

EAST L.A. MOVES
EL ESTE SE MUEVE

THE EAST LOS ANGELES ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT PROGRAM

Final Report



The Garage Board Shop Cyclists // Atlantic Blvd.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Los Angeles County Public Works received SB1 funding from Cycle 4 of the State Active Transportation Program for the East Los Angeles Active Transportation Education and Encouragement Program. In August 2021, Public Works partnered with Public Matters, a creative studio for civic engagement, to deliver this program. The purpose of this program was to build a culture of support for active transportation in East LA to ensure greater success and utilization of planned infrastructure improvements.

The program was rebranded as “East LA Moves/El Este Se Mueve”, a name that was workshopped with residents and East LA stakeholders – embedding community buy-in and ownership early on. The name is playful, inviting, and engaging. It represents motion, and an active, dynamic community, encouraging more active transportation within the name itself. Including the English and Spanish names prioritizes language justice in a predominantly Spanish-speaking community.

Building a culture of support for active transportation in East LA was achieved by celebrating and calling attention to the variety of ways people in the community get around. The program’s approach was to ensure all program elements, whether educational or promotional, were distinctively East LA—of, by, and for the community.

Community partnerships were at the program’s core. It built, established, and leveraged relationships with community members. An astounding 108 community partners consisting of local artists, businesses, agencies, schools, churches and community groups were engaged as either active participants or messengers. The program engaged people of all ages and abilities. The most vulnerable active transportation users—the young, the old, and people with disabilities—were showcased throughout the program.

QUICK FACTS

- » **128** high school students were directly engaged
- » **\$89,195** reinvested back into East LA
- » Over **121** East LA community members were featured in the advertising and promotion campaign
- » **188** bus shelter posters and pennants were seen by over 65,500 Metro bus riders alone
- » **8** events with over **1,106** event participants
- » **465** pre-post surveys assessed active transportation attitudes and behaviors
- » **149,140** unique social media impressions
- » **1.3 million** people were indirectly exposed to the program through social media, bus ridership, and media coverage.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

1. An active transportation youth engagement and leadership program was implemented, in the classroom and through a paid summer internship with high school students to develop young active transportation advocates. Students learned core transportation planning concepts. They contributed to existing LA County active transportation and complete streets projects, presenting their work at County agencies, LA Metro and in East LA public events.

2. How East LA Moves, a hyperlocal bilingual social marketing campaign promoted active transportation. It included bus shelter posters, street pennants, a calendar, a local food guide of establishments that are accessible by active transportation or public transit, and social media. The campaign featured community members, students, staffers, and entrepreneurs from local schools, community-based organizations, groups and small businesses. Residents were seen and celebrated throughout their community, promoting the forms of active transportation they use themselves.

3. Eight large-scale public events were designed and implemented. Events were joyful, participatory community-building spectacles that celebrated East LA culture. Active transportation was displayed all over East LA – customized fleets of active transportation devices; an East LA Pet Parade; a giant piñata walker, and personalized wheelchairs. Events were aligned with cultural events and occasions like the Mexican Independence Day Parade or *Día de los Muertos*.

OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS

1. Created a culture of support for active transportation in East LA, including an active network of community partners and local businesses who expressed interest in continuing to advocate for active transportation.

2. Celebrated the joy, ingenuity and creativity East LA community members express while using forms of active transportation, uplifting their behaviors for others to follow.

3. Set a precedent for participatory community engagement events and efforts promoting active transportation that are linked to community culture in East LA, that key stakeholders unanimously want to continue.

4. Created a cohort of passionate youth advocates for active transportation while increasing student skills, professional development, and awareness about active transportation and providing exposure to role models and career pathways in urban planning, transportation and government.

5. Improved student educational attainment and student leadership within their schools and their community.

6. Trained public agency staff about the key principles and how to conduct context-responsive community engagement.

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REPORT BACKGROUND

This report was written by Jackie Illum and by Public Matters. Jackie is a researcher who works with community-based organizations to conduct research and evaluation that informs public policy and land use decisions to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in health and wealth. Jackie is also a professor at the USC Price School of Public Policy where she teaches graduate students courses in effective stakeholder engagement and community health planning.

Public Matters is a creative studio for civic engagement. Public Matters deployed “context-responsive” engagement for this program, nurturing residents’ stewardship of their neighborhood; while recognizing the operating realities of a place, local lived experience, and community-defined priorities. Public Matters created and led program curriculum, classes and youth internships; public events; all community engagements; and community engagement trainings.

To prepare this report, Jackie conducted an extensive document review, interviewed 14 key stakeholders, and reviewed all other data collected throughout the life of the program. Using thematic analysis, she assessed best practices, strengths, and challenges, along with overall program impacts. This evaluation provides a detailed picture of the program and its outcomes and impacts. Finally the report provides a set of recommendations and next steps for public agencies.



Pushrim parade contingent // East LA Mexican Independence Day Parade

“All of the bad charts, we top them. Street safety is important. We have a high number of pedestrian fatalities in our community.

I’m a third generation resident of City Terrace...kids understand, people know when their community is devalued and when you feel

neglected and ignored. Growing up I saw a lot of that. This isn’t right. How do these decisions get made? We can do better for our community because we deserve it. It shouldn’t just be neighborhoods with means and access and time [that] have a safe and healthy environment.”
- Community Partner

INTRODUCTION: HOW EAST LA MOVES

People in East LA surveyed and interviewed for this program overwhelmingly want active transportation enhancements. Getting around East LA, particularly by active transportation, is daunting and challenging. The recently completed [East Los Angeles Pedestrian Plan](#) has 60 pages worth of recommendations to make walking in the community easier and safer. So many recommendations indicate that people simply can't get to where they'd like to go in ways that they'd like to. The report is based upon shared experiences of trauma around street safety: crossing streets that lack high visibility crosswalks, tripping on cracked sidewalks, rushing to get across the street against speeding traffic, insufficient shade and lighting, daunting obstacles for elders or people with mobility impairments. These dictate both behaviors and attitudes. People commonly choose alternative, indirect routes to get places because the shortest path has too many obstacles. More so, they refrain from walking, biking and rolling in East LA because they don't feel safe.

East LA has an abnormally high number of streets that are known to have street safety concerns—amongst the highest in all of LA County. There are no fewer than 15 collision concentration corridors along 11 separate streets identified in the LA County Vision Zero Action Plan. A segment of Whittier Blvd., one of East LA's main streets and perhaps its most iconic, is ranked among the top 20 priority LA County collision concentration corridors.

Cumulatively, these statistics and experiences speak to decades of neglect. They propel a general attitude in the community that

municipal agencies aren't adequately serving community needs. There is a tremendous amount of trust and goodwill that must be generated before infrastructure changes can achieve complete streets in East LA. Sufficiently engaging the community, particularly before any street enhancements occur, is essential. Otherwise, there is a real fear that they will be dismissed.



Walker Shaped Piñata // East LA Mexican Independence Day Parade

At the same time, people walk, bike and roll in East LA all the time. Their behaviors are linked to cultural patterns and forms of expression as well as the built environment. The East LA Runners Club plans their routes around East LA's ubiquitous tacos. People modify their bikes in low-rider style. East LA is a dog loving community: people are always out walking their dogs. Yet, they might have to do it while walking around a cemetery because there are few comfortable places to walk their dogs.

These facets of East LA's cultural life and the limitations for safe, easily accessible active transportation shaped the program. The program built upon the area's rich history and culture to celebrate and attempt to normalize active transportation. Its aim was to build a culture of support for active transportation. While LA County Public Works is currently investing to make it easier and safer to walk and bike in East LA through infrastructure projects and Vision Zero, a shift in residents' attitudes towards active transportation needs to occur before the full benefits of these investments can be realized. This requires deep, culturally-relevant community engagement, education, social marketing, and putting the people of East LA at the forefront of all efforts.

WHY CONTEXT-RESPONSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

“Usually when agencies do outreach and engagement in communities, it's very cookie cutter. It's typical education programs or typical outreach and engagement meetings. The things that [this program] did were very different. I really enjoyed seeing all the different ways that they were engaging people. It really made me want to see more of that throughout the County or in the planning profession in general.” - County Representative

In recent years, there has been a convergence of policies in California that are collectively aiming to shift the narrative and reality about how Californians get around - moving away from car culture and toward more active forms of transportation. These policies intend to address climate change, environmental injustices, and racial equity by getting people out of their cars. This includes SB 743 (2020), SB 99 and AB 101 (2013), among others. Despite the statewide mission of reducing VMT and increasing opportunities for safe active transportation, in the SCAG region, [only 5% of people walk and bike for daily trips, yet this group comprises 36% of traffic fatalities.](#)

In order for public agencies to succeed with these statewide goals, they must reconsider their community engagement approaches to achieve better success. Effectively engaging community members in any planning issue ultimately [ensures equity in planning practices](#); it increases the likelihood of successful implementation of projects when community input and buy-in is achieved, and it ensures that agencies have the necessary local knowledge about the most important locations and interventions to prioritize in any given community. The current process for stakeholder engagement does not effectively meet the needs of our most vulnerable populations. This program exemplifies a community engagement process that will lead to successful implementation of on-the-ground changes, behavior changes, and widespread community support.

This report provides valuable insights for public agencies to better implement community engagement. With some adaptations, the model presented here could be applied to communities across the state.



2022 Paseo del Cempazuchitl // Cesar Chavez Ave.

01

CONTEXT-RESPONSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

An overall goal of the program was encouraging East LA residents to become active participants in change, rather than passive recipients who may perceive infrastructure changes as intended for “someone else.”

East LA residents take immense pride in their community affiliation and resourcefulness. There is a strong aesthetic of DIY or *rasquache*, rooted in part on reusing and repurposing materials due to economic necessity, and in part because

creativity, colors, and culture ooze out of seemingly every business and home in East LA. The program embraced and celebrated the DIY-nature and aesthetic, the innovativeness of East LA residents. It uplifted those who brought an uniquely East LA spirit to how they walk, bike and roll around East LA, whether they customize skateboards, dress up their pets or themselves to take a stroll, or just emanate East LA pride in how they move.

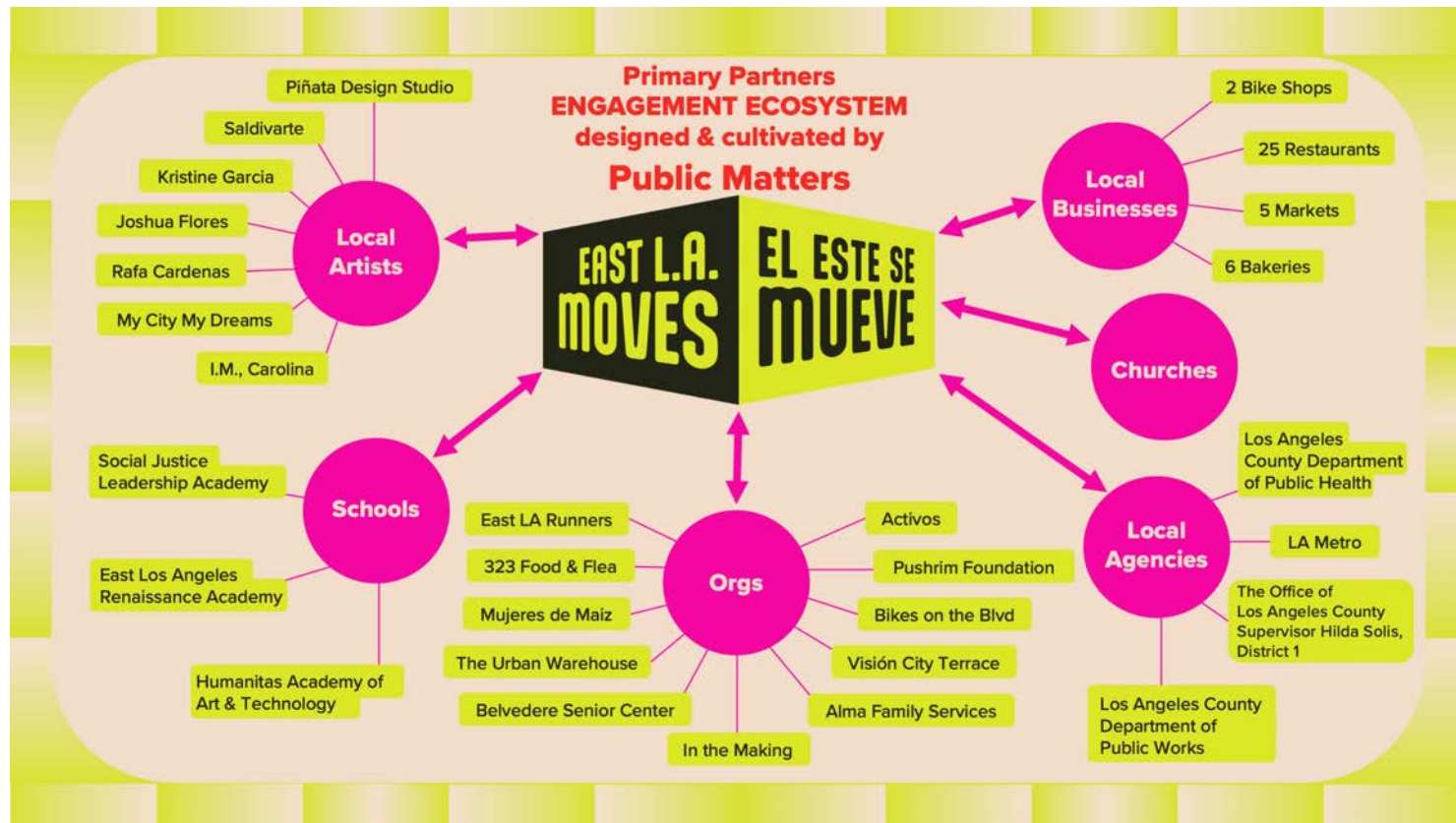
ENGAGING EAST LA'S COMMUNITY

Building a culture of support for active transportation deployed the following strategies:

- » **Celebrating and normalizing active transportation behavior** by highlighting local practitioners and advocates
- » **Hyperlocal messaging** that was of, by, and for the community
- » **Education** so that people had enough information and impetus to advocate for future active transportation projects
- » **Highly visible public events** that were connected to East LA's culture, rhythm and pace
- » **Language justice** ensuring that all materials and messages were done in English and Spanish
- » **Network building** to create a coalition of support across businesses, schools, community groups and organizations



Street pennant // Cesar Chavez Ave.



