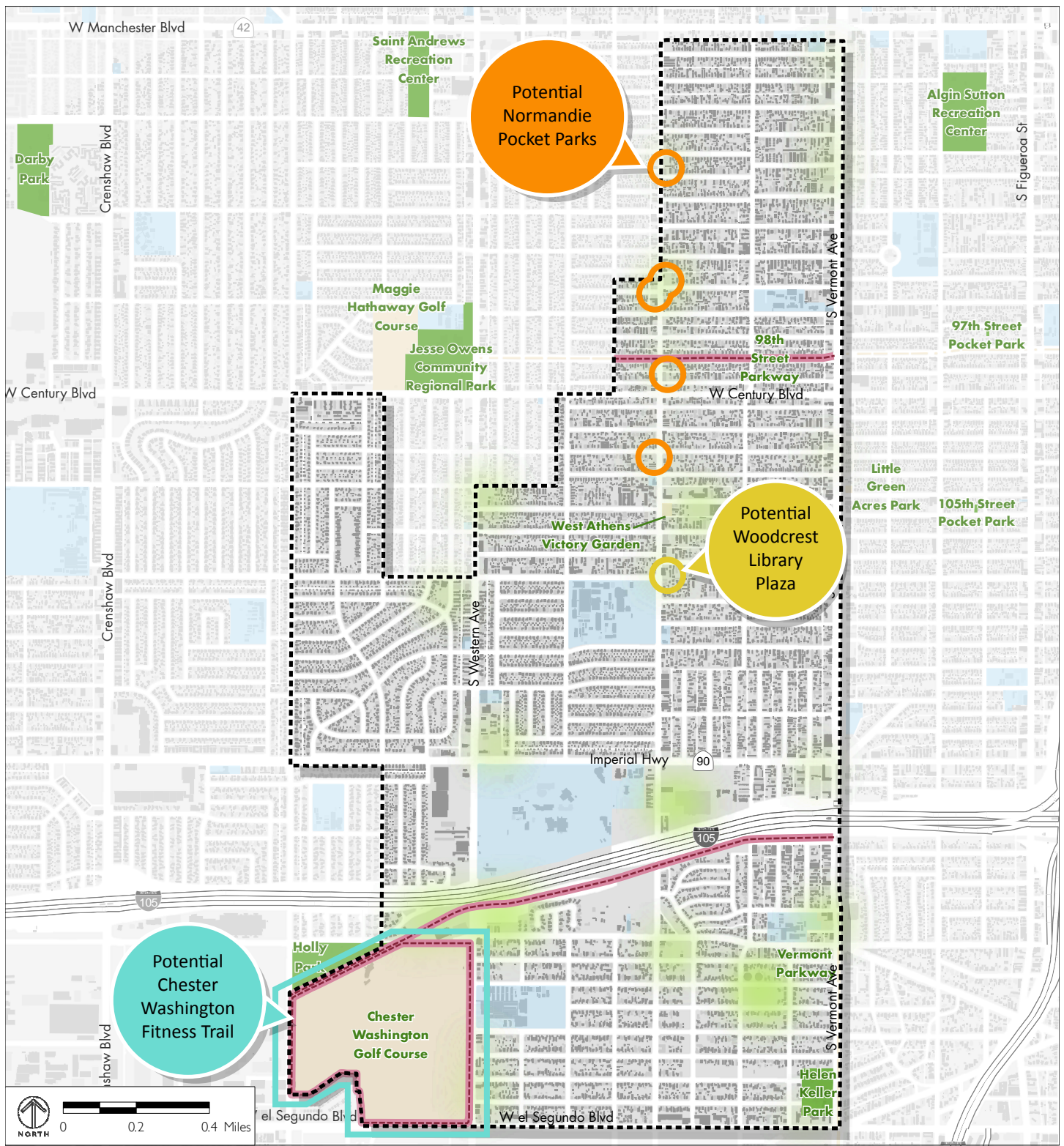
- **NORMANDIE POCKET PARK.** A series of pocket parks along S. Normandie Avenue could have a transformative impact on this important corridor in West Athens-Westmont. The Vision Plan calls this the "Enrichment Corridor," which comes from the community's desire for more places for older youth to recreate safely.
- **WOODCREST LIBRARY PLAZA.** The library is an active node within the community of Westmont. Activating the outdoor space could expand public use of this County facility.
- **CHESTER WASHINGTON FITNESS TRAIL.** This trail concept could utilize an existing Los Angeles County facility and provide the community with new exercise and fitness options.

Figure 6.1 highlights locations where the conceptual site designs could be implemented, although other available sites in West Athens-Westmont could additionally build on the concepts developed in this process.

PURPOSE AND FUTURE USE OF SITE DESIGNS

Although conceptual, these site designs bring together key elements from the Vision Plan presented in Chapter Five and how it could be carried out at a site level. As park projects are built in West Athens-Westmont, these plans should serve as a model for the design style and programming that is desired within the community as well as an illustration of how urban greening elements could be incorporated into future parks.

FIGURE 6.1 LOCATION OF CONCEPTUAL SITE DESIGN PROJECTS



Source: Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, 2013, PlaceWorks, 2013.

NORMANDIE AVENUE POCKET PARKS

SITE SUMMARY

West Athens-Westmont is significantly lacking in green space and residents have difficulty traveling a long distance to parks due to unsafe street conditions and limited access to public transit. S. Normandie Avenue has a number of vacant or underutilized small lots that could be transformed into pocket parks to create a corridor of green amenities within a short distance from residents and one another. Participants in the community design workshop examined two lots of this type and envisioned them as potential future park spaces.

COMMUNITY VISION

Workshop participants indicated that S. Normandie Avenue is a particularly unsafe street for gang activity and violence and that a park would not be successful without a partnership with local gang intervention groups and/or the sheriff’s department. A representative from R.A.C.E., an intervention group working in other parts of the neighborhood recommended reaching out to APUU, a gang intervention group working in this area, to ask if they would like to partner on creating a “hub” space for their group on the lot(s), thus ensuring that the space has “ownership,” and will not create a undesignated space for new turf disputes. The group also indicated that the lots could have a Sheriff’s outpost where law enforcement have an active presence to create the sense of safety and provide programs.

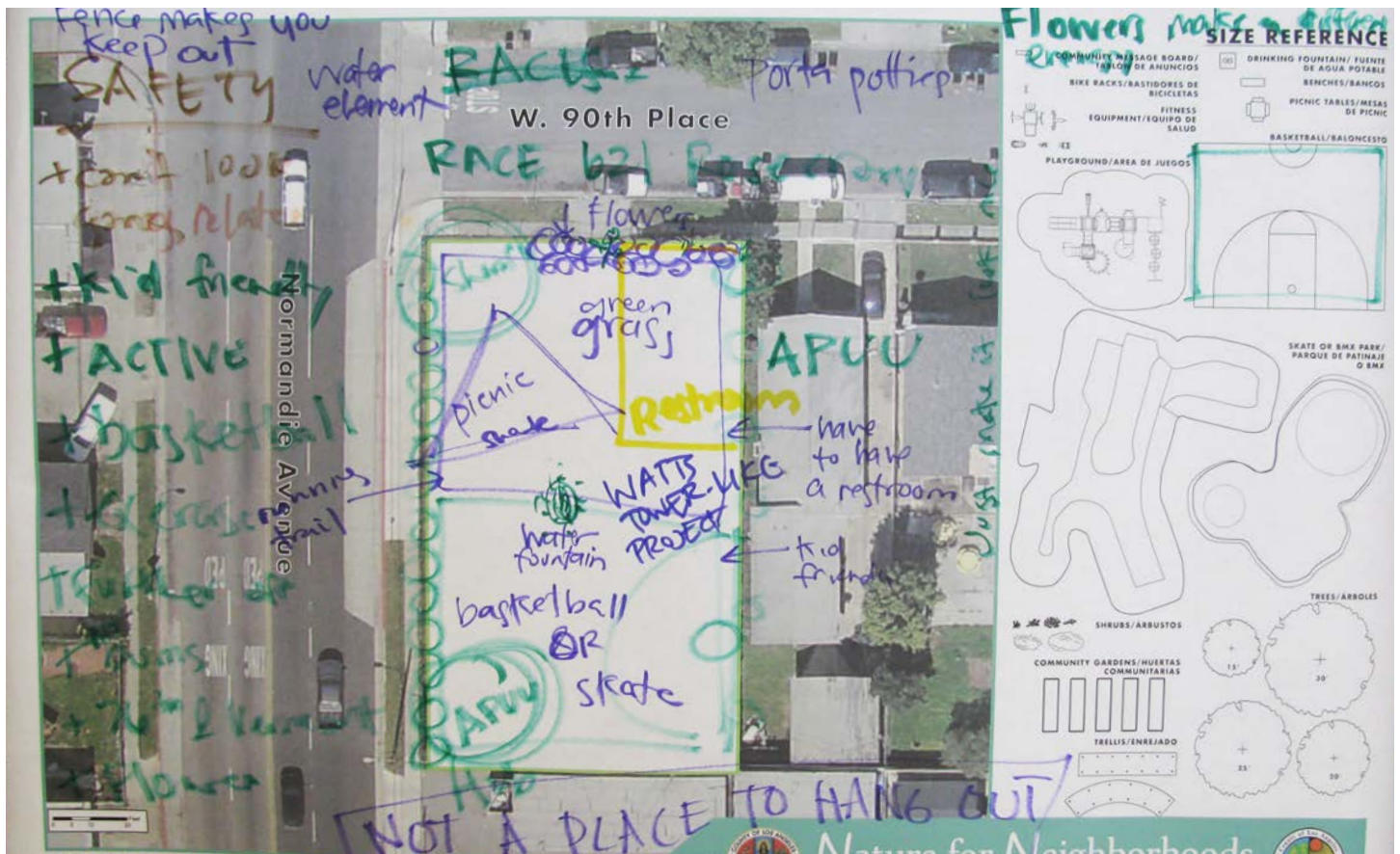
Beyond partnerships with intervention groups and the Sheriff, the group indicated the following items to improve safety:

- Make the space kid friendly
- Create active space – such as basketball courts, skate park, and exercise stations
- Make it NOT a place to hang out
- Set the activities farther back off of S. Normandie Avenue and add “protection” elements from the street (to prevent people from shooting into the park from the street)

One group member teaches at the George Washington Preparatory High School, located farther south along S. Normandie Avenue. They indicated that students from the school are shot each year, and they do not want to create another space where young people can hurt other young people and emphasize that the space needs to be easily protected. As the group moved through the safety elements, they also began to envision the space with park amenities and to consider other elements.

SITE DESIGN

Working collectively, the group developed two alternatives for each of the pocket park sites on S. Normandie Avenue. They are described below as Sites 1 and Sites 2, with Site 1 representing the slightly larger pocket park site.



Community Vision Drawing - Site 1

TABLE 6.1 SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY DESIGN SITE 1

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Site Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity areas set back from street • Site anchored by hub spaces for intervention group and/or sheriff • Easily accessed or exited from all open sides • Safety buffer along S. Normandie Avenue (landscape or structural) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running/walking path around periphery and through site • Open green to the south • Active play to the north
Site Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hub spaces for intervention group and/or sheriff's department • Basketball court or small skate park for teens • Play space for younger children with shade structure • Picnic table • Restroom or portable restrooms • Community art element • Water fountain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground with tetherball • Splashpad • Community kiosk • Small stage • Exercise equipment with bikes • Shade • Seating
Key Planting Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buffer planting along adjacent streets • Green grass for children to play on • Colorful flower and accents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass area near stage

SITE 1

The first alternative envisioned the small space as heavily programmed for active use by youth and being particularly “kid friendly.” They also indicated that landscape amenities could have a significant impact on improving the public’s perception of the spaces. In discussing plant types, one group member said, “Flowers make a different energy,” suggesting that by adding color and well-maintained landscaping to the space could significantly improve people’s mood and outlook on the street. Other members indicated the need for green grass in the center so kids could play and larger shrubs along S. Normandie Avenue to act as a buffer from the street.

The group considered a fence around the site, but one group member stated that a fence could have the negative impact of making people feel unwelcomed or that they should “keep out,” which they said would be detrimental to the space that they thought should be extremely active. The group member also said that a fence could prevent people from getting out of the space quickly in an emergency.

For the layout of the park, the group saw the space divided in half with an extremely active basketball or skate park at one end and grass with a shade structure for play at the other end. The group indicated that most of the activity should be set back off of S. Normandie Avenue and that the “hub” space for the intervention group or sheriff should be located near the front of the park with a strong presence. One group member said that it would be excellent to get an art project like the Watts Tower at the site, which could also be a great partnership opportunity. Another group member indicated that the art project could be a water element since that can have a relaxing component. The group felt that even though it was a small space, there should be restrooms.

The second alternative envisioned an active node with exercise opportunities for adults and play spaces for kids with a lot of site elements. The group wanted the park to be surrounded by a short walking and running path for exercise that would also include crossing to access other site components. The park includes a playground and splash pad area near the northern end that also includes exercise equipment for parents watching children. The southeastern corner is dominated by a small stage and theater space surrounded by grass for gathering during performances or informal exercise when the stage is not being used. The northeast corner includes a community kiosk which would serve as the central node for information and safety on the site.



Community Vision Drawing - Site 1

SITE 2

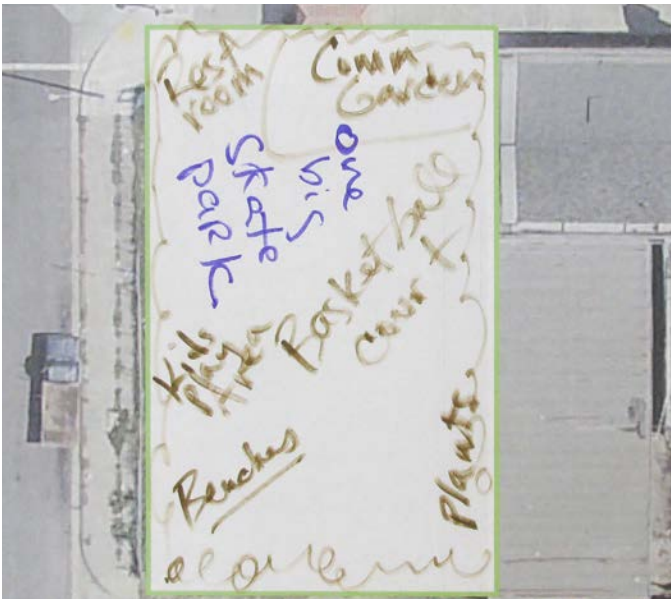
The first alternative envisions this space as being active and buffered from S. Normandie Avenue and adjacent streets, similar to Site 1. The group considered this site to be an opportunity for active space, such as basketball or just one large skate park. Some thought that the site might be too small for active recreation and might be more well-suited as a community garden space. The group included a kids' play area and a restroom to allow people to spend longer periods of time at the site. The site includes benches, but these are intended to be resting places for those using the sports facilities, and are not intended to encourage passive use of the site.