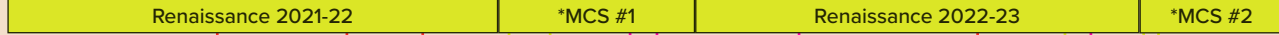
The engagement ecosystem that was created through this program is highlighted to emphasize the importance of a robust and diverse network of partners that is necessary to any successful dialogues about the built environment. In order to equitably and successfully plan for built environment changes, a diverse set of stakeholders must have a seat at the table.

PROGRAM TIMELINE

The program took place from August 2021 to March 2024, beginning during the active phase of the Covid-19 pandemic when it was more difficult to host in-person events and activities due to public safety and health. Meaningful community engagement requires intentional relationship and trust building between parties, and when community engagement is place-based, it often requires that those relationship and trust building activities occur in person. As a result, the public-facing program components began later as the pandemic began to wane.



Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb



Surveys

Pre Engagement Survey

Mid-Engagement Survey

Walk Audit 2
November 29

Walk Audits

Ped & Bike Counts
February 16 & 20

Renaissance Final Presentation at Public Works
May 15, 2023

Ped & Bike Counts
December 8 & 9

Ped & Bike Counts

Walk Audit 1
March 29

Torres Bike Safety Education Classes
March 1, 8 April 19, May 3

Public Works Professional Development Workshops
February 12, 13, 20

Professional Development Workshops

Torres Bike Safety Education Classes
May 3, 10, 17, 24

Renaissance Final Presentation at LA Metro
May 22

Esteban E. Torres High School Youth Engagement

Renaissance Final Presentation at Public Works
June 2, 2022

Public Events

Event 01: City Terrace Art Walk
July 30

Event 05: East LA Food Tour
August 5

Event 04: Pet Parade
April 15

Event 06: Mexican Independence Day Parade
September 10

Event 02: East LA Mural Bike Tour
August 6

Event 07: Paseo del Cempazuchitl on Cesar Chavez Ave.
October 28 - November 4

Event 03: Paseo del Cempazuchitl on City Terrace Dr.
October 27 - November 3

Event 08: East LA Eats
December 14



Project Timeline

* Moving Con Safos Summer Internship



Roller Skater // Cesar Chavez Ave.



East LA Runners // East LA Civic Center




Doña Trini // Cesar Chavez Ave.

CORE COMPONENTS

The program consisted of four core program components:

1. Implementing an active transportation youth engagement and leadership program, in the classroom and through a paid summer internship program,
2. Launching “*How East LA Moves*,” a hyperlocal bilingual social marketing campaign to promote active transportation,
3. Designing and implementing large-scale public events that were intertwined with East LA’s culture to publicly celebrate active transportation; and
4. Training workshops on how to design and implement community-responsive engagement efforts.

The next five chapters will describe the processes employed on each program component, and their impact.



“One of the biggest things that was successful in making more people aware of this culture of support [for active transportation] was the fact that we were high school students and we introduced ourselves as high school students working with a public agency that wanted to see success in our community. I think that really made people more open-minded, more receptive to what we had to say.”

- Moving Con Safos Intern

02

YOUTH ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ADVOCATES

“Our population of students are [often] not college bound or they don’t feel it is an option for them. This project opened a lot of doors for them. A good chunk of them actually went on and are still seeking some form of planning or policy or engineering education.” - Renaissance Educator

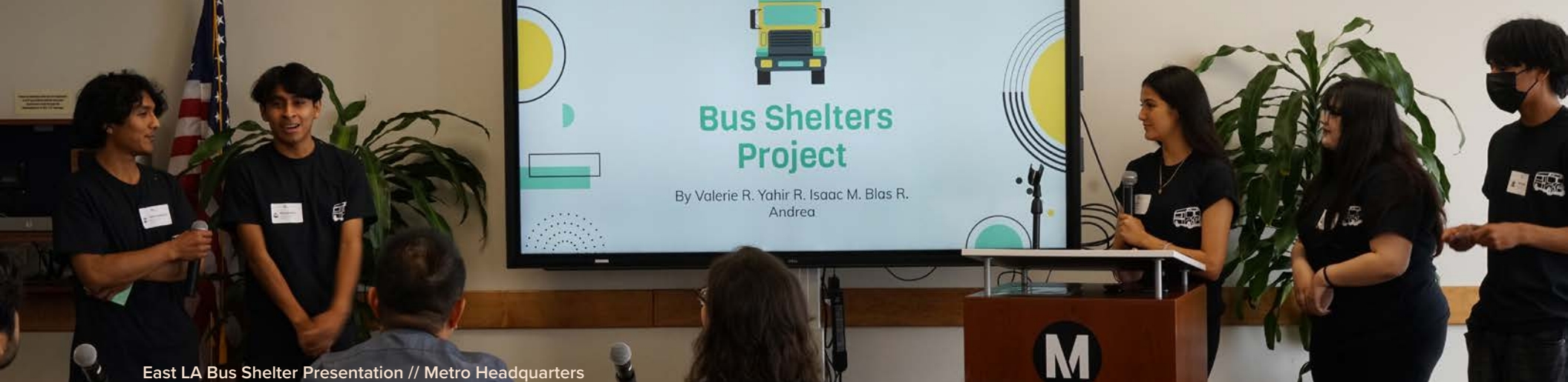
Active transportation isn’t in East LA high school students’ top 5 or likely top 10 topics of interest or concern. While the East Los Angeles Renaissance Academy (Renaissance) has an urban planning focus, and is in fact only one of three such high schools

in the nation, as an LAUSD public high school it lacks any classes that directly address planning. The program created a project-based curriculum that made active transportation relevant and meaningful to students. The approach stressed the importance of transportation and connected classroom learning with activities that took place in the community. The goal was that students become active transportation advocates amongst their families, friends and the broader East LA community.

The pandemic significantly altered the way the program worked with the school and its students. The hope was to start with a summer internship program for student leaders who would become peer leaders within the classroom during the academic year and then to work with the same cohort of students over a two-year period during their junior and senior years. This wasn’t possible, as schools weren’t fully open when the program began. Instead, the program began with a class of juniors in the fall of 2021. After the program’s first academic year, over 50% of faculty left along with the school’s long-term Principal. Schedules and projects were constantly adjusted to navigate the pandemic and the lack of consistency in either teachers or school leadership.



Renaissance students // LA County Public Works Office



East LA Bus Shelter Presentation // Metro Headquarters

Fortunately, Public Matters, whose staff include two Renaissance alumnae, has worked with the school for many years, allowing it to navigate these substantial challenges.

The program worked with three Renaissance classes directly and another class indirectly over two academic years. Classes were taught on average 2-3 times per week, with a heavier concentration of classes in the Spring semester, although the pandemic and other school priorities often impacted teaching schedules.

To build interest in transportation planning, the curriculum began by helping students to imagine and envision a future East LA they want to inhabit through a Civic Imagination Lab. This was the gateway to discussing urban planning. Likewise, to introduce students to the importance of transportation, it was framed through an equity lens and defined as an “opportunity.” Students needed to understand the link between transportation and getting to a job or internship on time, taking one’s Abuelito to the doctor’s, or seeing friends at a nearby hangout spot. Classes linked transportation planning to East LA’s history and culture while exposing students to complete streets models from throughout the world. Since real-life complete streets models are lacking in East LA, this is a crucial component of allowing students to imagine and envision the future they want to live in.

Active transportation was linked to many of the goals students expressed in the Civic Imagination Labs: higher quality of life, better health outcomes, and climate change mitigation.

Each year classes worked on a main project that augmented active transportation or complete streets projects being undertaken by LA County. From the get-go, students knew they had an opportunity to share their experiences getting around East LA along with their hopes for enhancing East LA’s streets, with people empowered to effect the changes. This manifested the program’s goal of developing active transportation advocates. Professionals, including planners, community leaders and County staff visited and worked with students, serving as role models and opening up the students’ eyes to future careers in planning, engineering and government.

CLASS PROJECTS

“We went on transit with our full blown projects and that was a really great experience because as we’re traveling through the East Side, the kids are sitting there with projects and there were elderly people or community members that started asking ‘What is this?’ And so the kids were kind of throwing their pitches to the community and they’re like, ‘yes, this needs to happen.’”

- Renaissance Educator

YEAR ONE

City Terrace Drive Complete Streets

Public Works' Vision Zero team was in the midst of developing plans to transform City Terrace Drive, one of East LA's collision concentration corridors, to a complete street. Renaissance juniors learned complete streets concepts, conducted a walk audit with City Terrace residents, and ultimately proposed their own complete streets vision for the corridor. Members of the Vision Zero team and City Terrace residents worked with students on their proposals, providing input, advice and feedback at mid and final project time.

YEAR TWO

Safer Streets Around Our Schools

The area around Torres High School lacks a crosswalk near a primary school entrance, adequate time to cross the street, and its line of sight is challenging due to the school sitting along a large hill. Sadly two Renaissance students were hit by a car in the first semester. This led to a project to propose street safety measures around the school. Led by Renaissance juniors, the project also included input from school staff and administration as well as input from Humanitas Academy students who use a separate street entrance.

East LA Bus Shelters and How Teens Travel

The Renaissance seniors, about half of whom were in the previous year's class, did two final projects. They studied model transit systems, including transit amenities, around the world to build upon their previous complete streets work. In an area that lacks sufficient tree canopy and gets very hot, East LA also lacks sufficient bus shelters. On average, only about [a third of LA County bus stops](#) have a shelter, according to researchers from UCLA and MoveLA.

The students explored East LA bus routes and nearby amenities they served, took a field trip with a Public Works' project manager who oversees the implementation of bus shelters, made videos about their own routes to school, and interviewed other students about their experiences and preferences for public transit. This led first to a project where student groups proposed locations for new bus shelters and suggestions for enhancing or redesigning the shelters. In their second project, How Teens Travel, Renaissance students suggested how to increase teens' use and ridership of public transit based upon research and interviews.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Each year, Renaissance students presented their final projects to Public Works staff, community members and other transportation planners and advocates at the agency's building. This is an invaluable experience that students often say is game-changing. It validates their ideas and experiences, while giving Public Works staff an opportunity to listen, learn and interact with a teenage population many don't have access to otherwise. The students' work informs Public Works' ongoing efforts in East LA.

The Renaissance seniors' bus shelter project was a competition. Thanks to funds from LA County Supervisor Hilda Solis, student teams competed for \$10,000 in funds that were earmarked for their post-secondary learning. In a presentation at LA Metro, their work was judged by a star-studded panel of local transportation experts from the Office of LA County Supervisor Hilda Solis, LA County Public Works, LA Metro and the Alliance for Community Transit. The teams were presented with their scholarship awards in front of family and friends at Renaissance's senior awards night.

STUDENT IMPACT

“It was great to see students who felt like they were failures and not succeeding at everything else, finding their niche and a place where they felt like what they were adding and contributing was essential and valuable. This student, [NAME], found a passion and love for architecture and drafting. [He made] these scale models and saw what the possibilities could be for him other than just going to work right after [graduating from] school. [He decided] to pursue community college.”
- Renaissance Educator

This experience was life-changing and eye-opening for students: they see their role in their community differently, now having a radically new understanding of what it means to participate in community. They have an entirely new lens for looking at the built environment and transportation systems. Students increased their self-esteem and confidence, and they chose to go to college when they otherwise hadn't even considered higher education an option.

- » Students were introduced to the concepts of **civic engagement and imagination** which allowed them to articulate their vision for a just and healthy future East LA they want to inhabit. More importantly, through the program activities, students clearly saw their own role in civic affairs. At a time when distrust of institutions amongst younger generations is extremely high, the value of this can't be understated.
- » Students left this experience with an **appreciation and awareness for the value of active transportation** and now serve as advocates in their communities
- » **They developed lifelong skills** like critical thinking, problem solving, public speaking, presentation, leadership, research and analytical skills

» **Students gained exposure to role models and careers** by interacting with a wide variety of professionals: County staff, planners, engineers, nonprofit directors, community leaders, artists, amongst others.

“If everything goes right and we make the right investments as a collective, we're opening the door to these future designers, future planners. It's good to start them early and keep them engaged and energized. Working with the students and being in conversation with the students is something that I won't forget.”
- County Representative

SCHOOL-WIDE IMPACT

- » **Mission and Visibility:** The program helped Renaissance grow into its mission as a school of urban planning, while also helping the school gain recognition and prominence in the community. **No other East LA high school can boast about the role they play in the community like Renaissance could thanks to this program.**
- » **Teachers:** As a public high school, Renaissance teachers are trained in traditional education, not in urban planning, let alone implementing large-scale projects that connect students to the broader community. The program created lessons and practices that they can continue to emulate. It also created models for collaborative projects that the school continues to develop with new partners.



Renaissance final presentation // LA County Public Works

ON PUBLIC AGENCIES

- » **City Terrace Drive Complete Streets:** Renaissance students' proposals and insights on how they and others use the streets helped inform and shape how Public Works staff work on the formal complete streets treatment for the corridor.
- » **Safer Streets around Our Schools:** Eastern Ave., a collision concentration corridor that runs adjacent to Torres High School, has been designated for future enhancements. Public Works staff plan to incorporate the Renaissance students, along with the input from faculty and staff, into their proposals so that street safety on the side streets (the entrances to the different

learning academies) can be folded into work on the Eastern Ave. corridor.

- » **Bus shelters:** Thanks in part to Karina Macias' participation as a juror, word of the students' proposals reached LA County Supervisor Hilda Solis. When her office applied for funding for new bus shelters, the Supervisor specifically requested that they put new shelters where the students asked for them.

- » **On future active transportation and complete streets projects:** Renaissance students also applied their learning to significantly contribute to the East LA Pedestrian Plan.



“I feel like [this internship] helped me approach things [by] being prepared for the long term and envisioning how I see myself in the future...I want to positively impact my community and I want to be the change that I see in my community. That’s the biggest thing. I think that I can positively impact my environment and my neighborhood and the people around me.”
- Moving Con Safos (MCS) Intern

03

MOVING CON SAFOS HIGH SCHOOL INTERNSHIPS

Con Safos in Chicano culture refers to “with respect.” *Moving Con Safos*, the name given to the program’s summer internship, implied a few things. It was an opportunity for Torres High School students to move and be seen in a visible leadership role while they worked on the program. It also reflected an educational goal: for interns to develop a greater appreciation for East LA’s built environment, particularly its streets and transportation network, and for East LA’s rich culture.

“I was also heavily impacted by the fact that we explored my community. I’m born and raised in East LA and I’ve actually never been outside of Los Angeles, but it changed my perspective of how I saw Los Angeles.”
- *Moving Con Safos Intern*

During the summers of 2022 and 2023, two cohorts of ten rising juniors and seniors were selected to serve as paid *Moving Con Safos* summer interns to work on the program. Interns submitted applications and were interviewed by a panel of program staff. For most, this was their first-ever job interview and paid job— invaluable experiences that ultimately boosted their self-esteem, poise and communications skills.

The interns were recruited and selected from all five academies that share the Torres High School campus. It was a strategic decision to get the top students and leaders and ultimately to reach a greater number of students, staff and faculty at Torres. Most first-year interns came from Renaissance, including several from the program’s class, while the second-year group was more equally dispersed amongst the various learning academies.



East LA Food & Bike Tour // East LA Civic Center

Interns learned complete streets and planning concepts, communication and marketing skills, how to contribute to socially engaged art and public projects, and leadership skills. **Moving was literal.** While Torres High School was the base, the summer program afforded an opportunity to take interns around East LA, to document it, to meet and interview community leaders and businesspeople, and to better understand the built environment.

Interns met roughly three times per week over an eight-week period for around 5 hours per session. It was a transformative experience for most interns.

YEAR ONE

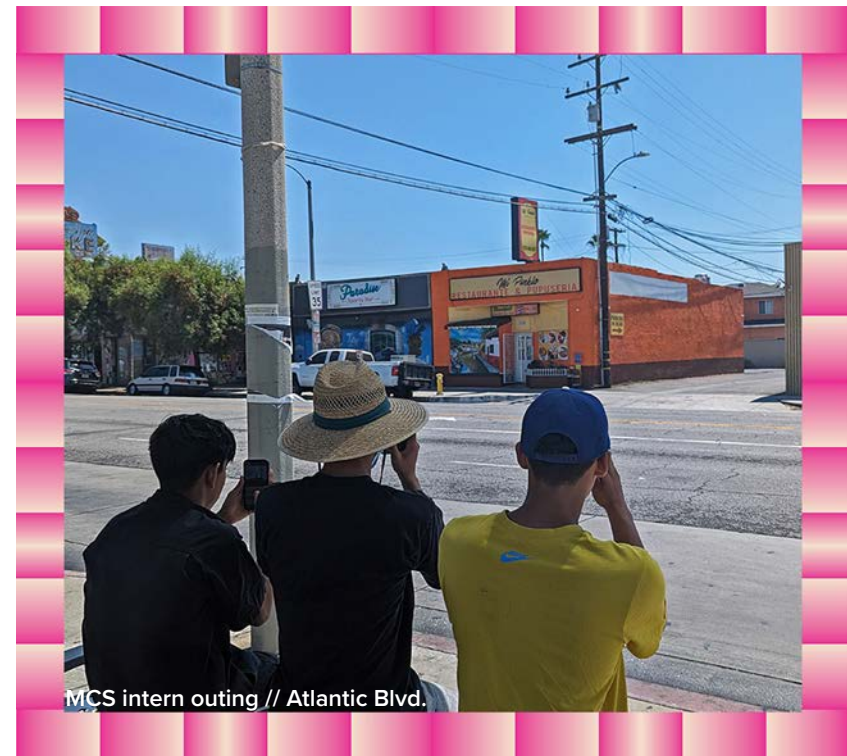
Interns assisted with the following program activities:

- » Photo shoots for the program’s advertising and promotion campaign
- » City Terrace Art Walk:
 - » Interns created work for a Custom, Creative People-Powered Transit Fleet that was displayed at the Art Walk. Each intern customized a bike, skateboard, or mobility assistance device, like bike helmets.
 - » They also served as community spokespeople at the event, helping set up and operate the complete streets demo, shared the Renaissance students’ City Terrace Drive complete streets proposals, and brought a youth leadership presence to the Art Walk.
- » East LA Bike Mural Tour: as their culminating act, most interns rode in the bike mural tour led by People for Mobility Justice

YEAR TWO

Interns first learned about 15 minute city concepts and took field trips to help document amenities within 15 minutes of transit stops in East LA. They contributed to the *East LA Moves/El Este Se Mueve Food Guide* in the following ways:

- » Helping with selections of the food establishments in the Guide
- » Documenting and interviewing food purveyors
- » Contributing hand-drawn lettering and graphics
- » Helping write social media posts and communications about the food establishments



MCS intern outing // Atlantic Blvd.



IMPACT

- » **Improved Educational Attainment:** every single intern from the first year was selected and attend either a UC or Cal State University
- » **Student Leadership:** students took on leadership positions in their student government and in their community, with roles in the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and on advisory boards like the East LA Pedestrian Plan advisory board where they could represent their communities.
- » **Students Stepping Up as Leaders in their Communities:**
 - » Alejandra Diaz, a first year intern, subsequently served as the sole youth on the East LA Pedestrian Plan community advisory committee.

» Alejandra also was selected the following summer for the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute’s NextGen Latino Leadership Program. The reviewers shared that this occurred directly due to her role in *Moving Con Safos*.

» Two members of the second cohort spoke at the LA County Regional Planning Commission’s hearing in support of the Pedestrian Plan. The Commissioners commended them for their attendance and civic participation.

» One of these two, Wilver Zarate, organized a community clean up around Torres High School with local groups In the Making and Vision City Terrace along with the Torres football team. Wilver is a constant presence at community events.

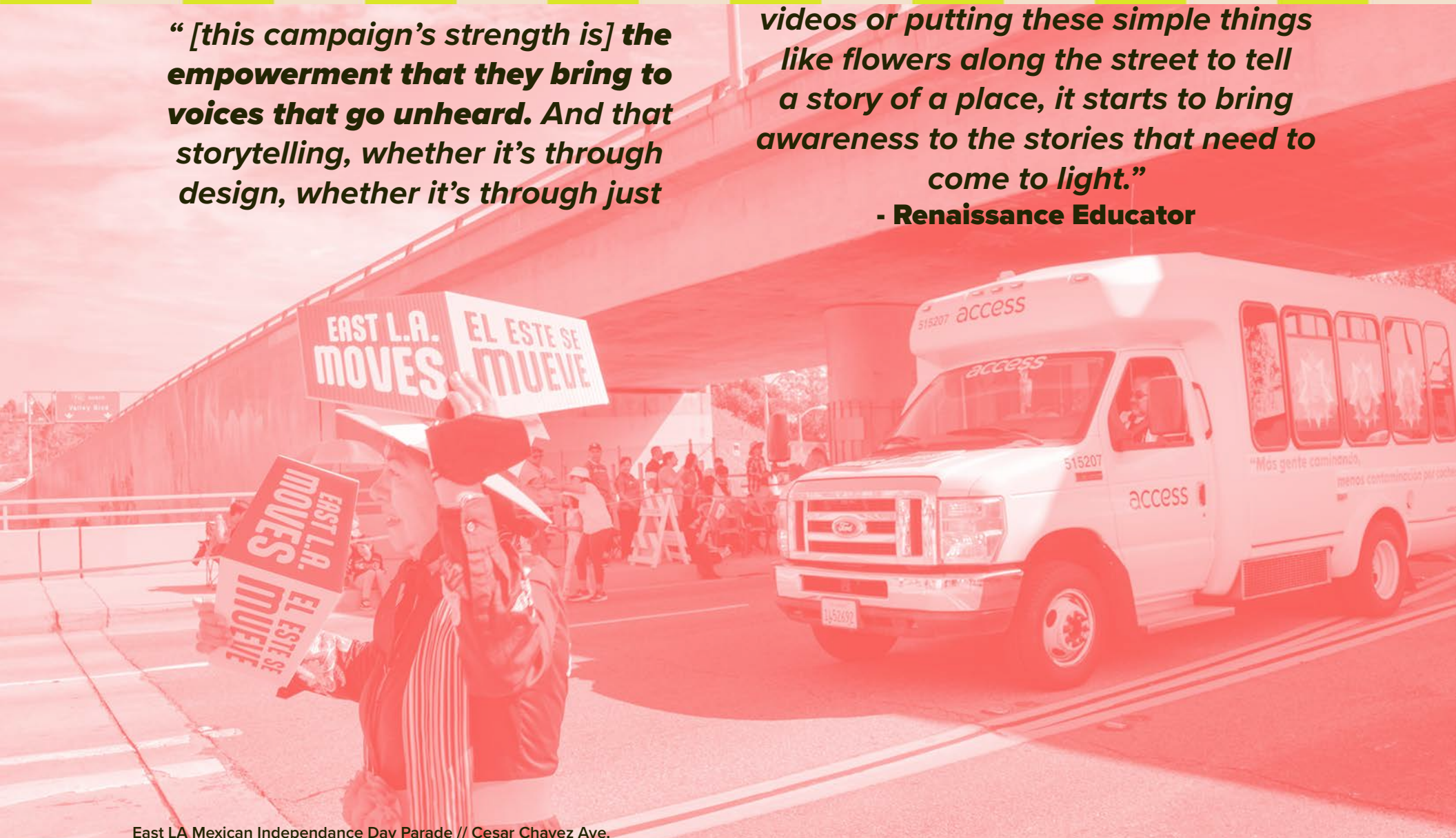
» Three second-year interns led a community video tour to inform Metro’s first/last mile planning for the future Atlantic/Pomona Metro Station.

From these, we can also extrapolate multiplier effects that the interns have on other students, their schools, families and the broader community. Leadership and engagement are cumulative. Often, someone sees someone else doing something and tends to join or follow.

“...doing this internship was very eye-opening because living there, it’s like you don’t really think that most of the things are going on or the safety in the streets is a really high concern. But then when you’re in the classroom learning about it, you’re like, oh my god, people are dying because people are speeding.”
- *Moving Con Safos Intern*

“ [this campaign’s strength is] the empowerment that they bring to voices that go unheard. And that storytelling, whether it’s through design, whether it’s through just

videos or putting these simple things like flowers along the street to tell a story of a place, it starts to bring awareness to the stories that need to come to light.”
- Renaissance Educator



East LA Mexican Independence Day Parade // Cesar Chavez Ave.

04

OF, BY AND FOR THE COMMUNITY- ADVERTISING / PROMOTION

To create meaningful messages that resonated with an East LA audience, the project's advertising and promotion campaign, *How East LA Moves*, ensured that all social marketing materials reflected the unique style and culture of East LA. Community members were seen and celebrated throughout their community promoting the forms of active transportation they use themselves. Local graphic designer Carolina Ibarra-Mendoza and photographer Rafa Cardenas were hired to work on the campaign, ensuring a local feel and flavor to all materials.