The second alternative centers around a skate park that occupies most of the site. The participants envisioned the skate park to incorporate sculptural elements and art features, such

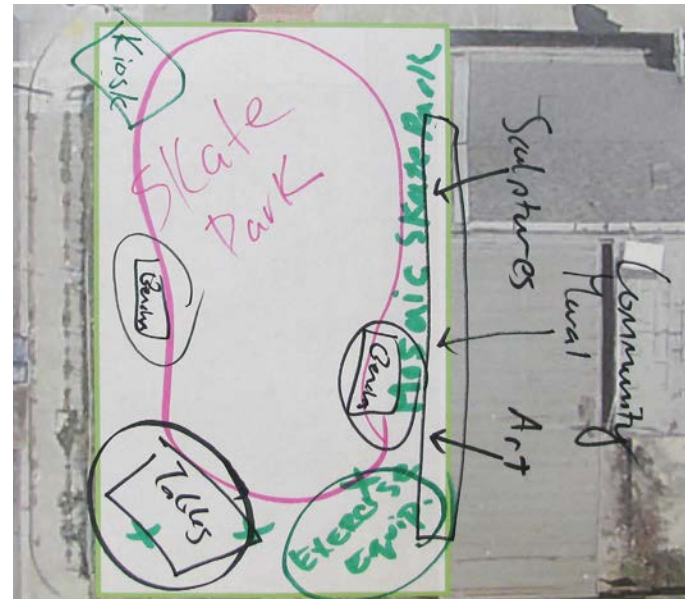
as mosaic tile along the surface to make it more than just a concrete bowl and pleasant for people to visit even when they are not skating. The sample site is adjacent to a building and the group used the adjacent wall for a community mural. The design also includes tables and benches for sitting to observe the skating, exercise equipment, and a community kiosk at the corner of the site. The kiosk could serve as an outpost for the Sheriff's Department or as a place to post information about community events or issues.

CONCEPT PLANS

These site designs developed in the community design workshop and feedback from other community outreach were used to develop four pocket park concepts for S. Normandie Avenue pocket parks, two alternatives for each of the sites presented to the group.



Community Vision Drawing - Site 2



Community Vision Drawing - Site 2

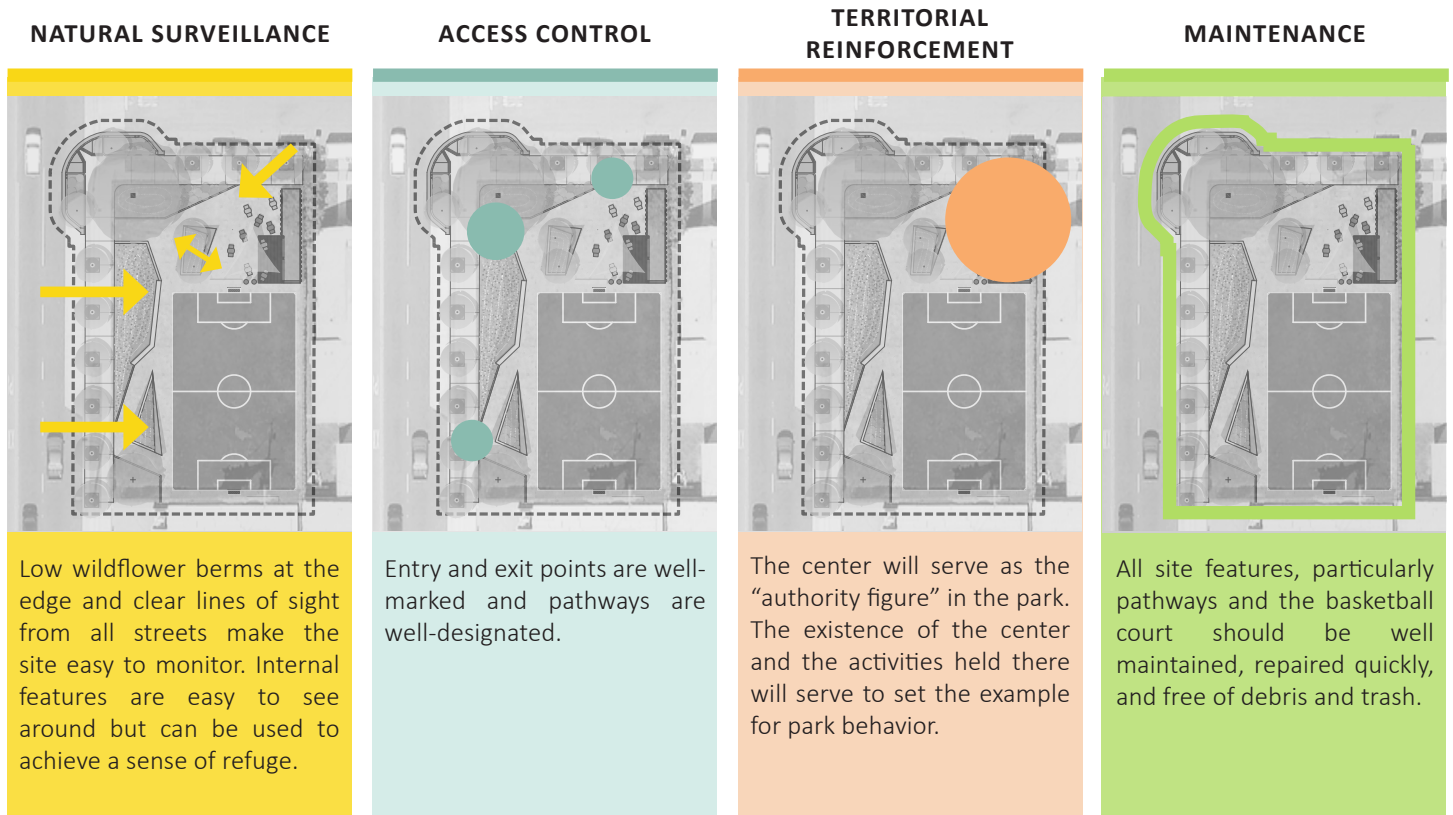
TABLE 6.2 SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY DESIGN SITE 2

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Site Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity areas located in center or with clear line of sight to streets Safety buffer along adjacent streets (landscape or structural) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central skate park Exercise and resting area on the western edge
Site Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreation options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 1: basketball court Option 2: skate park Option 3: community garden Restroom or porta potties Benches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skate park Art elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mosaic tile incorporated into skate features Community mural Skate-able sculptures Community kiosk Tables Benches Exercise equipment
Key Planting Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buffer Planting along adjacent streets Community garden space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not mentioned

FIGURE 6.2 NORMANDIE AVENUE POCKET PARK 1 CONCEPT (ALTERNATIVE 1)

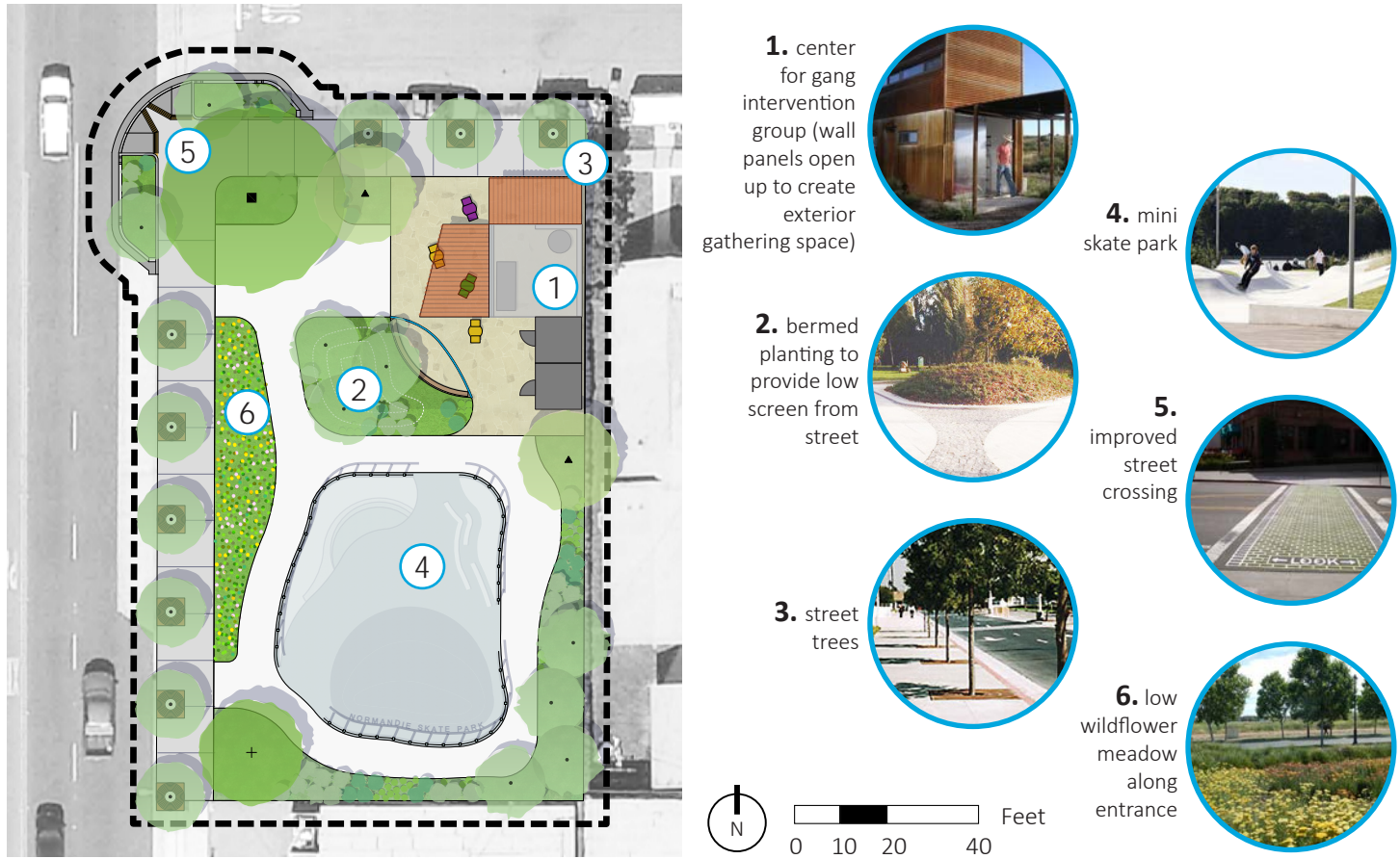


Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Analysis



SITE DESIGNS

FIGURE 6.3 NORMANDIE AVENUE POCKET PARK 1 CONCEPT (ALTERNATIVE 2)



Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Analysis

SITE DESIGNS

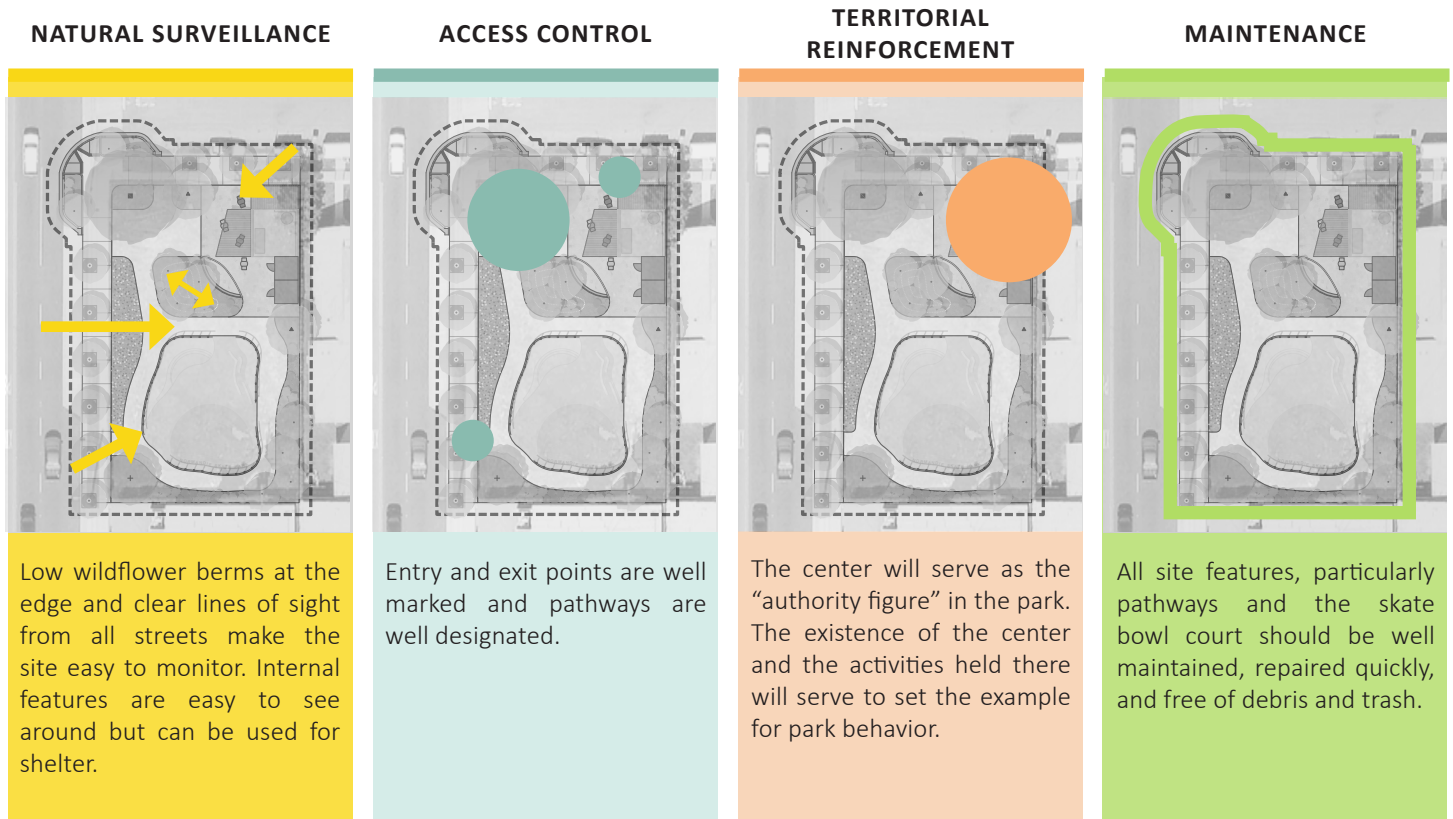
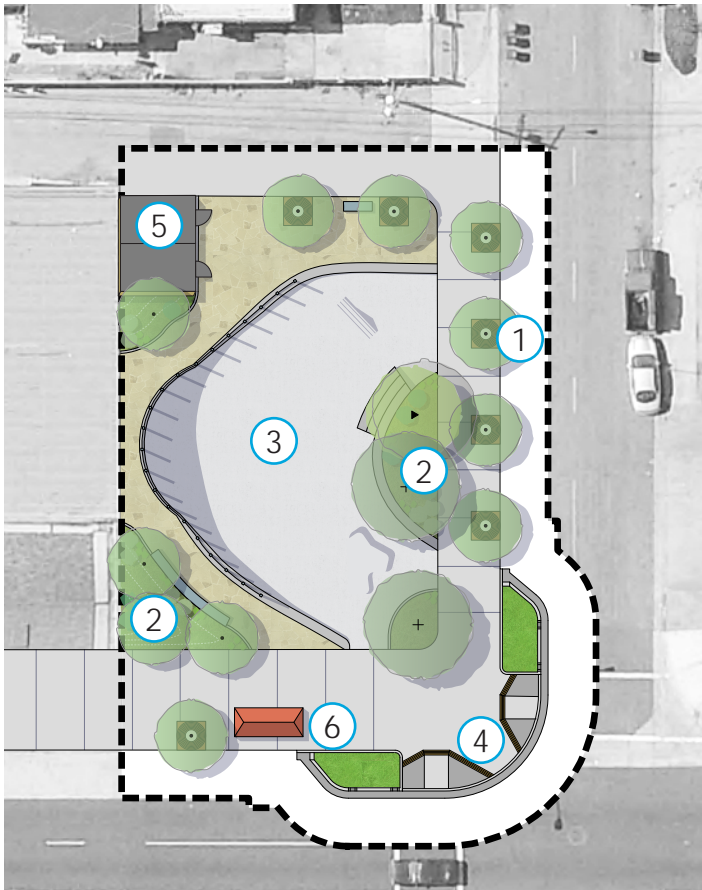