"I know the calendar was a huge success from the perspective that a lot of people felt celebrated and personally connected to this awareness campaign." - **County Representative**

APPROACH

How East LA Moves' approach was built around the following participatory collaborative acts that build relationships and community buy-in:

- » Authenticity - embodying community culture, values, and heritage
- » Celebration - putting a spotlight on East LA community members already involved in active transportation endeavors
- » Collaboration - bringing together a variety of community stakeholders and influencers to ensure inclusivity, partnership, and relationship-building as an engine for sustainable change
- » Representation - inspired by the community's style, telling the story of its people, and emanating East LA Pride
- » Leveraging Creativity - resonating with the community using functional artworks and visual content that educates and peaks curiosity for more information.



Juan R. Delgado Orantes // Mexican Independence Day Parade



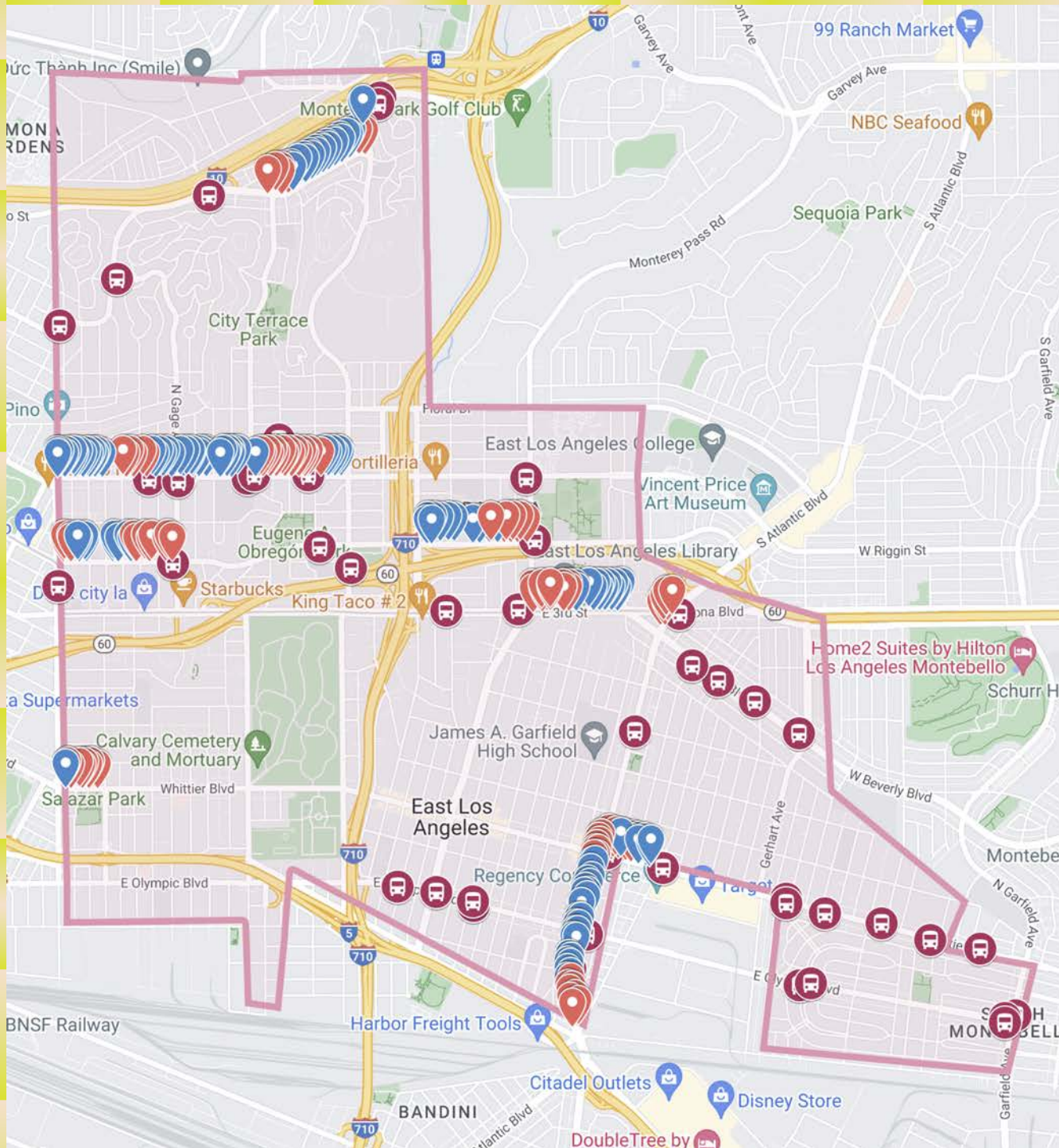
Bus shelter posters // East LA-wide

Promotional tools created for the program's campaign were distributed and shared through local small businesses, schools, and community-based organizations with established constituencies of customers, clients, and families. This relationship-building model allowed the campaign to target residents of all ages from a vast majority of East LA's many neighborhood communities. It also ensured multiple exposures of the project's branding and messaging to these audiences.

"The calendar highlighted different places in the community, which was really huge here because we have people coming in for them. We ran out of the calendars." - Local Business Owner

TARGET AUDIENCE: REACH AND STRATEGIES

How East LA Moves was a bilingual campaign that delivered all messages in both Spanish and English. It inclusively featured and spoke to residents of all ages and abilities, including multigenerational families with children, beloved pets, and cherished seniors. Local residents and community groups already embracing all modes of active transportation, including walking, biking, skateboarding, roller skating, and accommodating individuals with mobility impairments were invited to the table to share their passion for non-vehicular transportation, embodying inclusivity and accessibility.



PENNANTS & BUS SHELTER KIOSKS MAP

Quantity: **188**



PENNANT LOCATION



Eligible pennant location along corridor



BUS SHELTER KIOSK LOCATION

TONE

The tone of the campaign was intentionally familiar and culturally relevant to the local community, striking a tenor that was distinctly born of East LA. It was important to inspire interest and curiosity in the community by ensuring the campaign felt:

- » Homegrown
- » Hyperlocal
- » Celebratory
- » Declarative
- » Unabashed
- » Inclusive
- » Iconic

The campaign put a spotlight on the diverse ways East LA residents get around using active transportation, with distinctive local flair that channels the Rasquachismo-inflected customized, DIY spirit of East LA. Campaign advertising and promotional materials featured lowrider bikes, colorful skateboards radiating youth culture, blinged-out roller skates, suped-up strollers, wheelchairs beaming with Chicana pride, and walkers rocking Zoot suit style.

In addition, *How East LA Moves* **integrated the campaign's message into the existing social fabric of the community** by tapping into local culture or holidays such as Dia Los Muertos through the *Paseo* or by featuring local food establishments included in the *East LA Moves/El Este Se Mueve Food Guide* at the 323 Food and Flea Night Market. In the case of the *Paseo*, the result was an overwhelming feeling of community bonding and attention called to the shared concern of street safety and consideration of residents using active transportation along these streets. By seamlessly weaving the campaign into the rich tapestry of community life, authentic connections were nurtured resulting in a deeper resonance with residents.

“Being televised in one of the biggest celebrations in the country is huge. Having cultural roots as a Mexican-American, maybe different cultures also see disability differently. It was impactful for people to see us out there [in the parade], not just staying at home.” - Community Partner

KEY METRICS

Inviting, inclusive, and celebratory, collateral materials from *How East LA Moves* reached a large number of people in East LA through repeated exposures. Pairing advertising and promotional materials with existing events and gaining media attention ensured that *messages and materials* reached far and wide.

The program was featured through an article in the *LAist*, televised features on *Spectrum News*, and an article in the *Boyle Heights Beat*.

- » **Over 1.3 million people** were exposed to the program through media engagement
- » **Over 121 East LA community members** were featured in the advertising and promotion campaign
- » **108 businesses and community partners were engaged**
- » **149,140 unique social media impressions** through strategic Instagram collaborations with local partners

Instagram collaborations were often used to leverage social media promotions and increase the campaign's reach and engagement through partners.

- » **Impressions steadily grew over time, surging to over 60,000 impressions by December 2023 (an 87% increase).**

Bus shelter posters and street pennants were strategically placed throughout East LA. Extrapolating from October 2023 Metro bus ridership data, at least

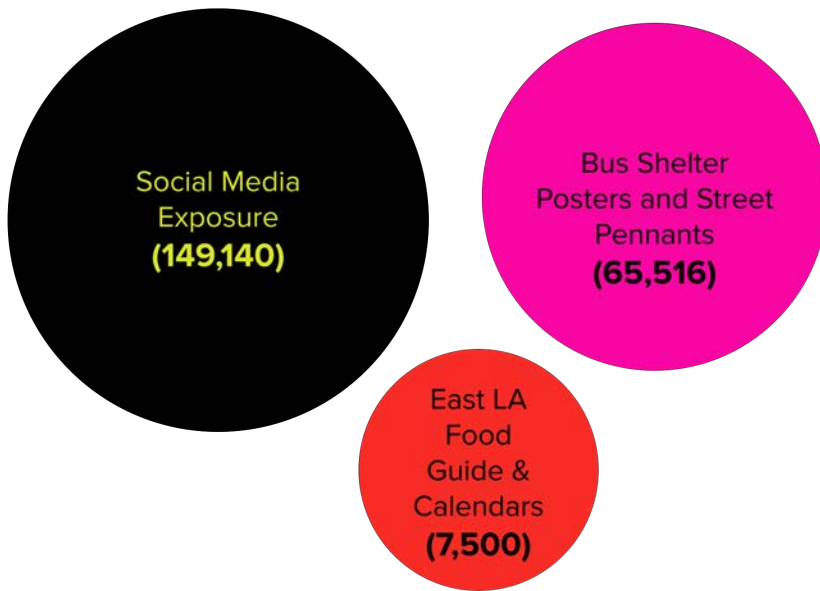
» **65,500 people saw bus shelter posters and street pennants** from May 2023 to the time of reporting (March 2024).

» This does not include people walking, biking, and rolling on the streets, who saw these promotional materials.

» **188 bus shelter posters and street pennants** were installed

On average, it takes six exposures for a message to be received. Repeated exposures through a range of platforms results in high visibility and impact. Stakeholder interviews highlighted the value

Number of People Reached through Different Campaign Components



of the Food Guides and Calendars, lasting mementos of the program and reminders to stay involved. Bus shelter and street pennants strategically placed throughout East LA on high volume corridors facilitated repeated exposure from May 2023 and continuing through today.

» 3,500 *East LA Moves/El Este Se Mueve 2023 Calendars* were distributed to program partners to disseminate widely in the community

» 4,000 *East LA Moves/El Este Se Mueve Food Guides* were distributed to program partners to disseminate widely in the community

» The calendars and food guides were printed in Spanish and English

The impact of this work was palpable. We saw evidence of the community valuing and appreciating how they were seen and heard throughout the program and the social marketing campaign.

» Stores purchased marigolds and donated them for the Paseo del Cempazuchitl.

» Community members featured in the program's calendars signed autographs of themselves at the East LA farmers market while passing out the calendars.

» Bakeries donated free baked goods and café de olla during public events.

» School principals and teachers set aside classroom time to talk about street safety and active transportation.



Set up for complete streets demo // City Terrace Art Walk



05

MARCHING TOGETHER - PUBLIC EVENTS

Eight large public events took place through the program, often strategically embedding the program within existing events happening in the community. These decisions were strategic: to amplify and celebrate the known; bring groups together; build a collective buzz. They ensured an authentic community driven process that manifested East LA in its most glorious, prideful way. Likewise, all events were closely aligned with the advertising and promotion campaign. The people and groups featured in calendars, bus shelters, and posters were prominently marching together down East LA's streets. These were ways to not only repeat and amplify messaging—they built a collective sense of ownership and pride.

Public events were aligned with other East LA-focused County efforts and initiatives that had shared goals or alignment. Throughout the implementation of the program, Public Matters led community engagement efforts for the East LA Pedestrian Plan and the LA County Department of Public Health. The Pet Parade, City Terrace Art Walk, *Paseo del Cempazuchitl* and Mexican Independence Day Parade were all co-productions and collaborations between the projects and partner agencies. This not only amplified the visibility of each, but it also helped emphasize the connections between planning and action. Additionally, it gave the agencies a visible way to show how they work together, while providing them an approachable, less formal, presence. **Agencies literally walked and marched step by step with the community. This built trust and helped to reposition County agencies.**



MCS interns with customized walkers // City Terrace Artwalk



Custom Skates // City Terrace Art Walk



Messaging // City Terrace Art Walk



Complete street demo // City Terrace Art Walk

SELECTED EVENTS

CITY TERRACE ART WALK

Founded by City Terrace artist Belinda Martinez from *My City, My Dreams*, the City Terrace Art Walk is a summer showcase of local artists and a celebration of the neighborhood. The program's first large-scale public event was held at the 2022 Art Walk. It included multiple components:

- » **City Terrace Dr. Complete Streets Demo:** to help visualize a pending complete streets proposal, a complete streets demo was installed in the heart of the Art Walk. The Demo included installing a high visibility crosswalk that connected a parking lot with the City Terrace Library; curb extensions designed by local artist Jawsher; a protected bike lane; and the Renaissance students' complete streets proposal for the street.
- » **Custom, Creative People-Powered Transit Fleet:** Public Matters leveraged additional funding from SCAG's Go Human program into a street-level installation and celebration of customized East LA active transportation. Local customization of active transportation devices were prominently shown as community art works as part of the Art Walk. The installation shone a spotlight on people-powered transit by transforming bikes, skateboards, walkers, wheelchairs – non-automotive ways of getting around – into flamboyant, functional works of art that embodied and uplifted the custom, DIY spirit of East LA culture.
- » **Messaging:** The complete streets demo was peppered with signs that spoke to the value of high visibility crosswalks, the impact of speed in crashes, bike lanes, and the importance of tree canopy, amongst others. Signs were in Spanish and English, graphic, and done with high contrast colors.