FIGURE 6.4 NORMANDIE AVENUE POCKET PARK 2 CONCEPT (ALTERNATIVE 1)



1. street trees



2. planted berm to provide low screen from street



3. mini skate park



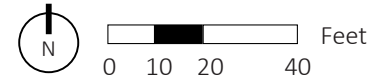
4. improved street crossing



5. restroom



6. bus stop



Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Analysis

NATURAL SURVEILLANCE	ACCESS CONTROL	TERRITORIAL REINFORCEMENT	MAINTENANCE
<p>Site is buffered from street with low vegetation that does not obscure views into the site. Internal benches are below vegetation to allow views out but the sense of protection.</p>	<p>Entry and exit points into the skate area is well marked.</p>	<p>The large skate feature dominates the site and is the central use. Unsanctioned use is easily identified.</p>	<p>All site features, particularly pathways and skate area should be well maintained, repaired quickly, and free of debris and trash. Trees are maintained to not provide hiding places or disturb lines of sight.</p>

FIGURE 6.5 NORMANDIE AVENUE POCKET PARK 2 CONCEPT (ALTERNATIVE 2)



Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Analysis

SITE DESIGNS

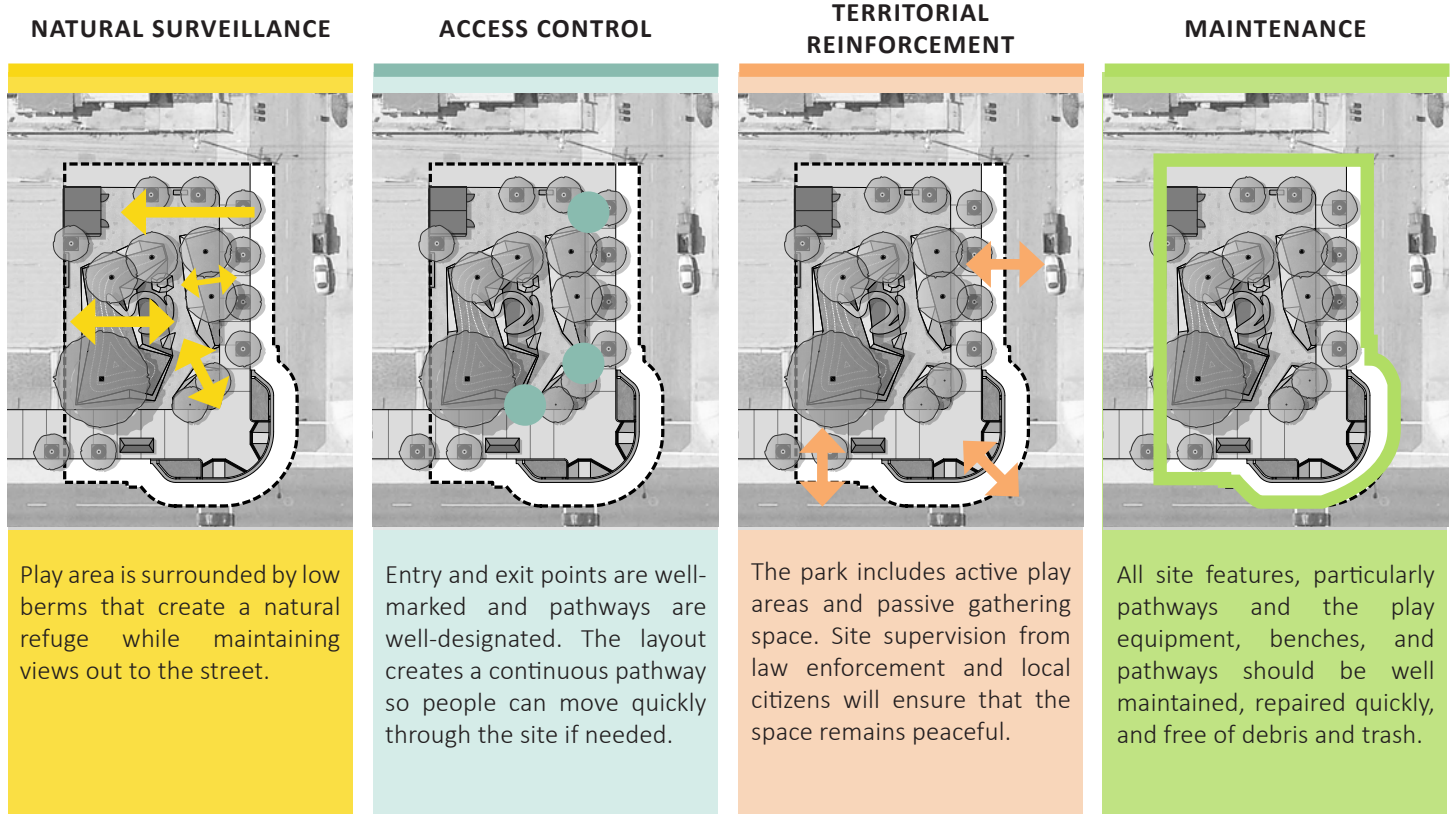
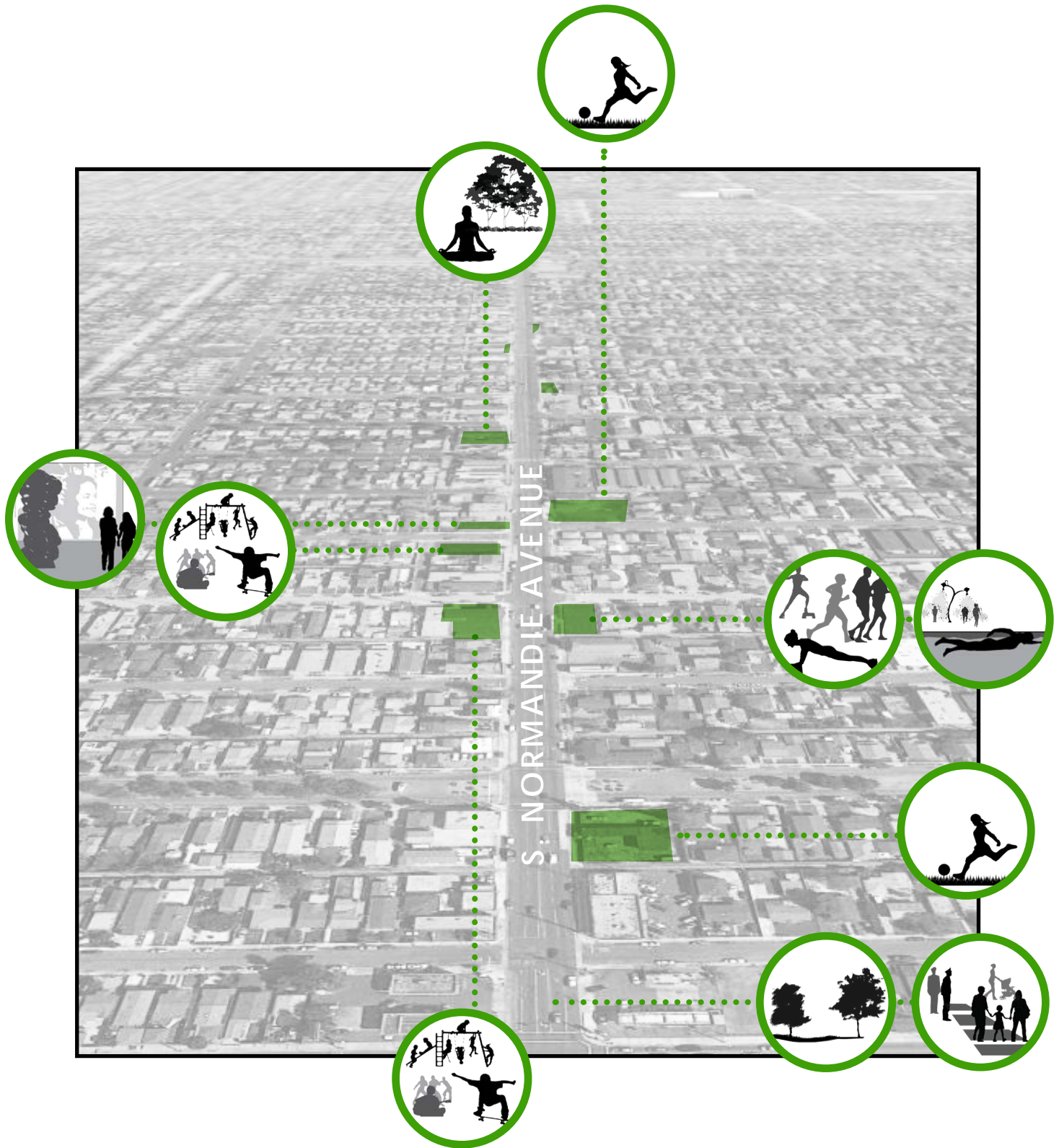


FIGURE 6.6 CONCEPTUAL USES OF NORMANDIE AVENUE POCKET PARKS



A corridor of pocket parks along S. Normandie Avenue could present a decentralized means of achieving many of the facility needs identified in West Athens-Westmont. As the conceptual diagram in Figure 6.6 shows, many of the facilities could be placed at different small parks along the street. Additionally,

many of the more general facility needs, such as Safe Facilities and Safe Corridors, Play Spaces, Tot Lots, and Spaces for Teens, Peaceful Places and Spaces for Stress Relief, Public Art and Arts Programs and Green Infrastructure could be integrated into a number of the sites.

WOODCREST LIBRARY PLAZA

SITE SUMMARY

Woodcrest Library is part of the County of Los Angeles Public Library System. The library is located on the corner of Normandie Avenue and 106th Street. The main entrance into the library is from the parking lot along 106th Street, which includes a small patio space with trees. The library is currently planning an art installation project with the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, which will include a mural on the side of the building facing Normandie Avenue and a decorative shade sail in the patio. The design concept incorporates these elements into an expanded design.

COMMUNITY NEED

Westmont residents need a safe place for young people to play. Woodcrest Library already serves as a destination for young people and parents and expanding the site to include a small play area would enhance the capacity of the site and further

solidify it as a community destination. Increasing activity at the library will ensure that it remains a safe destination and County staff working at the library can serve as “eyes on the plaza,” to monitor activity in the space.

SITE DESIGN

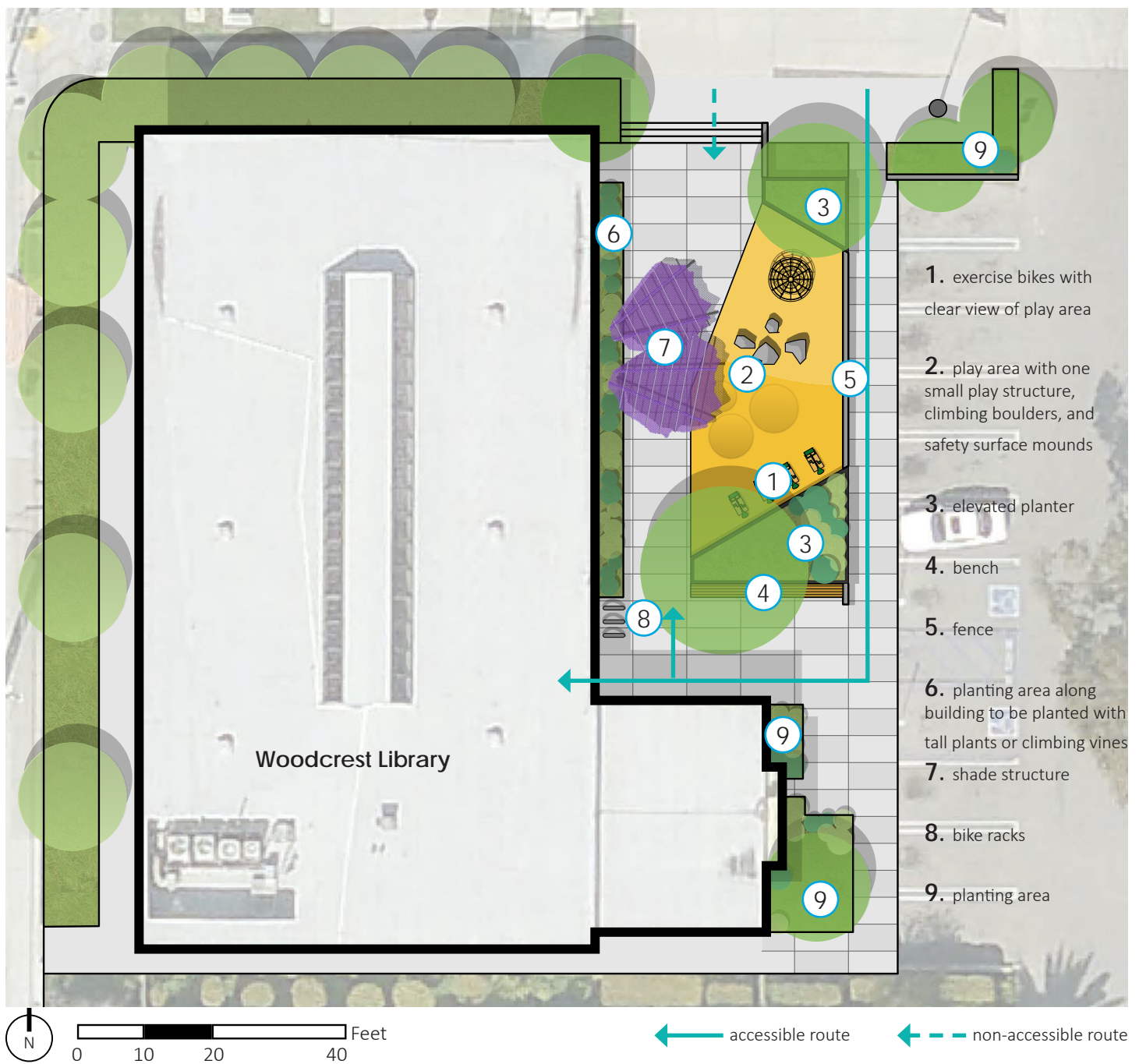
The central features to the new plaza are a small play area and space for outdoor reading. While a central walkway to the door is retained, much of the new area is paved with safety surfacing, which serve as a visual cue that the space is dedicated to playful activities. Play features include a small play structure and boulders for climbing. In some areas the safety surface creates mounds to create a simple but playful experience to explore. These spaces can additionally be used as seating for small outdoor reading sessions. The site design also includes stationary bikes within the play area. These bikes are intended to be used by parents who want to be able to watch their children as they play.

While the plaza is connected to the sidewalk through a small stairway, the accessible route to the plaza and library door is maintained along the parking lot. The play area is framed on either end by an elevated planter which help shield the space from the surrounding streets and keep plaza activity outside of the doorway to the library. Along the southern planter there is a bench for patrons who want to sit outside but not be in the play area. There are additionally bike racks close to the door. Trees planted within the planters, as well as the shade structure, will provide shade to the play area.



SITE DESIGNS

FIGURE 6.7 WOODCREST LIBRARY CONCEPT



Inspirational Imagery



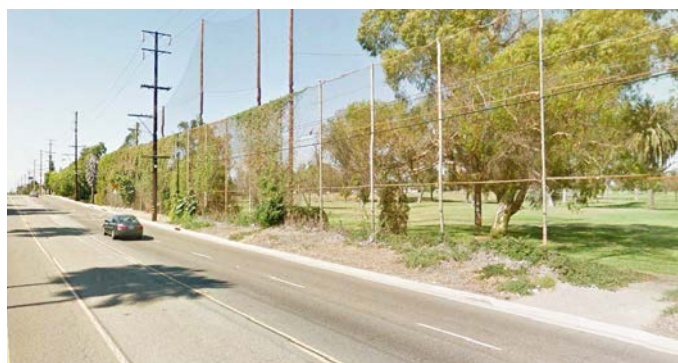
CHESTER WASHINGTON FITNESS TRAIL

SITE SUMMARY

Chester Washington Golf Course is an 18-hole golf course operated by Los Angeles County located on the West Athens-Westmont community border with the City of Hawthorne. The golf course is public, but there are fees to use the course or to hold events at the facility. The course is bordered to the south by El Segundo Boulevard, to the east by Western Avenue, to the west by Van Ness Avenue, and to the north by a rail corridor operated by Southern Pacific Rail. There is a small housing complex located the southwest of the course. The course is surrounded by a tall security fence on all sides and there are no public walkways around the course. The golf course serves as one of the largest green spaces in West Athens-Westmont and a community trail could potentially expand its capacity to provide amenities for those who do not golf.



Western Avenue Boundary
source: Google, DigitalGlobe, 2015



Van Ness Boundary
source: Google, DigitalGlobe, 2015



Corner of El Segundo and Western Avenue
source: Google, DigitalGlobe, 2015

COMMUNITY NEED

Although Chester Washington Fitness Trail was not considered during the community design workshop, the features included in its conceptual design are based on results from other events, particularly the community's desire to see more opportunities to walk and exercise in their community. A major concern with developing trails in other parts of the community is that the trail will not be safe or it will draw crime to the area. The fitness trail around Chester Washington Golf Course would utilize a site that is already active and well-monitored. Also, most of the trail would not be located near homes.

SITE DESIGN

The Chester Washington Fitness Trail is composed of two 6-foot wide trail segments that follow the perimeter of the golf course and two fitness nodes at the corners of Western Avenue and W. 120th Street (the entrance to Chester Washington Golf Course) and Western Avenue and El Segundo Boulevard. The northern fitness node near the entrance could include a small walking loop through the existing trees with fitness equipment. The fitness node along El Segundo Boulevard could be placed behind the existing Chester Washington Golf Course sign and could include new planting to integrate the fitness equipment with the gateway signage.

In most places the trail could be accommodated by moving the existing course fence in from the adjacent street. There are a few areas where the course trail or existing trees would interfere with the new fence or the new trail. These areas are highlighted in orange in Figure 6.7. In addition, the section of El Segundo Boulevard that is residential does not have a sidewalk. In order for the trail to continue, a segment of the street right-of-way or a section within the golf course would need to be reclaimed.

Along Van Ness Avenue, the golf course fence is set back approximately 4 feet from the road but a power line runs down the corridor with poles and street lights located approximately every 150 feet. The power lines could be placed underground or the fence could be set in an additional 6 feet to accommodate a trail in this area.

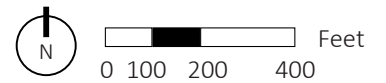
There is a low point at the northwest corner of Chester Washington Golf Course, located near the intersection of Van Ness Avenue and the rail corridor and circled in orange in Figure 6.7. The trail would need to go through the golf course here to connect the loop or could continue along S. Van Ness Avenue to Holly Park.

Creating a walking path outside of the golf course fence could allow the path to be more accessible to local residents. It also could potentially bring more people to the course for exercise and improve pedestrian activity in this area.

FIGURE 6.8 CHESTER WASHINGTON FITNESS TRAIL CONCEPT



- potential trail alignment
- key opportunities
- right-of-way constraint





7 - IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the West Athens-Westmont Community Parks and Recreation Plan will require long-term financing and strategic administrative policies for construction, acquisitions, and maintenance. This chapter includes recommendations of strategies, implementation actions, funding resources, and partnership agreements for achieving the “Safe and Green” vision in West Athens-Westmont.

SUMMARY OF GOALS

As presented in the Vision Plan in Chapter Five, goals for improving parks, recreation, and greening in West Athens-Westmont include:

1. *Increase overall green space and expand recreational opportunities for people of all ages, including youth and seniors.*
2. *Ensure that all parks and recreation facilities improve community safety and do not create new security issues.*
3. *Utilize park development as a catalyst for improving public health and safety community-wide.*
4. *Provide new places for exercise and safe places to walk.*
5. *Foster public participation in park projects and ensure that the community is included in decision-making processes.*
6. *Maintain and enhance West Athens-Westmont’s urban forest.*
7. *Focus on multi-benefit urban greening projects that optimize environmental services.*

These goals are achievable through new park development, updates to existing facilities, and partnerships between Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and other agencies and community groups.



*Dills Park
City of Paramount, CA*

STRATEGIES

Strategic policy and development actions at various places throughout West Athens-Westmont would be necessary to achieve these goals and increase overall parkland in West Athens-Westmont. The following is a summary of the key strategies to implement this project. Importantly, these strategies work together to achieve the vision of this plan and many of the strategies address multiple goals.

1. **ENSURE COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS AND SUPPORT DPR’S SUSTAINABILITY GOALS.** Helen Keller Park is the only County Park in West Athens-Westmont and is currently undergoing remediation and renovation. Upgrades that take place during renovation should be in line with the needs identified in this plan and utilize green technologies to improve overall park efficiency. The other DPR facility, Chester Washington Golf Course, has limited capacity to expand uses, but could integrate environmentally efficient landscape and energy use practices.
2. **CREATE A SAFE PARKS AND SAFE STREETS STRATEGY FOR WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT.** West Athens-Westmont residents are extremely concerned about the safety of their streets and see this as a major impediment to park use. A strong commitment to public safety would ensure that park facilities are enjoyable and accessible to all residents.
3. **STRATEGICALLY ACQUIRE VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED LOTS FOR PARKS AND GREENING THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY.** Vacant and underutilized parcels could be transformed into new green space for recreational and green infrastructure use. Transforming these spaces could increase overall green space and improve public perception of environmental health and recreation options in the community. Disinvestment in West Athens-Westmont has left behind a number of lots that may require cleanup and remediation. Typically, these spaces are not deemed desirable for park development, but in urban areas with built-out conditions, they could be considered and remediated where appropriate. Furthermore, cleaning a contaminated site could provide important benefits in terms of public and environmental health.
4. **DEVELOP NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, POCKET PARKS, PARK NODES, AND WALKING PATHS TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY’S DESIRE FOR EXERCISE AND PUBLIC HEALTH.** New opportunities for sports and exercise need to be explored throughout West Athens-

Westmont. These interventions could include walking paths, exercise equipment, or spaces for fitness events. Placing fitness parks along community corridors, walking paths, or proposed bicycle routes in the Los Angeles County Bike Master Plan will increase the benefits of these facilities as they can work in tandem within a community wellness network. The community additionally needs new green facilities that will help to contribute to peacefulness and psychological well-being. Green amenities can have a calming benefit, which is particularly helpful in communities with high levels of crime.



*East Rancho Dominguez Park
East Rancho Dominguez, CA*

5. CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS.

Healthy and safe recreation options for young people in West Athens-Westmont is important, as it provides an alternative to more dangerous activities such as gang participation. Youth-focused programs and facilities ensure that young people have places within the community where they can recreate in a fun and safe way. In particular, West Athens-Westmont has an active and engaged teen population who want greater recreational options for their demographic within their community.

6. ACTIVATE KEY CORRIDORS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY WITH PARK PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMING.

S. Normandie Avenue, S. Vermont Avenue, and Imperial Highway are important corridors that are currently considered to be very dangerous. Activating these corridors through park projects and partnership activities with other agencies and organizations will help to increase supervision on these routes and potentially discourage illicit activities. Green streets improvements, such as increased street tree planting, crosswalk improvements, and public art, as well as the development of park projects along these corridors, could dramatically shape the landscape of West Athens-Westmont.

7. UTILIZE “POP-UP” INTERVENTIONS TO CREATE RECREATIONAL AND GATHERING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SHORT TERM.

There is limited available space for new parkland development in West Athens-Westmont. Partnering with local businesses, non-profits, and public agencies to temporarily utilize space could provide some relief to recreational needs in the short-term. Potential locations include parking lots and public streets that could be closed for a limited time. Creative programs, such as mobile sports and exercise clinics, outdoor movie nights, and food truck events, among others, could help alleviate the community’s concern for lack of recreational options and events in West Athens-Westmont.

8. MAXIMIZE URBAN FORESTRY POTENTIAL AND UTILIZE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE.

Green infrastructure, such as urban forests, stormwater swales, and pervious planting areas, can provide valuable ecological services and aesthetic benefits to a community. Throughout West Athens-Westmont, there are opportunities to expand and

enhance the existing urban tree canopy and implement green infrastructure interventions. Within Helen Keller Park, Chester Washington Golf Course, and other potential future parks, DPR must ensure that the tree population is healthy and well-maintained and that water and soil systems are well-managed. Other local agencies, community groups, and local residents can also work to improve the overall urban forest and expand ecological services in the community.

9. CONTINUE DIALOGUE WITH COMMUNITY ABOUT PARK NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO BE INVOLVED IN PARK ADMINISTRATION.

The planning process for the West Athens-Westmont Community Parks and Recreation Plan started an important relationship between DPR and local residents. Participants in outreach events expressed interest in continuing to work on parks and recreation issues in their community and should be considered valuable advocates for implementation of this plan.

10. SUPPORT INITIATIVES THAT INCREASE ACCESS TO PARKS, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, AND REGIONAL DESTINATIONS.

Access to recreational opportunities in West Athens-Westmont can be enriched through improved pedestrian and bicycle amenities in the community and shuttle services to bring residents to green spaces and community centers. Programs to take residents to regional destinations throughout the County would further expand the reach of parks and recreation in the community.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

The following actions provide specific direction and are categorized as short, medium, or long-term. Short-term actions represent items that DPR and/or partner agencies could begin to explore in the next five years. Medium-term projects require more coordination and could be pursued within five to ten years. Long-term actions require extensive coordination, planning, and long-range strategies appropriate for ten to fifty years in the future. In addition, some actions are ongoing and require interim monitoring or progress.

These actions are detailed in the following tables.

STRATEGY 1: Ensure county parks and recreation facilities meet community needs and support DPR’s sustainability goals.

Implementation Actions		Phasing			
		Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
RECREATION ACTIONS	<p>1.1 Complete planned improvements at Helen Keller Park.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restore playgrounds, picnic areas, and the softball field impacted by soil remediation. Install fitness station near pool facility. Create sloped lawn for presentation of outdoor movies. 	●			
	<p>1.2 Create fitness trail around Chester Washington Golf Course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move perimeter fence to accommodate walking track between sidewalk and fence. Install stations with fitness equipment along trail. 		●		
SUSTAINABILITY ACTIONS	WATER CONSERVATION				
	<p>1.3 Ensure all parks and recreation facilities meet requirements set forth in Executive Order B-29-15 to address State drought actions.</p>	●			
	<p>1.4 Perform a preliminary water audit and perform additional audits biannually at existing parks and recreation facilities and any new parks.</p>	●			●
	<p>1.5 Install smart controllers or implement maintenance schedule to adjust irrigation frequency monthly to reflect evapotranspiration rate expected in the next month.</p>	●			●
	<p>1.6 Replace all high water-use plumbing fixtures with low water-use ones and use only low water-use fixtures in new County parks and recreation facilities.</p>	●			
	<p>1.7 Monitor regularly for potential leaks in plumbing and replace quickly when leak is identified.</p>				●
	<p>1.8 Ensure that all planting areas are provided with a two-inch (2”) layer of organic mulch (free of weed seed), consistent with plant palette in DPR’s Park Design Guidelines and Standards. At minimum, replenish mulch once per year in November.</p>	●			●
	<p>1.9 Use California native and drought-tolerant plant species, consistent with plant palette in DPR’s Park Design Guidelines and Standards, in existing and new County parks.</p>				●
	<p>1.10 Explore opportunities for demonstration spaces that highlight water-efficient planting and irrigation.</p>		●		

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation Actions		Phasing			
		Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
SUSTAINABILITY ACTIONS	<p>1.11 Introduce recycled water for irrigation at Helen Keller Park, Chester Washington Golf Course, and new parks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (DPW) and water purveyors in connecting County parks to recycled water lines where available. Participate in meetings and discussions on expansion of service areas for recycled water. • Systematically replace plants unsuitable for reused water irrigation with suitable species with higher salt tolerance, identified in the “Preferred Plan List- Recycled Water” from DPR’s Park Design Guidelines and Standards. • Research replacing active turf grass areas with drought-tolerant, high salt-tolerant turf grass, such as <i>Paspalum vaginatum</i> (seashore paspalum or platinum paspalum) and research replacing cool turf areas with drought and salt-tolerant utility groundcovers, such as <i>Lippia nodiflora</i> (Kurapia). 		•		•
	WATER QUALITY				
	<p>1.12 Increase stormwater management potential at count facilities and ensure that new parks maximize stormwater retention on-site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant bioswales along western edge of Helen Keller Park with native plants and utilize interpretive signage to educate the public about stormwater and wildlife habitat. • In the design of new parks, use the standards of a “designated project” outlined in Chapter 12.84 of the Los Angeles County Code: Low Impact Development Standards, requiring either 100-percent stormwater retention on-site or low-impact design strategies to mitigate whatever is not retained on-site. • Research capacity to utilize park spaces as urban sponges for street runoff by integrating curb cuts along park edges and creating stormwater basins along parks. • Replace existing paving with permeable paving in parking lots and use pervious surfaces in new parks. 	•			•
	ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND GREEN BUILDINGS				
	<p>1.13 Install solar panels in exposed parking lots or on roofs at Helen Keller Park, Chester Washington Golf Course, and new parks.</p>		•		
<p>1.14 Utilize paving materials with low albedo to reduce surface temperatures.</p>				•	

Smart controllers were installed at seven Los Angeles County Parks, which resulted in a 219 million gallon water reduction over a 12 month monitoring period, signifying a 23% reduction of water usage.