» **DIY Your Own Active Transportation Devices:** The Urban Warehouse/Garage Board Shop, an East LA skateboard and educational shop, and local artists gave families opportunities to bling out their own active transportation devices, including skateboard decks and activewear.

Impact

In the midst of a public event celebrating art and artists, the program's installation and demos were dynamic, visual spectacles that moved public awareness, attitudes, and behaviors towards safer, shared streets. Participating in the City Terrace Art Walk strategically grew momentum and brought new people into the fold early on.

“A lot of people had good feedback [because they were] able to see what the project was instead of just being told or having petitions being signed. A lot of people told me that they liked that the actual project had a demonstration, to bring the project to life. It gave them a better understanding. Things that you can physically see in [the] place of where they want it to be is very helpful.” - Community Partner

- » *Moving Con Safos* interns directly showcased and explained their fellow students' proposals to Supervisor Solis. This included an exchange about the value of color and design in safe street treatments.
- » Countless people asked if the temporarily installed high visibility crosswalk at Miller and City Terrace Drive could be left there because they immediately saw its value.
- » The playful, engaging spirit of the installation and the visible role local youth advocates brought, enticed people to willingly talk and participate. Public

Works ran out of complete streets surveys and had to dash into the City Terrace Library to copy more. The survey results were more favorable than Public Works imagined.

PASEO DEL CEMPAZUCHITL




The *Paseo del Cempazuchitl* commemorated lives lost in traffic crashes and highlighted the importance of traffic safety in East LA in honor of Día de los Muertos. According to Aztec tradition, the dead follow the fragrance of cempazuchitl (marigolds) to Dia de los Muertos altars or family homes. The *Paseo* was an opportunity for the community to gather, collectively remember and recognize lives lost, and reflect on the impact of traffic crashes in East LA.

The *Paseo* was a week-long activation that happened twice along two collision concentration corridors, during late October to early November in 2022 (along City Terrace Drive) and 2023 (along Cesar Chavez Ave). It enabled community members, in particular people who live, work, play, and go to school along the corridors, to mark locations where they have witnessed or experienced crashes or near misses along the street. Additionally, community members were asked to mark locations along the street where they felt unsafe. The goal was to mark incidents that are often underreported in communities like East LA and to allow community members to share how they view and use local streets. It's well known, for example, that if people don't feel safe walking in an area, their behavior will be impacted. They might avoid walking or the area altogether, or they may select a different route.

**2022 PASEO DE CEMPAZUCHITL
ON CITY TERRACE DRIVE**

Paseo de Cempazuchitl Map

LEGEND

-  Community placed cempazuchitl where they have experienced a near-miss traffic crash.
-  Community placed cempazuchitl where they felt unsafe.
-  Cempazuchitl Trail

**2023 PASEO DE CEMPAZUCHITL
ON CESAR CHAVEZ AVENUE**



“My father was hit by a car and passed at the age of 45. [The Paseo] was a part of healing because I had suppressed it for so long. I had just found out, I think the week before, who the person was that ran over my dad. All these years had passed, and I was too traumatized to even get the police report and find out who it was.

I was interviewed by Spectrum about that event and I was able to talk about my dad on the news. Just to have him, his picture on the Día de los Muertos event, was healing because I felt like he wasn't forgotten. People got to see his picture, a lot of people, when a lot of people probably didn't know him or anything. I felt like his story was swept under the rug for various reasons. I'm so grateful for that. That was [a] huge impact. It helped me. I know it's definitely helped others. Just seeing the families that were there with the altars for those that were hit by vehicles, those that have passed, and just to see the families honor their loved ones. It was heartwarming and very touching. [It's] something I'll never forget.”
- Community Partner



Community-placed cempazuchitl /// 2023 Paseo del Cempazuchitl



Marigold garland & informative medallions // 2023 Paseo del Cempazuchitl

Paseo del Cempazuchitl consisted of several parts including:

» **Cempazuchitl Trail**

- » **Marigold (Cempazuchitl) Garlands & Informative Medallions**, noted where pedestrians were hit by cars in the past decade.
- » **Community-Placed Cempazuchitl** marked locations along the corridor where community members felt unsafe or experienced a near-miss traffic crash.
- » **Commemorative Plaques & Altars** remembered and honored the lives of those lost along the street.

» **A Community Altar**

- » **Caminata de los Altares**, the culminating event, a community walk along the Cempazuchitl Trail to the commemorative plaques & altars.

Impact

In stakeholder interviews, the *Paseos* were repeatedly brought up as one of the most impactful experiences participants had. These events not only served as a very visible source of data about unsafe streets and intersections in East LA, but they built trust and fostered community.

It's common to see *Día de los Muertos* celebrations around the neighborhood. The *Paseo* was initially a response to recent fatalities along City Terrace Drive. Weaving cultural celebrations to bring awareness of traffic safety resonated with the community in a deep and meaningful way. Marking otherwise unreported data about street safety with the paper cempazuchitls was an easily approachable method for residents.

Following the *Paseos*, Public Works requested the data to inform their street safety efforts.

» The City Terrace *Paseo* gave the family of a recently deceased resident a chance to create an elaborate public altar and to hold a ceremony at the location of their passing.

» Business owners along both corridors donated materials for the activation.

» Without prompting, along City Terrace Dr, Abe's Market, Amigos Market, and Barrio all donated fresh cempazuchitl flowers, while La Terraza offered their space, free coffee and pastries for community members to gather after the *Caminata*.

» El Gallo Bakery on Cesar Chavez Ave gifted community members coffee and pastries.

» Earthly Corazón donated *Día de los Muertos* candles to the City Terrace Dr. altar.

» Ten businesses hosted paper Cempazuchitl flowers as pick-up stations.

» Over 100 community members of all ages and abilities attended the *Caminatas*.

» City Terrace residents created spontaneous pet altars to commemorate pets lost due to crashes.

» Abe's Market, Sara's Market, Melanie's Cleaners, and other City Terrace Dr. residents created their own altars.

» *My City, My Dreams* created the community altar on City Terrace Dr. in front of the City Terrace Library. The librarians and other residents cared for the altar.

» Alma Family Services, in partnership with the LA County Mental Health Department, created the community altar on Cesar Chavez Ave.

» Residents placed 47 paper cempazuchitls along City Terrace Dr. and 43 on Cesar Chavez Ave.



MEXICAN INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE

The program’s contingent for the Mexican Independence Day Parade was by far the Parade’s largest and also the most home-grown. It included many groups featured in the campaign—the East LA Runners Club who came out in droves, roller skaters, members of the Pushrim Foundation who rolled in their wheelchairs—along with other community members and partners such as a contingent of people with disabilities from Alma Family Services and Esteban E. Torres High School students. All told, over 100 people were in the contingent. They marched side-by-side with representatives from LA County Public Works, the Office of County Supervisor Hilda Solis, and the LA County Department of Public Health. It was the first time Public Works marched in a parade. It was also the first time people with disabilities were featured in the Parade. That alone had a significant impact not only on parade participants, but on parade-goers as well. For many, this was the first time they saw themselves represented in a big, public, fun, and positive way.

Impact

The Mexican Independence Day Parade played a key role in the program’s success. The contingent showed up in large numbers and with high spirits and enthusiasm due to how the campaign had continuously built goodwill and had put residents in the spotlight. The parade highlighted the importance of engaging a diverse range of community members - all of whom utilize


public spaces and streets differently. **Stakeholders interviewed highlighted the value added by their representation. The more people get to see themselves in a campaign or a movement, the more likely they are going to want to participate and join in. Including diverse abilities also ensured that, in this instance, streets will be designed for a multitude of users and use-cases.**

“The impact of this work is heartfelt. Just remembering a moment where we were part of this parade where we were actually going through and seeing people’s faces, giving us thumbs up, happy to see us out there - ‘wow, these guys are dealing with this, but these guys are out here living life and with smiles on their faces.’ It’s kind of contagious. But when I got to see that family with their disabled child light up brighter than anyone else around and smile and say, ‘look, these people with disabilities are out there’ and I saw how the kid looked at their mom and looked back at us and smiled, it really was heartfelt. We were able to go over there and personally say hello and for a few minutes and just have that connection. That’s probably never going to go away. It’s probably the first time that family ever saw us in a parade in that kind of positive light. I will never forget that look in their eyes and the happiness that we were able to share with them.” - Community Partner





FOOD GUIDE
GUÍA GASTRONÓMICA
 presents // presenta
So-Cal Burgers
 203 S. Main St. Ave
 @ socalburgers
 Best LA Dinner with a Twist
 Comida del Este de Los Angeles
 con un toque especial



 1ST L.A. MOVES EL ESTE O TITULVE
FOOD GUIDE
GUÍA GASTRONÓMICA
 presents // presenta
Zenaida's
Café
 1058 N Townsend Ave
 @ zenidascafela
 Metro Bus 100 & 605 ✕ DASH Boyle Heights
 ✕ El Sol City Terrace/ELAC

06

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TRAININGS

A central question raised by this program is, how might it ultimately impact how public agencies interact with community members? Community engagement moves at the speed of trust. At a time when distrust of public institutions and government is extremely high, the need for effective community engagement models is high. This includes models like this program that center community, culture and participation in ways that counter traditional models that often lead to disenchantment and distrust. The structure of the interactions is often highly scripted, proscriptive in ways that lead community members to feel that they are spoken at, not with, and at times spoken down to. There is limited time for meaningful dialogue and exchange that allow communities to have the information that they need to

make informed decisions. They often are left to share opinions or to react, many times defensively, to proposals that from their perspective, don't adequately reflect their experiences or input.

With this in mind, Public Matters designed and led three two-hour long training workshops, sharing its decades of expertise on effective community engagement. Roughly 35 LA County Public Works staff from a variety of service areas attended.

WORKSHOP ONE: LET'S TALK PEOPLE: EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OR PREVENTIVE CARE VS. EMERGENCY SURGERY

Community engagement is analogous to preventative care. While it takes time and has costs, those are nothing compared to the cost, pain, and detrimental impact of emergency surgery. When organizations fail to properly engage communities, they find themselves in defensive, hostile situations where they scramble to perform emergency surgery. The workshop explored the core elements, benefits and how-to's of implementing effective community engagement.

- » How community engagement differs from outreach
- » How to align work with community values, priorities and practices.
- » How to build trust and relationships with community.



Pet Parade participants // East LA Civic Center



2023 Paseo del Cempazuchitl // Cesar Chavez Ave.

WORKSHOP TWO: SETTING THE STAGE FOR LEARNING AND EXCHANGE— DESIGNING EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENTS

This workshop focused on:

- » Engagement design, including designing interactive educational workshops.
- » Language—how to explain new and sometimes complicated and technical concepts in easily understandable and approachable ways.
- » Strategies to engage hard-to-reach groups and design participatory engagements:
- » Heritage narratives: planning engagements around history, culture, dynamics, demographics, attitudes and beliefs.
- » Asset mapping and designing effective community engagement ecosystems.
- » How to design small, interactive workshops built around exchangeNon-traditional forms of community engagement.

WORKSHOP THREE: WORKSHOP DESIGN— MOVING FROM A “NO BECAUSE” CULTURE TO A “YES IF” CULTURE

Standing in front of a group of hostile community members is a scenario that can be avoided with proper design and training. The final workshop focused on how to deal with difficult circumstances where communities seem predetermined to loudly say NO to any proposed change. The workshop unpacked the circumstances that lead communities to feel that “no” is the only power they have.

Learnings included:

- » Approachability
- » Creating proactive situations that utilize participatory methods. These avoid circumstances where ideas and plans are presented to communities with minimal input, time to understand or respond, and without adequate information to make informed decisions. Such situations can create or deepen distrust amongst community members.
- » How to budget for community engagement.



The conversations, they're good conversations, they bring us back to highlighting some of those needs and also thinking about why we don't do more walking, biking, whatever. [The program has] done a great job of bringing in kids and families and thinking about mobility in a very broad and inclusive way. It is culturally responsive in ways that people in our community can connect with. And it's fun. I think that's important to bring the fun."