Source: Los Angeles County DPR

The California State Water Resources Control Board proposed that Southern California Water Company, which provides water to West Athens-Westmont, reduce usage by 25% to achieve mandatory statewide conservation goal of 25% reduction.

Source: State Water Resources Control Board

Implementation Actions		Phasing				
		Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing	
SUSTAINABILITY ACTIONS	<p>1.15 Construct all new County park buildings and park building remodels to meet U.S. Green Building Council LEED Rated Silver, as directed in the Park Design Guidelines and Standards, and ensure that all new buildings on County parks properties conform with the County’s Green Building Ordinances.</p>				●	
	<p>1.16 Pursue Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification (or other equivalent energy certified ratings) for all new buildings of 5,000 square feet or more on County Park properties.</p>				●	
	CARBON SEQUESTRATION					
	<p>1.17 Maintain and enhance park forest following the recommendations set forth in the urban forestry implementation actions below.</p>				●	
	<p>1.18 Utilize an organic approach to soils management to improve organic matter content, which will in turn increase carbon sequestration in the soil. See “Healthy Soil” below.</p>				●	
	HEALTHY SOIL					
	<p>1.19 Perform soils analysis of existing multipurpose fields to assess drainage, compaction, and organic matter content. Test shall include recommendations to increase soil organic matter content to 5 percent using quality green-waste compost. If needed, implement recommendations to improve soil tilth, drainage, and carbon sequestering potential.</p>		●		●	
	<p>1.20 Turf maintenance shall include grass recycling and topdressing turf with finely screened quality compost after aeration and/or 1-4 times per year to maintain a healthy, living soil profile.</p>				●	
	<p>1.21 All landscaped areas shall receive a regular reapplication of organic mulch, preferably shredded tree/shrub trimmings, to a minimum depth of three inches (3”) for all exposed soil to minimize evapotranspiration, protect against compaction, and maintain overall soil health.</p>				●	
<p>1.22 Plant and soil amendments for maintenance shall be specified as compost, compost tea, or other naturally occurring and non-synthetic fertilizers for all landscaped areas.</p>				●		

DPR’s Energy and Water Efficiency Program seeks to further reduce energy and water consumption at County Parks by establishing specific reduction targets and a formal reporting system process to measure DPR’s progress towards these targets.

Implementation Actions		Phasing			
		Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
SUSTAINABILITY ACTIONS	ADMINISTRATIVE PROTOCOLS				
	<p>1.23 Establish and implement guidelines for operation, design, and development of existing and new park facilities that will meet the needs of the West Athens-Westmont community while minimizing impact on the natural environment. The guidelines will address a variety of issues including, but not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems designs which promote efficient use of water and energy. • Landscape design which uses drought-tolerant and native plants where appropriate. • Use of construction material with recycled content. • Reduce generations of waste during construction and occupancy. • Use of construction material with reduced or no release of harmful gases. • Building design and operation which promotes indoor air quality and users' comfort level and productivity. • Installation of efficient plumbing fixtures to reduce potable water use and lower production of waste water. • Purchase of sustainable cleaning materials and building maintenance products. 				•
	EXISTING INITIATIVES				
	<p>1.24 Implement the County's Energy and Environmental Policy at Helen Keller Park and Chester Washington Golf Course, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy and Water Efficiency Program • Environmental Stewardship Program • Sustainable Design Program 				•

The Environmental Stewardship Program aims to reduce DPR's environmental footprint through a series of environmental impact actions.

The Sustainable Design Program provides integration of sustainable, green building technologies into the design of park improvement and refurbishment projects. The program seeks to extend the life cycle or useful life of buildings in County parks and maximize energy and water use efficiency.

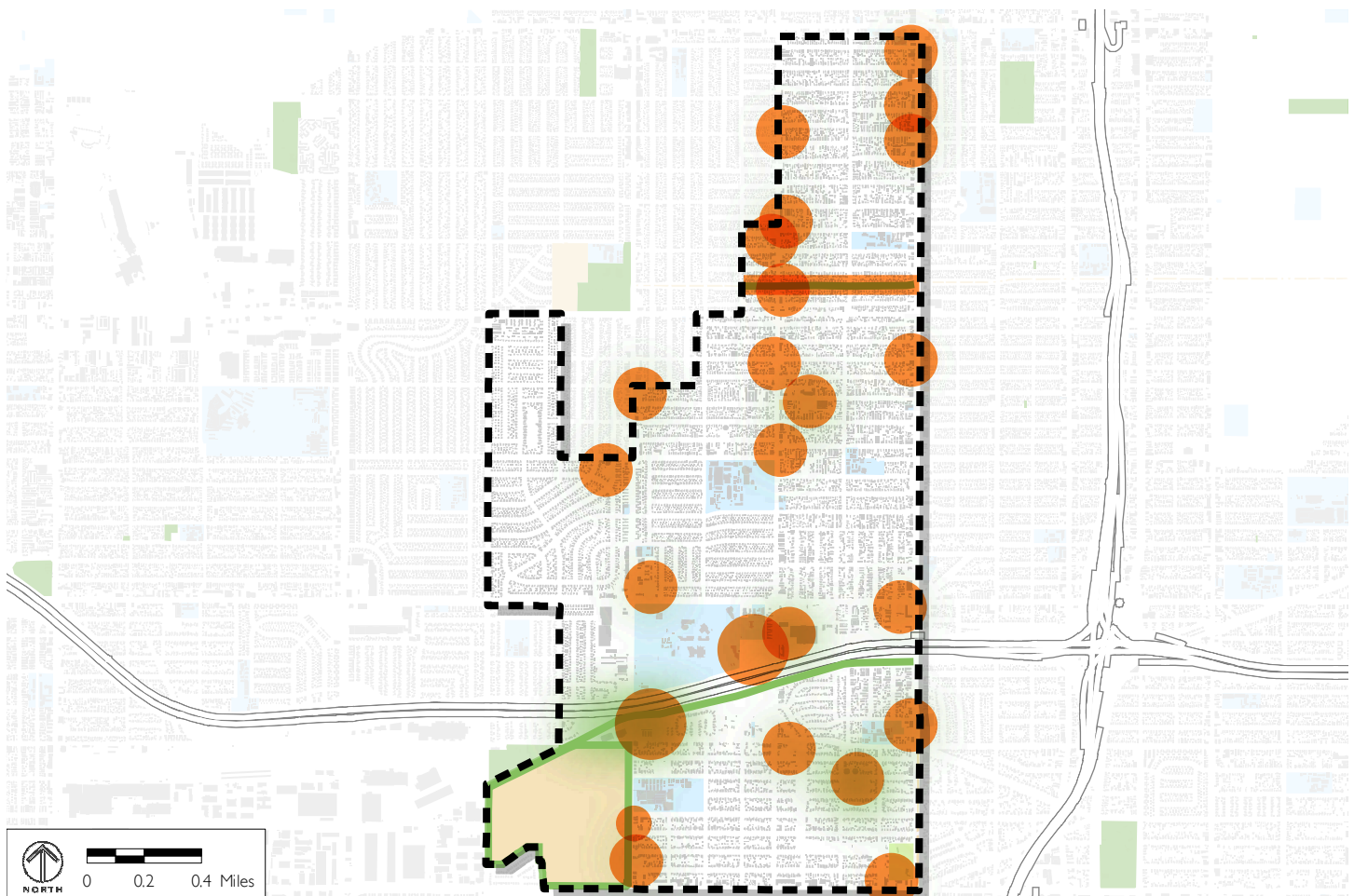
STRATEGY 2: Create a safe streets and safe parks strategy For West Athens-Westmont.

Implementation Actions		Phasing			
		Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
PARKS	2.1 Expand the Parks After Dark program into Helen Keller Park and any new parks in West Athens-Westmont.		●		
	2.2 Contract with the Parks Bureau of the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department (Sheriff’s Department) to conduct regular walking patrols through Helen Keller Park and new parks, including regular passes through restrooms, and interactions with park users, informing them of any events or updates.				●
	2.3 Install facilities that are attractive to large groups at new parks that are located outside of high pedestrian traffic and high visibility areas to ensure frequent use.		●		
	2.4 Develop a program to create outposts or offices for intervention groups within parks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider using a potential new park along S. Normandie Avenue as a prototype project. 		●		
	2.5 Empower a citizen task force such as local business owners or homeowners who can take inventory of the park, assess its safety, and report back to DPR.				●
	2.6 Install community call boxes within new parks to directly contact the Sheriff’s Department.		●		
	2.7 Ensure that new parks incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate CPTED strategies as part of the design review for any new parks projects. Ensure that a strong preventive maintenance program is developed for each new park. 	●			●
STREETS	2.8 Compile community feedback regarding concerns about street activity for the Sheriff’s Department and DPW.	●			
	2.9 Work with the Sheriff’s Department and DPW to implement pedestrian streetscape and safety improvements throughout the community.		●		
COMMUNITY	2.10 Hold annual job fairs at local parks, including resources such as mental health and housing.	●			
	2.11 Utilize local organizations that help at-risk populations find for new positions in parks and for local construction.				●
	2.12 Create a park lunch program to include resources for the homeless.		●		

IMPLEMENTATION

STRATEGY 3: Strategically acquire vacant and underutilized lots for parks and greening throughout the community.

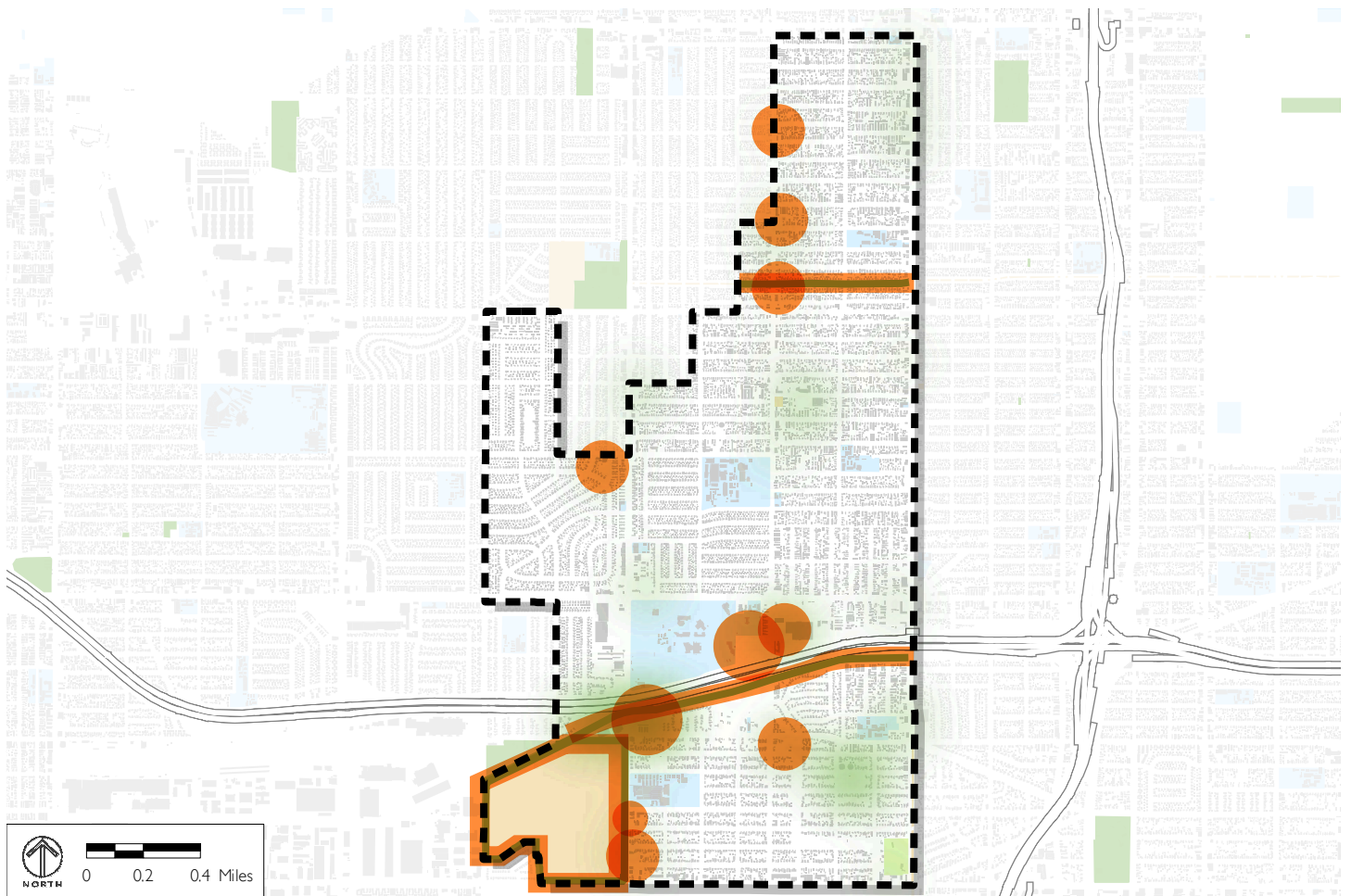
Implementation Actions	Phasing			
	Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
<p>3.1 Reach out to owners of currently vacant lots and the abandoned rail corridor identified in this plan for potential acquisition.</p>	●			●
<p>3.2 Conduct an annual review of vacancies along key corridors to identify potential new acquisitions, including vacant buildings and foreclosed properties.</p>				●
<p>3.4 Partner with Southern California Water Company to create a drought-tolerant demonstration garden and mural on existing water tanks at their storage facility on Florence Avenue.</p>	●			
<p>3.5 Consider applying to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for brownfield remediation grants to develop a new park with known contamination issues, or investigate parkland opportunity site with suspected contamination due to previous use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose a site to investigate as a test case for remediation and park creation. 			●	●