- Community Partner

2022 Paseo del Cempazuchitl // City Terrace Dr.

07 IMPACT

EVALUATION STRATEGY

The evaluation strategy for the program was multifaceted: 1) a [community action research](#) approach was used to collect data throughout the project, 2) engagement metrics were tracked, and 3) a set of stakeholder interviews were conducted at the end of the project to assess overall impact.

The stakeholder interviews were conducted by an external evaluator to objectively assess the impact that the program had on building a culture of support for active transportation. Fourteen stakeholders were interviewed in February - March 2024. These stakeholders represent East LA business owners, government employees, local youth, educators, artists, advocates, people with disabilities, families and children with special needs.

The impact of deep community engagement through this program cannot be downplayed. **The successful network building, trust building, and increased community capacity to make informed decisions set the stage for future active transportation work in East LA.** This chapter details the overall impact of the program through quantitative engagement metrics and qualitative data from stakeholder interviews.



2022 Paseo del Cempazuchitl // City Terrace Dr.

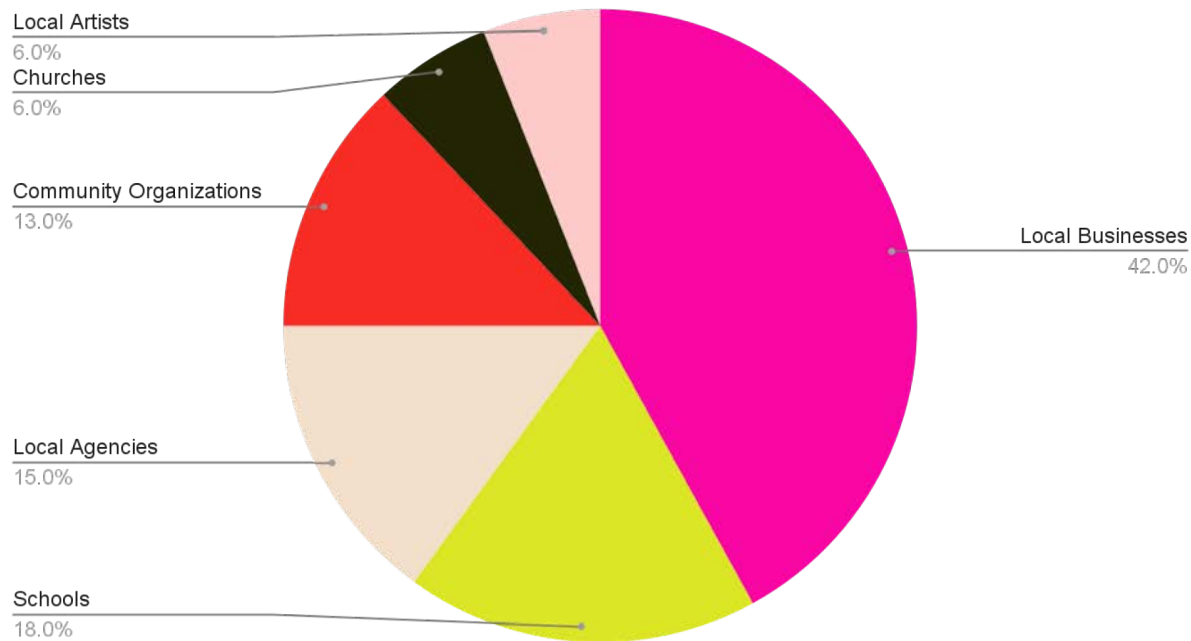
ENGAGEMENT METRICS

Community partners, such as local businesses, community groups, and faith-based institutions are the backbone of any thriving community. East LA is no different. The program strategically formed alliances with these groups to help 1) disseminate advertising and promotional materials and 2) promote and participate in events, since they were already seen as trusted sources of information for community members. Local businesses (which included restaurants, bakeries, and small markets) (45 total), schools (19 total), and community organizations (14 total) made up the largest groups of partners. However, there is power in diversity, and it shows: libraries,

parks, faith-based institutions, and others all committed to this movement. In total, 108 local partners were engaged throughout this program.

“That’s a big thing for us as well, to have representatives [from agencies] come and drop off flyers or informative pieces because they [customers] shop here and that would make it easy for them... to have brochures in English and in Spanish, that would be easy, accessible, maybe placed in all the little shops that are on the street schools, libraries, so there can be access to it basically almost on every block.” - Local Business Owner

Groups Engaged through East LA Moves/El Este Se Mueve

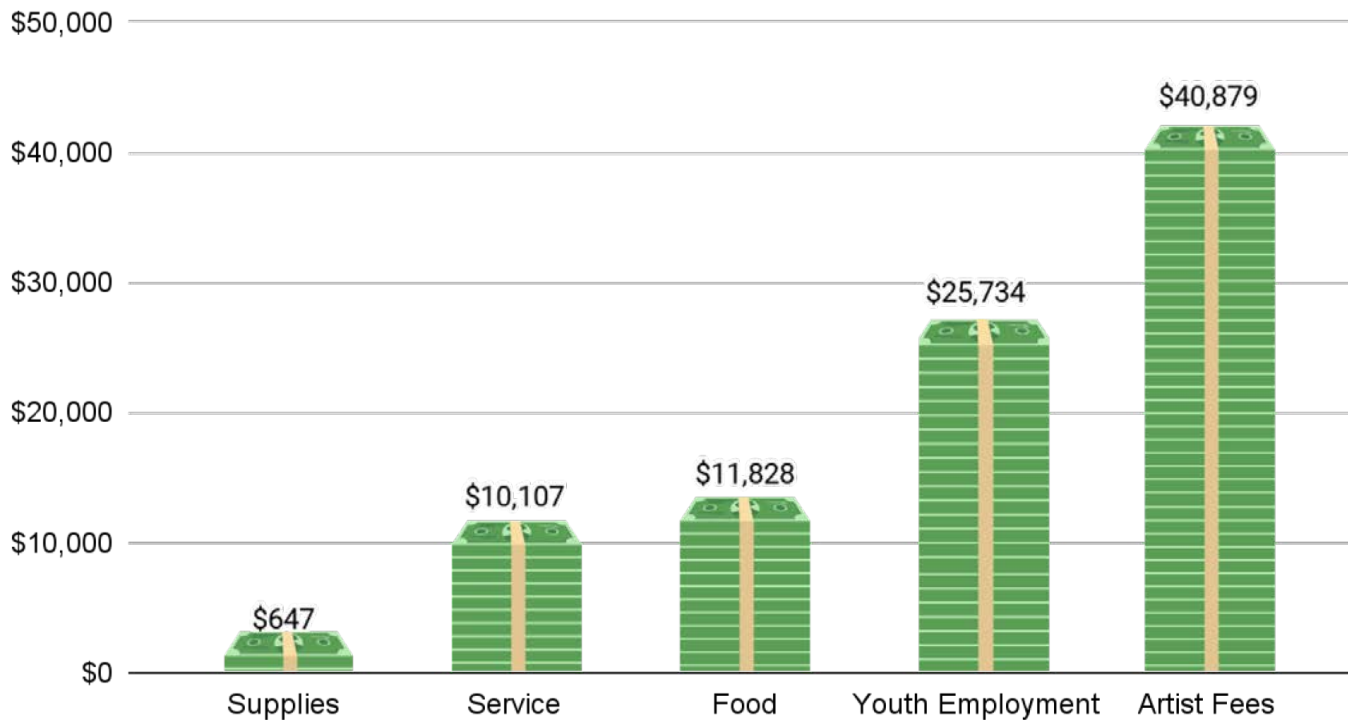


REINVESTING IN EAST LA

Keeping community at the forefront of the program also meant reinvesting money directly back into the community. In order to build a culture of support for active transportation – or anything – it is essential to infuse money into the community being impacted. It's a statement about how the community is valued in a tangible and economic sense. This is especially important when considering concerns around gentrification that exist in East LA. The program showed the East LA community that they were the priority. A total of \$89,195.26 was invested directly back into small businesses, local artists, and interns.

The program's multi-pronged engagement approach brought information and ideas directly to the people in East LA. Educational components at Renaissance, including the *Moving Con Safos* internship, allowed for extensive engagement and learning amongst a core group of high school students. Large public events reached more people faster: event activities were embedded in existing community events whenever possible. Many people who learned about or participated in the program through public events continued to stay involved for subsequent activities. Finally, the advertisement and promotional campaign reached even more people, in public settings and online or via social media.

Funds Reinvested Back into East LA Businesses



The graph below depicts the number of engagements and direct participants for three overarching activities: large public events, engagement at Renaissance, and people and groups photographed for the advertisement and promotional campaign. Each small circle represents a direct engagement activity - an event, a classroom session, or another interaction. The circles are then scaled to the number of people directly engaged through each activity. The almost 1:1 ratio of engagements and direct high school participants shows the depth of engagement. The large public events, on the other hand, reached many more people with fewer total engagements. In addition to 1,106 direct participants across 8 events, **there was an indirect engagement of at least 1.3 million people exposed to the program through social media, bus ridership, and media coverage.**

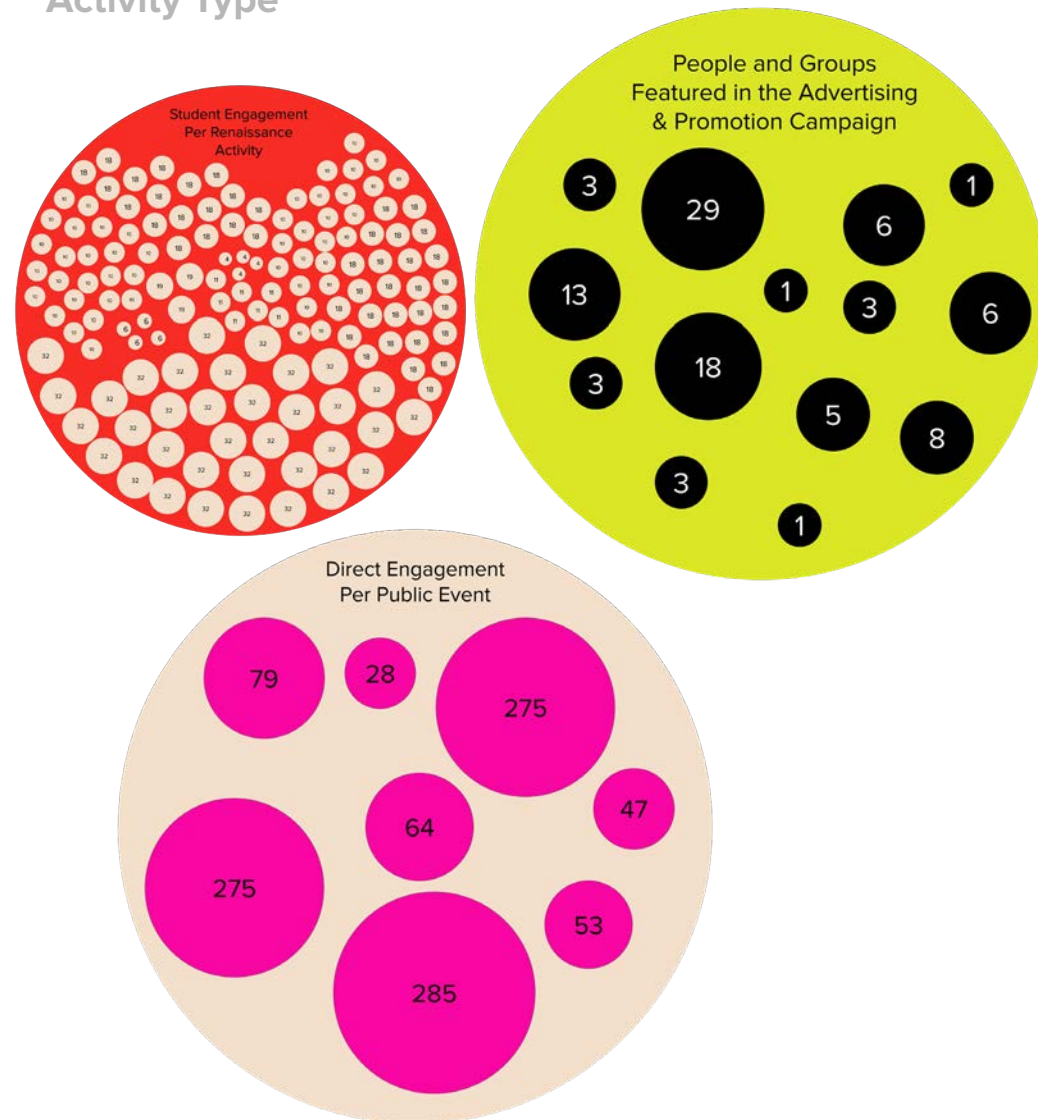
COMMUNITY ACTION RESEARCH

Community action research is, by design, research intended to explore local problems and solutions with community members and stakeholders who are most directly impacted. This approach accomplishes several goals:

1. builds a network of local stakeholders (residents, CBOs, businesses, etc.);
2. lifts up rich local knowledge about a place to develop a deep understanding of the issues;
3. raises awareness about local issues through community-driven and highly visible data collection approaches; and
4. ensures context-responsive solutions are identified.