IMPLEMENTATION

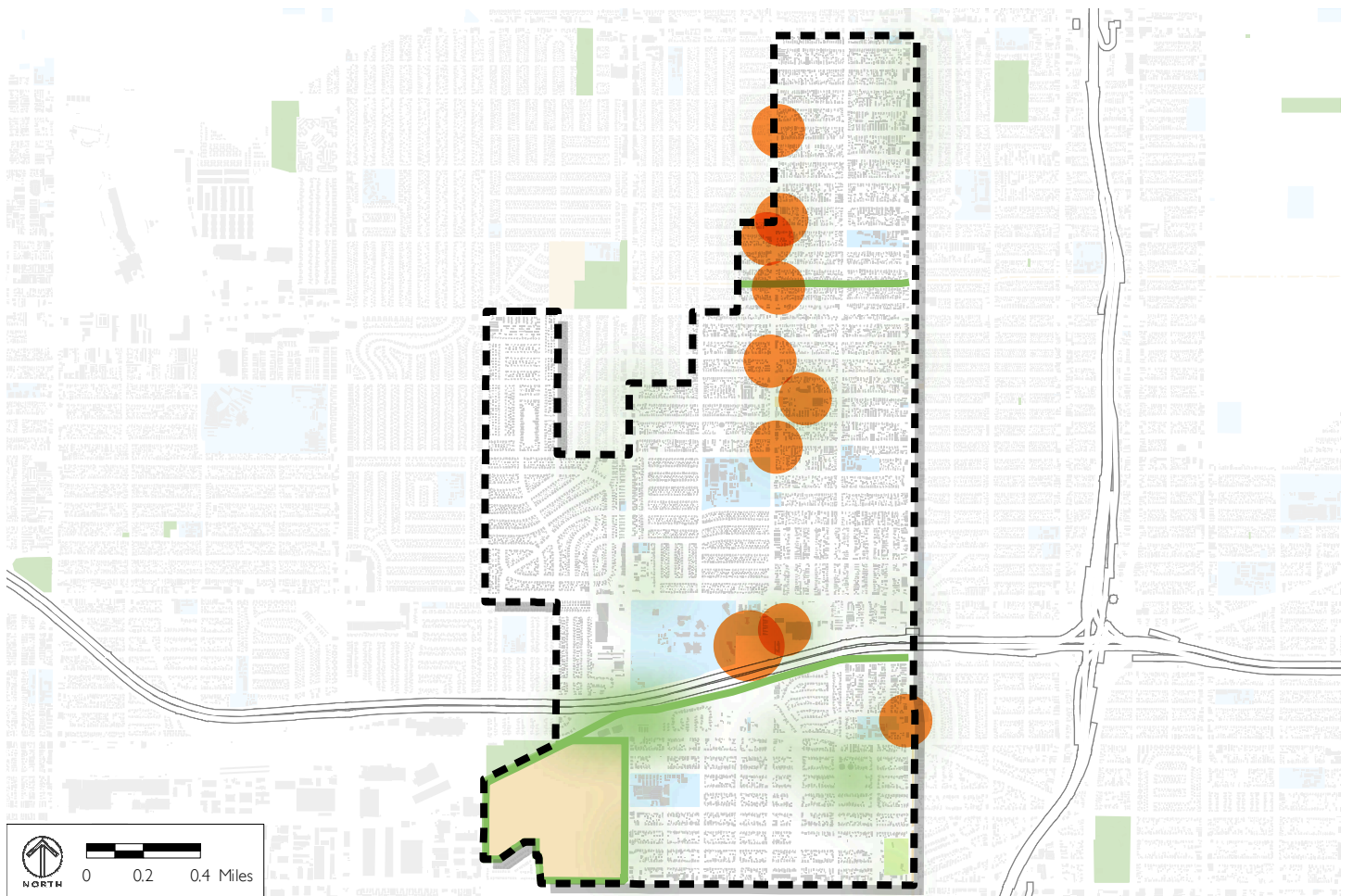
STRATEGY 4: Develop neighborhood parks, pocket parks, park nodes, and walking paths to support the community’s desire for exercise and public health.

Implementation Actions	Phasing			
	Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
4.1 Create new walking paths around Chester Washington Golf Course, along utility corridor along 98th Street and along the rail corridor adjacent to the 105 Freeway, as identified in this plan.		●		
4.2 Install park nodes with exercise equipment along walking paths, popular pedestrian routes, and near schools.		●		
4.3 Create mobile program unit to travel to provide programs, such as exercise and dance classes, at small pocket parks and at “pop-up” events.		●		
4.4 Partner with DPW to implement pedestrian improvements and street tree planting throughout the community to encourage walking along sidewalks.	●			●



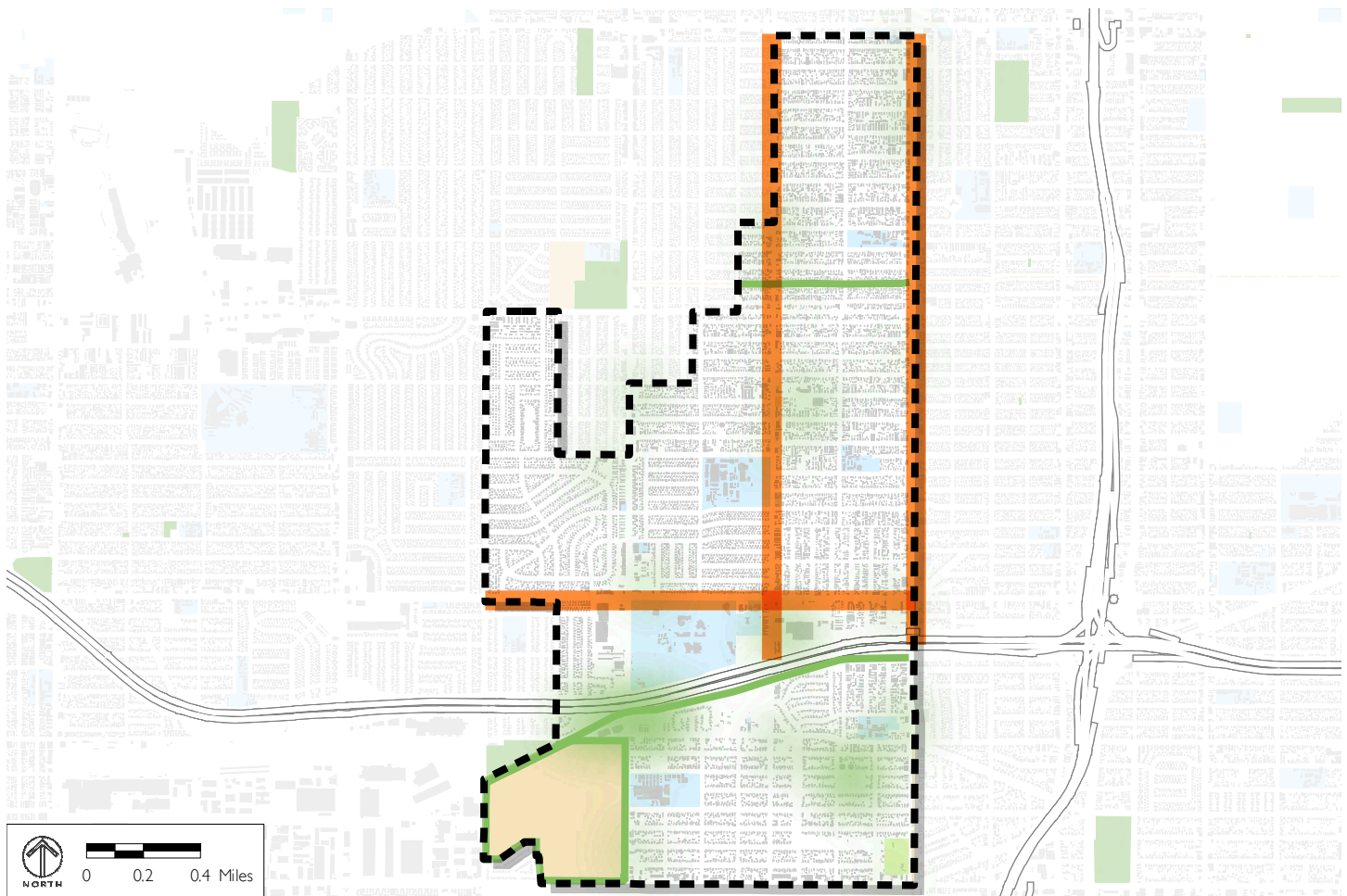
STRATEGY 5: Create new opportunities for children and teens.

Implementation Actions	Phasing			
	Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
<p>5.1 Develop a joint-use agreement(s) with Los Angeles Unified School District to create a partnership green space at Woodcrest Elementary School.</p>	●			●
<p>5.2 Coordinate with community garden organizations to facilitate new community gardens for youth and parents at existing schools in West Athens-Westmont.</p>				●
<p>5.3 Create new tot lot, a play area for children under five, at a new pocket park.</p>		●		
<p>5.4 Install a splash pad at a new pocket park.</p>		●		
<p>5.5 Integrate amenities for teens into site designs for new parks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a skate or bike park along S. Normandie Avenue. • Partner with Washington High School and Los Angeles County Arts Commission to create a public art projects. 	●		●	●



STRATEGY 6: Activate key Corridors within the community with park projects and programming.

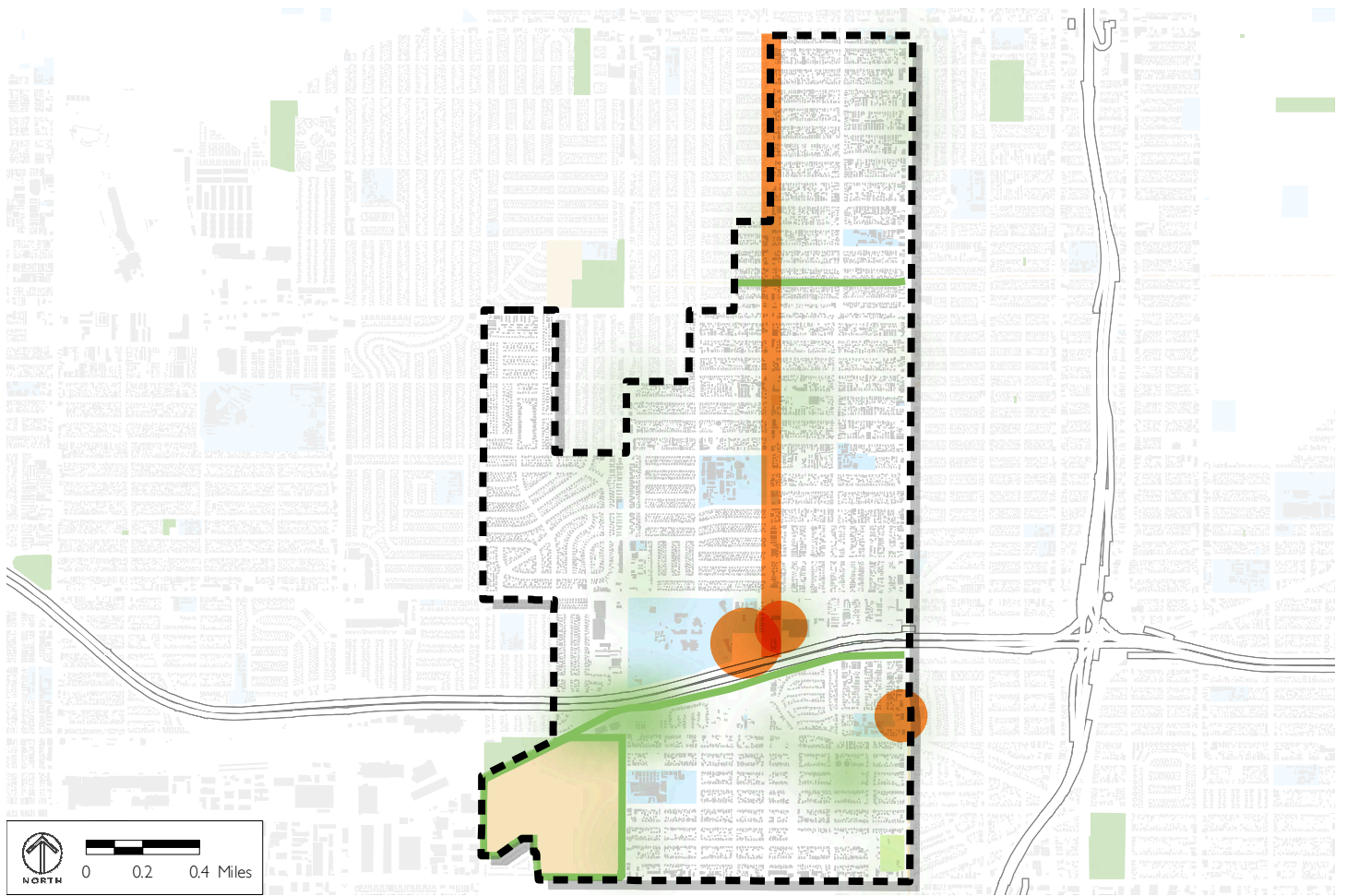
Implementation Actions	Phasing			
	Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
<p>6.1 Create pocket park(s), public art, and wayfinding corridors along S. Normandie Avenue, S. Vermont Avenue, and Imperial Highway.</p>				●
<p>6.2 Partner with DPW to implement Green Street concepts along S. Normandie Avenue, S. Vermont Avenue, and Imperial Highway, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street tree plantings. • Stormwater treatment basins. • Public art and community branding. 	●	●	●	



IMPLEMENTATION

STRATEGY 7: Utilize “pop-up” interventions to create recreational and gathering opportunities in the short term.

Implementation Actions	Phasing			
	Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
<p>7.1 Coordinate with DPW to temporarily close segments of streets for “pop-up” park events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider developing an annual S. Normandie Avenue street festival that closes the streets and creates sports courts in the right-of-way for the day. 	●	●		
<p>7.2 Partner with Sheriff’s Department to create a “pop-up” park events in the parking lot of Youth Activity League Centers.</p>	●			
<p>7.3 Partner with local businesses with large parking lots for “pop-up” park events.</p>		●		



IMPLEMENTATION

STRATEGY 8: Maximize urban forestry potential and utilize green infrastructure.

Implementation Actions		Phasing			
		Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
EXISTING	<p>8.1 Plant new trees at Helen Keller Park to bring canopy coverage to 15% within the park. New trees could be planted in the following areas to increase overall coverage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant street trees along S. Vermont Avenue to buffer the park from the active street. Plant shade trees in parking lot to increase overall canopy and reduce heat from asphalt. 	●	● ●		●
	<p>8.2 Replace trees lost during renovation with trees from the Preferred Tree List in Appendix E.</p>	●			
NEW	<p>8.3 Ensure maximum of 15 percent urban forest cover at new County parks.</p>				●
	<p>8.4 Partner with other agencies and groups to enhance urban forest throughout the community.</p>				●
County DPW	<p>Street Corridors Add street trees, particularly along the street corridors in high need areas (see Figure 5.3).</p> <p>Explore opportunities to bury utility lines throughout community to increase planting opportunities.</p> <p>Trees should be planted along S. Normandie Boulevard to create a more pleasant pedestrian environment and reduce stress.</p>	●			● ●
Caltrans	<p>Freeway Buffers Create buffers from freeways by planting trees along remnant parcels and vacant lots along the 105.</p> <p>Actively collaborate with Caltrans regarding projects within the Caltrans right-of-way.</p>	●			●
Southern Pacific Railroad	<p>Rail Corridors Create new urban forest corridor along rail line adjacent at the 105 Freeway.</p>			●	
Private Property Owners	<p>Residential Yards Educate residents about benefits of tree planting and offer tools to encourage and inspire residential projects, including through community involvement in urban forest projects.</p> <p>Encourage development of programs for utility companies to provide shade trees to home owners to increase community forest canopy and reduce residential energy use (The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 (HR2454) appropriated funds from the US Department of Energy to local utility companies for strategic tree planting).</p> <p>Encourage the use of Preferred Tree List in Appendix E.</p>				● ● ●

IMPLEMENTATION

STRATEGY 9: Continue dialogue with community about park needs and opportunities to be involved in park administration.