Action-oriented data collection was embedded into the program. This approach allowed for strengthened networks across stakeholders, moments to gather, grieve and heal, and an opportunity to identify the most pressing street safety issues being faced by the people who live, work, and play in East LA.

Number of People Directly Engaged by Activity Type



These data collection activities included walk audits, pedestrian and bike counts, and an active transportation pre- and post-engagement survey. Additionally, the Paseos were a hybrid public event-visual data display that was entirely community derived. These activities were conducted in partnership with students, community partners, and agencies.

A note: tools like walk audits and pedestrian and bike counts are useful for planners and engineers who want to understand trends over long periods of time, but these are not metrics that would be expected to change through the life of one program. To see large behavioral shifts in how people move around, requires both building a culture of support for active transportation, while also improving the street infrastructure. The impact of collecting the above-mentioned data lies in the process itself, as these metrics will take longer to impact. The walk audit and bike/pedestrian count data are shared in Appendix A. As expected no changes were indicated in the walk audits or bike/pedestrian counts between the two time points (2022 and 2023, approximately one year apart).

FINDINGS FROM STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

BEST PRACTICES AND THEIR IMPACT

Stakeholders interviewed for the final report unanimously said that they would like to see continued community engagement efforts that are participatory, fun, and celebrate the culture and people of East LA.

The program was distinctive and ultimately effective due to its multifaceted approach. It took all of the elements of the program – education, youth engagement, public events, advertising and promotion – and being out in the community to build trust and move the needle towards embracing active transportation in East LA. Many community members pointed out how present,

receptive, and collaborative the program was. Agency and community-based organization partnerships helped advance common goals.

While speaking to the collective impact of the program, key stakeholders identified a set of best practices that should be replicated and utilized in future community engagement efforts.

Using public events to engage communities brought the conversation to the people. Embedding program activity in existing public events, such as the Mexican Independence Parade, Queer Mercado (Pet Parade), and City Terrace Art Walk, while creating new public events such as the *Paseo del Cempazuchitl* events, brought residents together and fostered a sense of community. These events were strategic and culturally relevant – tapping into existing networks and relationships while allowing new people and groups to join into this larger movement.

The program consistently brought planners, engineers, and decision-makers directly into community cultural contexts rather than asking people to attend formal meetings or functions that often are limited and hard for most to attend. Being in community is essential to successful engagement and awareness building.

This resulted in **willing advocates for street safety and active transportation being empowered to participate.** East LA community members of all ages and abilities who were involved in this program came to testify in support of the adjacent East LA Pedestrian Plan. Investing in people and their creativity and tapping into the custom, DIY culture of East LA and local pride of place, invited people to recognize the role of people-powered transit in their community and how it can reflect the culture and character of their home. It also created an opportunity for residents to imagine, walk along and then talk about a potential

significant change to the main traffic corridor with the agency responsible for implementing the change.

Art integration and creative, participatory engagement techniques made the program inviting and fun. The use of visually appealing and culturally relevant campaign materials, and partnering with local artists made information more accessible and attractive to the community.

“I think the incorporation of art into the program was really effective because they were definitely able to connect with populations that you wouldn’t really get to engage in this kind of thing.” - County Representative

Accessible and customized social marketing across various mediums ensured information reached diverse community spaces. Materials were easy to read, messages were simplified, and all work was in English and Spanish.

East LA community members were celebrated by uplifting community members who use active transportation and connecting messages to cultural norms and practices in East LA. This program successfully brought visibility to voices that are often left out of conversations such as people with disabilities and other special needs. This approach allowed different types of people to envision themselves using active transportation and participating in discussions and activities to shape the future of their community. **The result: increased buy-in and participation amongst community members.**

“An active transportation encouragement campaign, honestly on paper sounds really dry and boring. But the way it was presented to the public was actually really interesting and fun and lively. So things like the Pet Parade was a really great way of engaging not just people but the animals that they live with. It is just a whole different kind of environment that they were encouraging that was very different from what you would usually get out of this kind of thing. The calendars were also really great because they were intentionally trying to capture a diverse spectrum of the people that live in East LA. They had people from runner’s clubs, they had vendors, students, a wide cross-section of people represented in that calendar. It’s not something that you would typically get out of your cookie cutter active transportation campaign. The art and the variety of engagement techniques that they used were really beneficial here. I think that creativity was able to capture more people than you normally would in this kind of program.” - County Representative

Utilizing a collaborative approach and having a lead agency that led from behind to build trust with diverse members of the community ensured community voice was front and center in the messaging and activities. Intentionally including a wide range of voices – from advocacy and community groups, youth, residents, artists, public agencies, and local businesses, ensured a well-rounded understanding of the challenges and potential solutions.

“To me, what made this work successful is the team the project brought together. It wasn’t one person over another person, it was everybody trying to work with each other.” - Community Partner

The impact of this was twofold:

1. Relationships were fostered to create a robust cross-sector network of community partners, across ages and neighborhoods in East LA, which sets the stage for all future active transportation efforts in the community. This network is ready and willing to support public agencies in making East LA streets safer.

“One of the benefits and keys [to the] positive outcomes of East LA Moves, was staff being out there all the time and having one-on-one interpersonal interactions with people who are living there and creating moments for staff to have that face time and remove the barrier of [residents] having to [navigate complex systems to advocate for their communities]...” - County Representative

2. County entities and the community grew to trust each other again. When public agency staff march side-by-side with residents in a parade, it’s a statement to the entire community that *“we’re here with you and we’re here for you.”* The program’s efforts increased awareness and trust of public agencies, promoting transparency and understanding.

“The impact it’s had is rebuilding trust between the County and the residents of the community.” - County Representative

Intentionally involving and empowering youth, providing them a public platform and teaching them about transportation planning and environmental design was strategic and successful. The program’s educational structure provided opportunities for leadership development, professional skill development, creativity, and networking. It recognized and nurtured the potential of youth, fostering a sense of agency and reinvestment



back into East LA for future generations. Youth were also seen as “nonthreatening messengers” to others in the community. This work leveraged the positive perception associated with youth-led initiatives to make the community more open to new ideas and discussions.

East LA now has a **passionate cohort of young active transportation leaders.** Classes at Renaissance and *Moving Con Safos* internships opened up new worlds to students, including role models and career pathways. Students saw and envisioned themselves as active participants in their community and as change makers - even taking on leadership roles in their student government and in their community. Many youth came out of this experience with a new sense of community and a stronger understanding of what they wanted to do upon graduation.

Educational and professional attainment levels at Torres High School and throughout East LA are chronically low. The program



East LA Food & Bike Tour // Woods Ave.

led students to pursue higher education - with all of the first year *Moving Con Safos* interns enrolling in a UC or Cal State school upon graduation. While the internship drew higher achieving students, their academic records were mixed. Featuring the program in college applications helped students with admission to schools of their choice. Seniors in the second cohort are still hearing about their college selections, but some have already been selected to their dream schools.

“I think more than anything, it’s given me the opportunity to further explore how I see myself. I think I’m a visionary and I didn’t necessarily believe that to the extent that I do now if it wasn’t for this internship.”
- *Moving Con Safos Intern*

“ Before [my involvement as a Moving Con Safos intern] I was really indecisive of what I wanted to do. It inspired me to want to study medicine because the rate of Latinos in medicine is way less and it especially [made me want to attend] UCLA. UCLA is a little bit more driven to help underrepresented communities. And now that I was in Public Matters and in the internship, now here [at UCLA] I’m helping people by volunteering in their communities, gardening, all that stuff. I just want to help out more.” - *Moving Con Safos Intern*

These best practices and their impacts collectively speak to the success of the program in engaging the community, raising awareness, and fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment to build a culture of support for active transportation. They are strategies and activities that should be replicated and continued.

***“One of the biggest things that
the government can do is be more
engaged in the community.”***

- Community Partner



East LA Runners with dogs // East LA Civic Center

08

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the challenges identified through this program were indicative of community engagement broadly, and often not unique to the program. Stakeholders interviewed spoke primarily of the challenges they've encountered while engaging with public agencies. Public agencies are not typically viewed positively in the East LA community due to a history of perceived neglect, and negative experiences by many community members who describe being disregarded when raising concerns about the places they know best. There is a need for public agencies to change their culture to support meaningful collaboration and better consider community preferences in the prioritization and decision making around infrastructure improvements. The major challenges that agencies should consider and plan for are:

Communities are often disenfranchised and struggle with unmet basic needs. Respondents highlighted challenges stemming from a sense of disconnection from public agencies. Unmet basic needs, such as access to resources and safety concerns, contribute to a broader challenge. This is a direct result of decades of disinvestment by the public sector. Increasing trust between agencies and the public was identified as a crucial factor in addressing these issues.



Parade contingent // East LA Mexican Independence Day Parade

Some stakeholder groups are often excluded or made invisible. For some stakeholders, challenges related to visibility and recognition were identified, particularly for people with disabilities or mobility impairments. Stakeholders noted that this program was one of the first times their groups were actively invited to have a voice. Advocating for underserved groups by identifying and including representatives from those groups is crucial for long term success. The need for targeted strategies to reach marginalized individuals and communities is important.

“And they were telling me what they were doing and I was explaining to them that the disability community has always been asked last. But now they’re finally starting to bring us to the table. My main goal is to get us further into it than where it’s at right now.” - Community Partner

A lack of coordination among public agencies working on related topics makes it difficult for communities to engage. While this program effectively promoted alternative transportation, community members expressed confusion trying to follow multiple related but separate campaigns (for example, Vision Zero, Pedestrian Plan, Metro Area Plan, etc.). This is due to a lack of centralization across agencies as it relates to land use and policy decisions. Interviewees recommended more centralized information that could be disseminated broadly in places like libraries and local businesses.

“People have very real urgent concerns around accessing parts of our community or feeling safe or having the basic resources that they need to survive. And I think sometimes community members don’t always perfectly follow [the different] campaigns [and activities]. I also think that people struggle with knowing who is doing what...sometimes the details can get lost.” - Community Partner

Concerns about gentrification surfaced during discussions around active transportation, especially regarding infrastructure improvements in specific places. The fear that such changes might attract newcomers and potentially lead to displacement is a challenge that needs careful consideration in communities such as East LA. Agencies should address gentrification concerns and commit to reinvesting funds directly into the communities they are working in to better protect against potential displacement that can come with infrastructure improvements.

“Going back to trust, there tends to be fear, especially in communities where there’s such a large proportion of people who are renting their homes, that creating improving streets and the quality and the comfort and accessibility of streets is making way to people from outside of the neighborhood to now find this place more attractive, price them out, and buy out the homes that they’ve been renting for generations. And that was a fear that continued to rear its head around different conversations and events [related to infrastructure improvements].” - County Representative

Slow implementation and communication gaps result in lost faith from the community that public agencies are working for them. These were identified as challenges prohibiting community members from wanting to engage with public agencies. Communicating the progress of initiatives effectively to the community is crucial for maintaining interest and trust, especially when infrastructure changes take a long time to implement. Many stakeholders felt that specific infrastructure improvements related to safety should be implemented with a faster timeline. Specific concerns about speeding and potential solutions, like speed bumps, underscore the importance of addressing immediate safety issues to maintain community trust.

Stakeholders expressed challenges amongst the community in maintaining momentum for changes that may take many years, and understanding and navigating bureaucratic processes.

“Why does it take so long to get things approved? I don’t know. Would I even still be running [by the time streets are improved]? I’d be like 80, not even running anymore.”
- Community Partner

These challenges collectively paint a comprehensive picture of the obstacles of engaging historically disinvested communities in dialogues around infrastructure improvements. Addressing these challenges will require strategic communication, community involvement, and collaboration with a focus on inclusivity and responsiveness to community needs and concerns.



Pet Parade photo booth // East LA Civic Center

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Through this program, community members and organizations felt heard, valued, and included. **The next steps are explicitly clear from stakeholders interviewed: keep the momentum going.** The following recommendations highlight ways for public agencies to best implement future ATP non-infrastructure programs. The recommendations distill down the set of best practices already described.

Reinvent how community engagement and participation happen:

- » Reflect and celebrate community culture in all efforts, engagements, and communications. Allow communities to see and recognize themselves and center them in the work.
- » Embrace participatory methods of engagement.
- » Ensure that public participation is easily accessible, inviting, celebratory and fun.
- » Use easy-to-grasp graphics and information for those with low literacy.
- » Communicate in all languages that the community speaks.
- » Work with CBOs to lead engagement. There are limits to what any public agency can achieve on its own. CBOs also bring different credibility, skills and networks.
- » Link marketing with community engagement in manners that affirm and reinforce local culture. Work with local artists and designers.
- » Reinvest funds back into the local economy and support local businesses and community groups.
- » Center the experiences of people who are the most vulnerable and who are often excluded due to their age or ability in active transportation efforts.