Implementation Actions	Phasing			
	Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
9.1 Develop a suggestion and/or complaint system at local parks, such as a drop-box for community feedback. Ensure that questions and concerns receive a follow-up call in a timely manner.	●			
9.2 Invest in additional “relationship building” training for park staff and Parks Bureau deputies.				●

STRATEGY 10: Support initiatives that increase access to parks, recreational facilities, and regional destinations.

Implementation Actions	Phasing			
	Short	Medium	Long	Ongoing
10.1 Partner with DPW to ensure that The Link shuttle provides service to new parks developed in West Athens-Westmont.				●
10.2 Partner with DPW to create Beach Bus service within walking distance of West Athens-Westmont during summer months.	●			
10.3 Create shuttle program to regional recreational open spaces, such as the Kenneth Hahn State Recreational Area and the Santa Monica Mountains.		●		



PARTNERSHIP

Partnering with other agencies, local non-profit groups, and individuals is key to improving parks and recreation in West Athens-Westmont. Nearly all of the identified potential opportunity sites are managed by other agencies or privately-owned, requiring collaboration to move forward. Furthermore, one of the best strategies for building support for a green space and keeping it safe is to have community support. Community-based partnerships build momentum for a greening project and help community members have greater ownership over a space.

PUBLIC AGENCIES AND PUBLIC UTILITIES

Partnerships with public agencies or public utilities can provide use of underutilized spaces or provide additional outreach and programming opportunities.

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Community safety is especially important in the development and enhancement of the West Athens-Westmont park system. Residents need to feel safe in parks and partnerships with park deputies from the Sheriff's Department to patrol new parks and respond to community concerns could potentially help to alleviate security issues. Additionally, the Sheriff Department's Youth Activity League (YAL) operates successful programming at two centers in West Athens-Westmont. Partnership to expand their facilities could offer some additional space for urban greening that is well-supervised and does not create security issues for the community.

COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Streetscape and pedestrian improvements could have dramatic impacts on the perception of public space in West Athens-Westmont. Increased exposure to landscape features can have a calming impact and reduce stress. Increasing urban street tree canopy can be a beneficial way of introducing these features into the community. Although these actions are outside of DPR's typical jurisdiction, they can help to improve park access and public perception of the overall greening of the community and should be considered via partnership with DPW.

COUNTY ARTS COMMISSION

Community members, particularly youth, expressed interest in seeing public arts projects in their community and consider art to be an important factor in making public space unique. Los Angeles County Arts Commission helps to create public art projects throughout the County. Partnership with the Arts Commission could be beneficial in developing new plaza areas as well as creating new arts programming or events.

SCHOOLS

There are currently no joint-use agreements with schools in West Athens-Westmont. Developing joint-use agreements with Los Angeles Unified School District or private schools in

the community could provide new park resources, particularly in areas with limited opportunity sites. Schools might also serve as locations for green space outside of parks, such as community or educational gardens. Although this might not be a partnership project for DPR, supporting these facilities through grant assistance and operational guidance will help to increase overall green space.

There could also be partnership opportunities with the State of California Community Colleges for potential public use of facilities at Los Angeles Southwest College.

CALTRANS

DPR has experience working with Caltrans through lease agreements to develop recreation amenities on their property. In West Athens-Westmont, DPR could continue to explore lease agreements with Caltrans in order to develop green infrastructure projects along the 105 Freeway.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WATER COMPANY

Southern California Water Company owns and operates a number of sites with large water tanks in West Athens-Westmont. Like other water companies across the state, the Southern California Water Company is dealing with constraints from the drought emergency and potential partnership opportunities could include educational installations about water conservation, such as demonstration gardens to teach residents about drought-tolerant species or murals on the water tanks with water conservation themes or history of California water use.

LOS ANGELES CITY DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND POWER (DWP)

A multi-benefit lease agreement with DWP would enable the development of the utility corridor trail along the median in 98th Street described in this plan. Such an agreement would be developed through coordination with DWP regarding the design of the proposed project and long-term lease of the spaces.

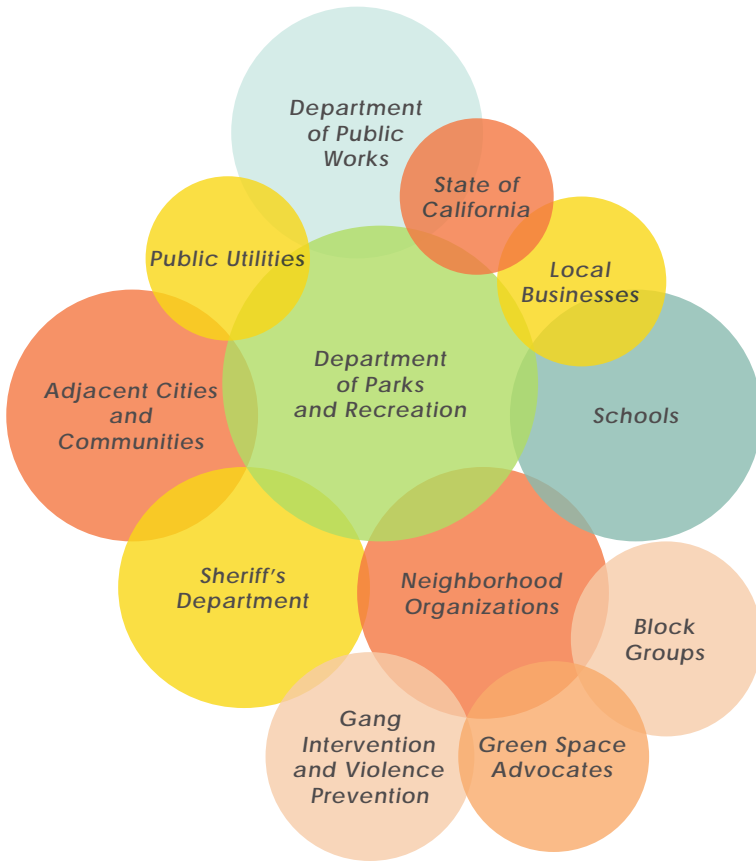
ADJACENT CITIES

Some of the trails identified in the plan could be more effective if they extend beyond the West Athens-Westmont boundary into other communities. This requires partnering with neighboring communities, including the Cities of Hawthorne and Inglewood and the unincorporated communities to the east.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND GREEN SPACE ADVOCATES

Partnership agreements with community-based organizations are another tool for development. The West Athens Victory Garden was developed and is managed by the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust (LANLT). Other such partnerships with green space advocacy groups could enable the development of a number of the park and greening projects identified in this plan. LANLT could continue to be a strong

FIGURE 7.1 POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIP WEB IN WEST ATHENS-WESTMONT



- Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust
- A Better LA
- Reclaiming America’s Communities through Empowerment (RACE)
- Advocates for Peace and Urban Unity (APUU)
- Soledad Enrichment Action (SEA)
- Normandie Halladie Block Club Association
- St. Francis Xavier Cabrini School and Church
- St. John’s Well Child and Family Center
- Residents of Hale Morris Lewis Manor
- Southwest Community Association
- British Academy of Film and Television (BAFTA)
- Weingart YMCA Wellness & Aquatic Center
- Communities for a Better Environment
- Rails to Trails Conservancy
- Los Angeles Parks Foundation
- Los Angeles Community Garden Council
- Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
- Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority
- Los Angeles Conservation Corps
- Restore Neighborhoods LA
- Trust for Public Land
- Los Angeles Bicycle Coalition

ally in the development of smaller green spaces and gardens within West Athens-Westmont, while the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy could help to develop nature space or urban greening projects. Rail-to-Trails, a non-profit group that advocates for the conversion of unused railways to trails, could be a partner in the development of the linear corridor along the 105 Freeway.

Partnership with gang intervention and violence prevention groups could also ensure that future park projects are safe and well-supervised. The plan calls for the development of intervention group outposts at pocket parks through the community. Active dialogue with these groups will be necessary to ensure that these spaces are utilized. Residents will also play an important role in the development of new park space and the informal supervision of these spaces. Creating a citizen’s green space advisory committee from local leadership and partnering with established green space advocacy groups will ensure that new parks, trails, and greening projects in West Athens-Westmont will be well-used and well-loved.

Potential community partners for projects in West Athens-Westmont include (but are not limited to):

PRIVATE OWNERS, AND LOCAL BUSINESSES

Limited land availability for new parkland development suggests that creative strategies to provide recreational options to residents may be necessary. Partnering with local businesses and community groups to create “pop-up” parks in parking lots or along streets could be beneficial in the short-term before new parks can be developed. Additionally, partnering with local businesses near future park spaces to become unofficial overseers of public space could help to ensure the safety of these spaces and build cooperation between the County and local businesses. In these cases, it will be important to establish prompt and responsive methods of contact with these groups.



*West Athens Victory Garden
source: Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust*

FUNDING SOURCES

There are consistent sources of funding for developing new parks and renovating existing parks. However, this funding is typically in short supply in relation to the need. While funds from California's Proposition 84 have facilitated new parks over the past several years, these funds have largely been expended.

The following sources of parks construction funds are divided into traditional funding sources, financing and other revenue-raising mechanisms, partnerships and other creative solutions, and grants. It may take more than one of these sources to build or renovate a park. Because there are many grants available that may apply to parks in Los Angeles County, the bulk of this section describes those grants.

CONVENTIONAL FUNDING SOURCES

The primary traditional sources of parks funding are the County's General Fund and developer dedication of land or in-lieu fees.

QUIMBY ACT FEES

Since the passage of the 1975 Quimby Act,¹ cities and counties have been authorized to pass ordinances requiring that developers set aside land, donate conservation easements, or pay fees for parks. Revenues generated through the Quimby Act cannot be used for the operation and maintenance of park facilities.² A 1982 amendment (AB 1600) requires agencies to clearly show a reasonable relationship between the public need for the recreation facility or park land, and the type of development project upon which the fee is imposed. Cities and counties with a high ratio of park space to inhabitants can set a standard of up to 5 acres per thousand persons for new development. Cities with a lower ratio can only require the provision of up to 3 acres of park space per thousand people.

In Los Angeles County, in order to determine the local park space obligation for a subdivision, a formula is used which considers the number of dwelling units in the subdivision, the average household size by Park Planning Area (PPA) (which differs for single family, multifamily, mobile home developments, and by PPA), and the adopted ratio of 3 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, per the Quimby Act. However, it should be noted that in accordance with the County's General Plan parkland dedication standards, as a condition of zone change approval, General Plan amendment, Specific Plan approval, or Development Agreement, the County may require a subdivider to provide 4 acres of local parkland per 1,000 residents in unincorporated areas, and 6 acres of regional parkland per 1,000 residents in the county as a whole.³

It should be noted that West Athens-Westmont has very limited Quimby funding because there have been very few new residential subdivisions in the community.

GENERAL FUND

The County's General Fund is primarily comprised of revenues from property taxes, and a portion is allocated annually to parks to address existing needs. In 2013-2014, recreation and cultural functions cost \$722 million, or 3 percent of Los Angeles County's budget, with parks and recreation receiving \$112 million.⁴

FINANCING AND REVENUE MECHANISMS

To raise new sources of revenue, DPR can consider various mechanisms. These include relying on private development to finance parks, privatizing parks services, or developing parks services that charge a fee to users.⁵

BONDS AND LEVIES

Taxpayer-approved measures to issue a bond or levy a tax are commonly used financing tools, but they require significant political support. Proposition A, approved in 1992, provided \$52 million per year through a tax levy of an average of \$13 per year per homeowner in the County to fund parks. Proposition K, passed in 1996, provides \$28 million per year and will expire in 2019. A new bond or tax levy would need to be approved in order to continue this source of funding for parks in the County.

LEASE FINANCING

Lease-purchase agreements allow an agency to lease a facility while purchasing it in order to obtain a facility with a smaller investment up front. Cities have used the sale of Certificates of Participation to finance park improvements and the purchase of open space. Lease-purchase financing does not require voter approval.⁶

RAISING REVENUES

There are several ways to raise revenues by using existing parks infrastructure. Some strategies tend to be controversial, such as privatizing or outsourcing services, while others are more common, including soliciting business sponsorships of facilities or events. Charging a fee to use facilities is another controversial source of revenue. However, many parks and recreation departments already do this with some services, such as swimming pool use. The most profitable fee-for-service facilities include golf courses, tennis courts, and event facilities.⁷ To reduce inequitable access to parks facilities, many parks departments will provide subsidies for low-income users.

1 [California Government Code §66477](#)

2 [Westrup, Laura, 2002, Quimby Act 101: An Abbreviated Overview, Sacramento: California Department of Parks and Recreation. \(<http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/quimby101.pdf>\).](#)

3 [Draft 2035 General Plan, Policy P/R 3.1.](#)

4 <http://ceo.lacounty.gov/pdf/budget/2013/2012-13%20Recommended%20Budget%20Charts.pdf>

5 <http://www.pps.org/reference/financeparks1/>

6 <http://ceres.ca.gov/planning/financing/chap6.html>

7 <https://www.tpl.org/sites/default/files/cloud.tpl.org/pubs/ccpe-localparks-localfinancingvol2-textonly.pdf>

Another option is to charge voluntary annual fees, allowing residents to choose whether to donate or fill out a form in order to receive a membership card.

GRANTS

Grants are available for parks and parks-related construction. In addition to grants intended to build parks, specialized grants that may apply to various Los Angeles County Parks include environmental, trails, community development, waterways, urban forestry, or landscaping funds. The grants described below are organized by these categories. Grants may require a local match in either funds or volunteer labor.

PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES

- **EXCESS FUNDS GRANT PROGRAM.** These grants were established through the Safe Neighborhood Parks Propositions of 1992 and 1996 and are intended to provide funding for “high priority” parks and recreation projects in Los Angeles County. Competitive grants can be received for projects that include urban tree planting, restoration of natural land, and at-risk youth recreation, among others.⁸
- **CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS FOUNDATION PARK ENRICHMENT GRANTS.** These grants are small, suitable for programming or small repair/restoration projects. Only State Parks are eligible.⁹
- **LISC/NFL FOUNDATION GRASSROOTS PROGRAM.** Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and the National Football League (NFL) provide grants to restore or build football fields as gathering places and recreational facilities to support the development of young people and their parents, particularly in poorer communities.¹⁰
- **LISC HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM.** The Los Angeles branch of LISC has a Youth Development Recreation component of their Health & Environment program, listing recreation facilities in addition to football fields.¹¹
- **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RIVERS, TRAILS, AND CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.** This provides technical assistance only, offering a National Park Service employee to help recipients organize, strategize, build capacity and public participation, and implement a conservation or recreation project. Example include parks

8 http://file.lacounty.gov/dpr/cms1_196810.pdf

9 <http://www.calparks.org/whatwedo/grants/park-enrichment.html>

10 http://www.lisc.org/docs/resources/ydr/2014_NFL_Grassroots_Program_Description.pdf

11 http://www.lisc.org/los_angeles/programs/health_&_environment.php

and trails, conservation and access improvements to rivers and natural areas, and creation of recreation opportunities through locally-led partnerships.¹²

- **US FOREST SERVICE BALTIMORE RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP.** The US Forest Service (USFS) recently implemented a unique commitment between the USFS and the City of Baltimore to foster partnered attention on the sustainability and social-ecological restoration of its inner-city neighborhoods. While this agreement currently exists only in Baltimore, the County of Los Angeles could explore the innovative partnerships the USFS might be open to in order to support Los Angeles’ disadvantaged neighborhoods.¹³
- **URBAN PARK AND RECREATION RECOVERY (UPARR) PROGRAM.** The federal UPARR program was designed to offer matching grants and technical assistance for rehabilitation to economically distressed urban communities. However, UPARR has not been funded since 2002.¹⁴
- **CORPORATE GRANTS.** Many small-scale grants and sponsorships are available to support the development and revitalization of parks and recreation. Some of these are through established corporate giving programs such as PowerBar’s Direct Impact on Rivers and Trails program, which has provided funds up to \$5,000 to create, maintain, improve, or restore access to valued recreational areas. While smaller companies are less likely to have established programs, local businesses often designate funds for donation to their community and can be tapped for sponsorships of local projects that support the community.¹⁵

ENVIRONMENTAL

- **WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD.** The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) provides public access funding and can enter into cooperative project agreements with local agencies or nonprofit organizations for the development of facilities for “public access for hunting, fishing, or other wildlife-oriented recreation,” such as wildlife viewing and bird watching. The WCB may fund the construction of project elements such as trails and interpretive facilities. Applications are accepted on a continuous basis.¹⁶

12 <http://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/index.htm>

13 [http://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/prc/home/?cid=stelprd3804156&width=full#Baltimore Restoration Partnership](http://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/prc/home/?cid=stelprd3804156&width=full#Baltimore+Restoration+Partnership)

14 <http://www.nps.gov/uparr/>

15 <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/funding/DIRTfund.html>

16 <https://www.wcb.ca.gov/>

- **URBAN WATERS FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP.** This partnership between federal agencies and nonprofit organizations is intended to improve water systems and promote their economic, environmental and social benefits. The Urban Waters small grants give \$40-60k to support activities that improve water quality while supporting community revitalization and other local priorities. The Los Angeles River Watershed is one of the designated Urban Waters locations. Both Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) and the UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability received grants for education and engagement in the 2013-2014 funding round.¹⁷
- **HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND.** This State fund provides support for nature interpretation programs, protection of plant and animal species, and acquisition and development of wildlife corridors and trails. These funds require a 50 percent match.¹⁸
- **FEDERAL LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND (LWCF).** This fund can be used by cities and counties to reimburse development costs for outdoor recreation areas and facilities. These are matching funds and will cover up to 50 percent of project costs.¹⁹
- **TOXIC SUBSTANCES CONTROL REVOLVING LOAN FUND.** The Department of Toxic Substances Control Revolving Loan Fund provides subgrants or loans for the redevelopment of brownfields to municipalities, nonprofits, or developers who are bona fide purchasers, innocent land owners, or contiguous property owners.²⁰
- **CA WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD ORPHAN SITE CLEANUP FUND (OSCF) PROGRAM.** The OSCF program provides grants to clean vacant sites in urban areas contaminated by a petroleum underground storage tank. Such abandoned sites, upon cleanup, might become available for recreation.²¹
- **CA WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD PETROLEUM UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANK CLEANUP FUND.** This State fund reimburses the cost of remediation for underground petroleum storage tanks. Such abandoned sites, upon cleanup, might become available for recreation.²²
- **EPA BROWNFIELDS CLEANUP GRANTS.** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides funds to clean and reuse former toxic and industrial sites. California recipients have included the City of Brea, which received \$200,000 to clean a former railroad row, the City of Los Angeles, which received \$200,000 to clean a former industrial site in South Los Angeles for use as a natural wetlands park, and Nevada City, which received \$600,000 for three mine cleanup grants to incorporate the areas into a trail system.²³
- **EPA FINANCIAL TOOLS AND FUNDING SOURCES.** The EPA has a web page where it announces information about existing and upcoming financial tools and funding.²⁴
- **US EPA ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE.** The EPA Environmental Justice program is available to fund partnerships and programs. While these grants are not used for construction or implementation of projects, partnerships and programs are a key aspect of developing and operating successful parks and recreation facilities.²⁵
- **CLEANUP AND ABATEMENT ACCOUNT.** These State funds support cleanup or abatement of a condition of pollution when there are no viable responsible parties available to undertake the work.²⁶
- **CALIFORNIA RIPARIAN HABITAT CONSERVATION PROGRAM.** This State program of the Wildlife Conservation Program provides grants for protecting, restoring, and enhancing riparian habitat systems.²⁷
- **HABITAT ENHANCEMENT AND RESTORATION PROGRAM.** This California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) program provides funds for restoring and enhancing fish and wildlife resources. Eligible projects include native fisheries restoration; restoration of wetlands; and restoration of coastal, tidal, or fresh water habitat. Other native habitat restoration projects include coastal scrub oak, grasslands, and threatened and endangered species habitats, in-stream restoration projects, including removal of fish passage barriers and other obstructions, and other projects that improve the quality of native habitat throughout the State.²⁸

17 <http://www.urbanwaters.gov/>

18 http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21361

19 <http://www.nps.gov/lwcf/index.htm>

20 https://www.dtsc.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/Brownfields/Loans_Grants.cfm

21 http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ustcf/oscfshtml

22 http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/ustcf/

23 http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/cleanup_grants.htm

24 <http://www2.epa.gov/envirofinance/tools>

25 <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/grants/index.html>

26 http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/caa/

27 <http://rlch.org/funding/california-riparian-habitat-conservation-program>

28 <https://www.wcb.ca.gov/Programs/Habitat-Enhancement>

HEALTH

- **PREVENTIVE HEALTH AND HEALTH SERVICES BLOCK GRANT.** These are federal funds available for State use. The California Department of Public Health's Project Leaders Encouraging Activity and Nutrition (LEAN), has used this funding.²⁹
- **NATIONAL NATURE SACRED AWARDS PROGRAM.** This program is unique in that it supports projects that combine the creation of tranquil, restorative spaces in urban environments with rigorous study of their impact on users' well-being and resilience. Recent research has shown that careful design and maintenance of urban greening facilities can also provide human health and well-being benefits, such as stress recovery, improved mental health, faster healing, and improved community situations. This program is designed to both facilitate such facilities and support further research into their impacts.³⁰

TRAILS

- **FEDERAL RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM.** These federal transportation funds are administered by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. The 2013 California apportionment was over \$5.7 million. The funds are intended to benefit recreation, including hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, four-wheel driving, or using other off-road motorized vehicles. The program requires at least a 12 percent local match and encourages applicants to develop cooperative agreements with qualified youth conservation or service corps to perform trail construction and maintenance.³¹
- **NATIONAL TRAILS FUND.** The American Hiking Society provides micro-grants to trail crews to support hiking trails. Grants are available in amounts between \$500 and \$5,000 to members of the American Hiking Society's Alliance of Hiking Organizations for projects that have hikers as the primary constituency; are seeking to secure trail lands; and build and maintain trails resulting in visible and substantial ease of access, improved hiker safety, or avoidance of environmental damage. Higher preference is given to projects with volunteer labor.³²

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- **NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION PROGRAM.** These federal funds are intended to stabilize communities that have suffered from foreclosures and abandonment. The Housing and Community Investment Department of the City of Los Angeles (HCIDLA) was awarded \$13.7 million

29 <http://www.cdc.gov/phhsblockgrant/index.htm>

30 <http://naturesacred.org/our-approach/overview/>

31 http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/

32 <http://www.americanhiking.org/national-trails-fund/>

and is using these funds to acquire, rehabilitate, and resell foreclosed homes. City Recreation and Parks partnered with the Housing Department to establish neighborhood parks where the rehabilitation of a foreclosed home is not reasonable (see Consolidated Plan). As of 2014, Quarter 2, \$10.1 million of the funds had been expended.³³

- **PROPOSITION 1C. HOUSING RELATED PARKS PROGRAM.** The Housing Related Parks Program is funded by Proposition 1C, the \$2.85 billion affordable housing bond component of California's Strategic Growth Plan, which invests \$2.85 billion for housing and infrastructure programs to produce an estimated 118,000 housing units, 2,350 homeless shelter spaces, and infrastructure projects that help infill housing development such as water, sewer, parks, and transportation improvements. Run by the California office of Housing and Community Development (HCD), the program offers housing-related park grants in urban, suburban, and rural areas, expected to result in over 52,000 housing units. As of June 2013, there was \$163.6 million left of \$200 million designated from Proposition 1C.³⁴
- **INFILL INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM.** The Infill Infrastructure Grant Program is administered by HCD and funded by Proposition 1C. Grants are for the development of public infrastructure projects that facilitate or support infill housing construction estimated to result in about 32,000 housing units. Projects could include water, sewer, and transportation improvements; traffic mitigation; brownfield cleanup; and up to an additional \$200 million for parks. As of June 2013, there was \$80 million left of \$850 million.³⁵
- **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT.** The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is a locally-administered federal program that addresses capital construction needs in low-to-moderate income neighborhoods. Parks and playground improvements are an allowed use of CDBG funds under Public Facilities & Improvements. Both the City and County of Los Angeles are granted annual entitlements.

The Community Development Commission runs the County program. According to the County's Consolidated Plan, Community Development and Housing Needs, the highest need reported by survey respondents was for parks and recreational facilities.³⁶

33 http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs/neighborhoodspg

34 <http://www.bondaccountability.hcd.ca.gov/>

35 <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/fa/iig/>

36 http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs

WATER AND WATERWAYS

- **CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF BOATING AND WATERWAYS.** The California Department of Boating and Waterways has grants available for recreational boating facilities with public access. Grants are restricted to qualifying public agencies to fund boat launching ramps, boarding floats, and associated parking areas, restrooms, and lighting.³⁷
- **FLOOD CORRIDOR PROGRAM.** The California Department of Water Resources' Flood Corridor Program is intended to protect and restore floodplains and preserve or enhance wildlife habitat and agriculture.³⁸
- **URBAN STREAMS RESTORATION PROGRAM.** This California Department of Water Resources program funds stream restoration projects that reduce flooding or erosion; restore, enhance, or protect the natural environment; and promote community involvement, education, and stewardship in urban streams.³⁹
- **PROPOSITION 1 WATER BOND.** This Statewide bond measure, passed in 2014 to fund investments in California's aging water infrastructure, includes \$1.89 billion for habitat and watershed programs. It also includes \$810 million for water reliability, including stormwater capture. It is not yet clear how these funds will be made available.⁴⁰
- **U.S. FOREST SERVICE OF CALIFORNIA ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION WITH POWER AND WATER UTILITIES INITIATIVE.** Half of all surface water in California originates from national forest watersheds, with downstream consumers realizing an estimated value of nearly \$10 billion every year. This partnership brings together beneficiaries of these watersheds to support ecological restoration and reduction of wildfire threat in critical headwaters and near key utility transmission lines. They also strive to maintain the biomass infrastructure needed to increase the pace and scale of restoration activities in California's forests.⁴¹
- **THE COASTAL AND ESTUARINE LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM.** The California Coastal Conservancy is the lead agency for the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP, pronounced "kelp"), a program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that provides matching funds up to \$1 million to state and local governments to purchase threatened coastal and

estuarine lands or obtain conservation easements. To be considered, the land must be important ecologically or possess other coastal conservation values, such as historic features, scenic views, or recreational opportunities. These matching funds require an equivalent amount of non-federal funds, and that the general public has appropriate access to the subject property. The funds cannot be used for development of active recreation facilities.⁴²

URBAN FORESTS/LANDSCAPING

- **CALFIRE URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY GRANTS.** CalFire provides several urban and community forestry grants to reduce greenhouse gases (GHG), ranging from \$200,000 to \$1.5 million. Each of these grants requires a 25 percent local match. The following CalFire grants all fall under this category of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) grants.⁴³
- **CALFIRE GREEN TREES FOR THE GOLDEN STATE PROGRAM.** Grants are available for urban tree planting projects, including years of tree establishment care, with preference to communities identified as environmental justice communities using CalEnviroScreen 2.0. Preference is given to the planting of trees to optimize the multiple benefits of urban forests in environmental justice communities, with special attention given to GHG sequestration and avoided GHG emissions.⁴⁴
- **CALFIRE WOODS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAM.** The woods in the neighborhood program offers funds ranging from \$200,000 to \$1.5 million to assist local entities with purchasing and improving unused, vacant urban neighborhood properties in environmental justice communities or to serve such communities for purposes consistent with the Urban Forestry Act. These projects must demonstrate how GHG emissions will be reduced.⁴⁵
- **CALFIRE GREEN INNOVATIONS GRANT PROGRAM.** The Green Innovations program offers grants to further AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act, by reducing GHG emissions and improving greening in urban areas. These projects should be unique and forward-thinking and not fit one of the other CalFire greening grants. Projects must show how GHG emissions will be reduced. Selection will be strongly focused on environmental justice communities.⁴⁶

37 <http://www.dbw.ca.gov/Funding/>

38 <http://www.water.ca.gov/floodmgmt/fpo/sgb/fpcp/>

39 <http://www.water.ca.gov/urbanstreams/>

40 <http://www.acwa.com/spotlight/2014-water-bond>

41 <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/prc/home/?cid=stelprd3804156&width=full#California%20Ecological%20Restoration%20with%20Power%20and%20Water%20Utilities>

42 <http://coast.noaa.gov/czm/landconservation/?redirect=301ocm>

43 http://calfire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_urbanforestry_grants.php

44 http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_urbanforestry_grants.php

45 http://calfire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_urbanforestry_grants.php

46 http://calfire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_urbanforestry_grants.php

- **U.S.D.A. FOREST SERVICE NATIONAL URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY CHALLENGE COST-SHARE PROGRAM.** This grant program of the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council provides funding to help enhance urban forest stewardship, support new employment opportunities, and help build resilience in the face of a changing climate. Categories in 2014 included: making urban trees and forests more resilient to the impacts of natural disasters and the long-term impacts of climate change, green infrastructure jobs analysis, and utilizing green infrastructure to manage and mitigate stormwater to improve water quality.
- **CALIFORNIA WELLNESS FOUNDATION.** The California Wellness Foundation’s program includes a grantmaking portfolio focused on promoting healthy and safe neighborhoods, which include access to safe parks, open spaces, and recreational activities to improve fun opportunities and social cohesion. The target population for these grants is low-income communities of color.⁴⁷
- **CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (CCF).** The CCF provides grants in a range of priority areas to serve low-income or underserved communities in Los Angeles County. While parks are not one of the priority areas, elements of parks and recreation projects may be eligible for funding in one of the areas such as arts and culture.⁴⁸

47 http://www.calwellness.org/grants_program/

48 <https://www.calfund.org/page.aspx?pid=742>