Implement Context Responsive Community Engagement and Design:

- » **Create a network of community partners** that includes schools, community groups, businesses, faith-based institutions and residents of all ages and abilities. Work closely with the network so that they are informed about active transportation, why it's needed, and how it will benefit the community.
- » **Ask community partners to help inform their constituents** of pending projects and opportunities, including reaching constituents who are hard to reach due to the digital divide. Compensate groups for their time and efforts, including costs of food and beverages if hosting convenings.
- » **Utilize deep community engagement to identify the most pressing issues** and areas to address, and then provide solutions to enhance community safety and increase opportunities for active transportation.
- » **Address built environment and logistical challenges by listening to the people who live, work, and play in the community you serve**, as they are the most impacted by land-use decisions.
- » **Be clear and transparent** with communities about how these practices will inform subsequent plans and actions, along with the timeline to implement the work.

» **Create a community engagement plan for each project.** The plan should include:

- » sections on understanding the community
- » an asset map of community groups, resources, and key stakeholders
- » cultural practices and events
- » potential partners
- » an engagement timeline
- » methods of engagement

» **Ensure that public agencies utilize the IAP2 [Spectrum of Public Participation](#)** move from practices that “inform” and “consult” to practices that “involve” and collaborate”.

Collectively, these actions demonstrate a willingness to listen, learn, and work together—to be *in community* instead of serving community. They are invaluable ways to build and maintain community trust and support. Public agencies should commit to fostering a long-term cultural shift to better support context-specific community engagement. This should happen not only within specific communities but also across broader contexts.

Improving street safety and creating opportunities for greater use of active transportation can't be done in isolation. It requires deep coordination and collaboration among a wide range of stakeholders. This program opened the door to a new path forward for public agencies by growing a culture of support for active transportation in East LA that can be followed by other public agencies. It demonstrated the value and need for these actions.

Complete streets demo // City Terrace Dr.



“It’s not just, ‘okay, we had the conversation, we identified some issues and we’re going to do a couple of them.’ It’s a long-term cultural change. That means continued investment, building on what they already have been able to pull together through this campaign. And

that means continued community engagement opportunities. It means actively investing in projects that support active transportation and creating those spaces where people feel comfortable and safe, being able to be there and not shying away from the logistical challenges.”

- Community Partner

APPENDIX A: WALK AUDITS AND BIKE/ PEDESTRIAN COUNTS

WALK AUDITS

Walk audits were conducted twice during the program: first in February 2022, and again in November 2023. Walk audits are a particularly valuable tool in community action research, as they allow community members to document and assess the pedestrian safety, accessibility, and comfort of a particular area. The walk audit was designed to help students with their proposal for a complete streets treatment of City Terrace Dr. and to inform a Complete Streets redesign. The walk audit assessed current built environment conditions and provided observations of behaviors along the corridor; its purpose is to help inform the County's efforts to improve safety and encourage active transportation along City Terrace Drive.

After both walk audits, auditors reported similar concerns about safety, visibility, and access. Various auditors did not feel safe walking due to traffic flow and lack of visibility. Auditors also believe this corridor will benefit from amenities such as

trees, bus shelters, crosswalks, trash cans, and curb ramps to improve pedestrian comfortability and access. During the afternoon hours, a total of 161 people were seen using the streets throughout the whole corridor to get to local restaurants, schools, and corner stores. With the current activities led by local community members to activate City Terrace, there is a crucial need to make sure all forms of mobility have safe access to the area. Involving a diverse group of stakeholders in this process facilitated trust building and shared learning across individuals and allowed the community to shed light on very specific streetscape challenges that must be addressed.

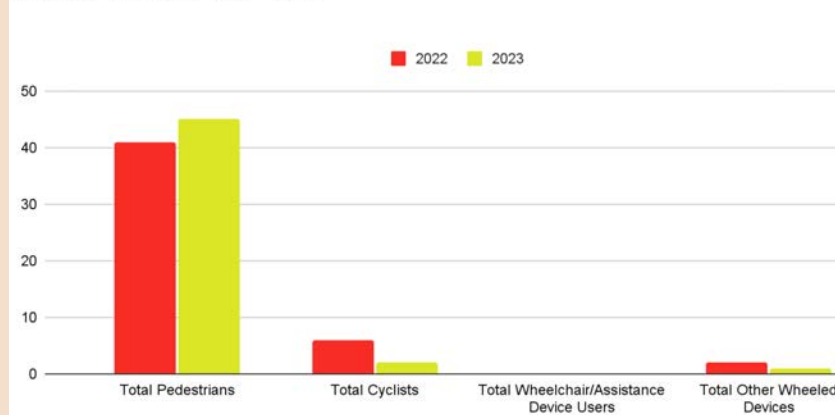


PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE COUNTS

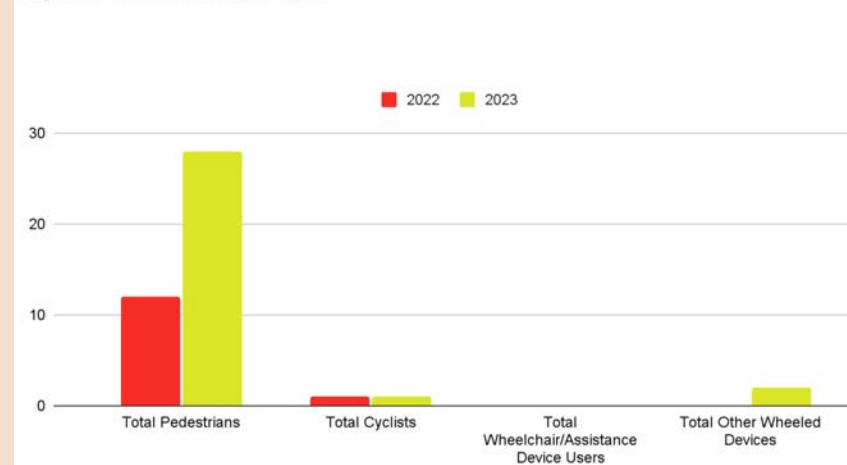
Pedestrian and bike counts were conducted in February 2022 and December 2023 in two locations: 1) Cesar Chavez Ave. between Arizona Ave and Kern Ave, and 2) Ford Blvd. between 4th St. and Eagle St. These corridors were chosen because of their collision concentration corridor status, proximity to freeway on and off-ramps, schools, and businesses, which indicates potential safety concerns for pedestrians and cyclists in the area. The counts revealed that weekdays experienced greater pedestrian activity than weekends. The counts also highlighted low numbers of commuters with wheelchairs or other wheeled devices, emphasizing the need to address potential accessibility challenges and optimize infrastructure to enhance pedestrian experiences in these East Los Angeles corridors.

There were no significant changes in the bike and pedestrian counts between the two time points, with one exception: an increase in total pedestrians along Ford Blvd. on weekday mornings. This data confirms what is already known: without infrastructure improvements, one would not expect to see big differences in behavior.

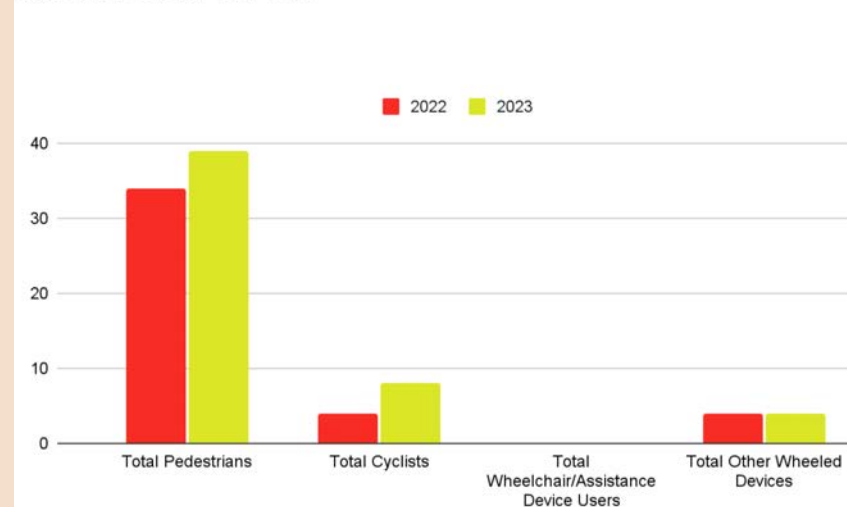
Bike and Pedestrian Count: Ford Blvd: between 4th St. and Eagle St. Weekday 7am - 9am



Bike and Pedestrian Count: Ford Blvd: between 4th St. and Eagle St. Weekend 11am - 1pm

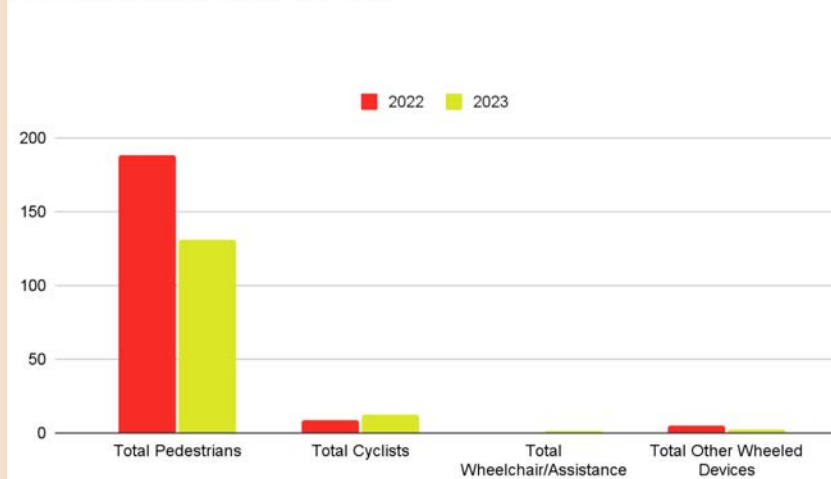


Bike and Pedestrian Count: Ford Blvd: between 4th St. and Eagle St. Weekday 4pm - 6pm

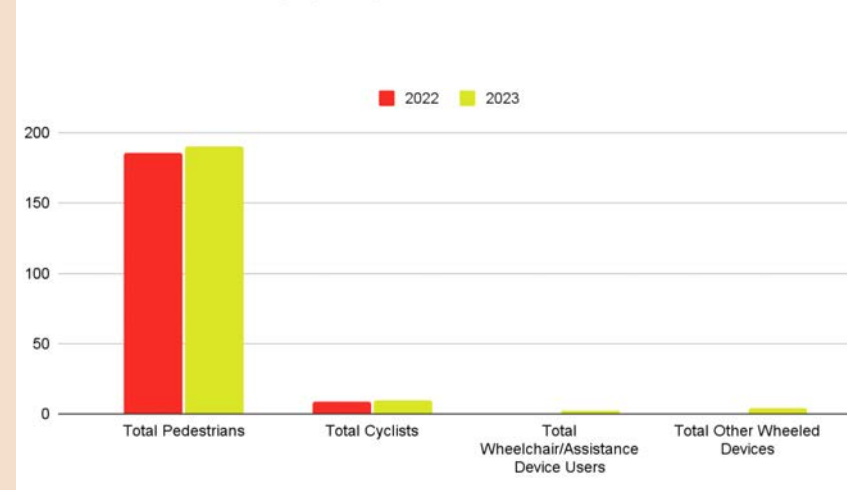


East Los Angeles Active Transportation Education and Encouragement Program

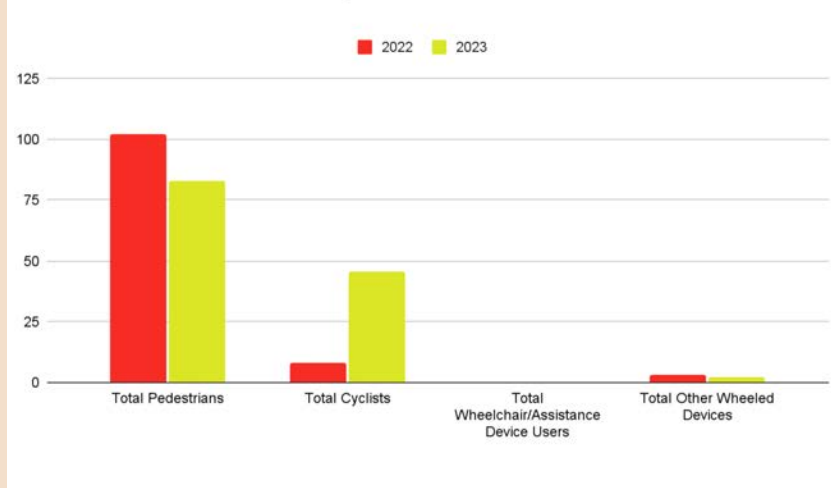
Bike and Pedestrian Count: Cesar Chavez Ave: Between Arizona Ave and Kern Ave Weekday 7am - 9am



Bike and Pedestrian Count: Cesar Chavez Ave: Between Arizona Ave and Kern Ave Weekday 4pm - 6pm



Bike and Pedestrian Count: Cesar Chavez Ave: Between Arizona Ave and Kern Ave Weekend 11am - 1pm



APPENDIX B: RENAISSANCE PRE-ENGAGEMENT AND POST-ENGAGEMENT SURVEY DATA

Renaissance students and their parents/guardians took a survey twice during the program timeline - prior to the start of the community engagement and education regarding active transportation issues, and again after engagement and education activities took place. The goals of the survey were to understand how intentional and intensive community engagement accomplishes the following:

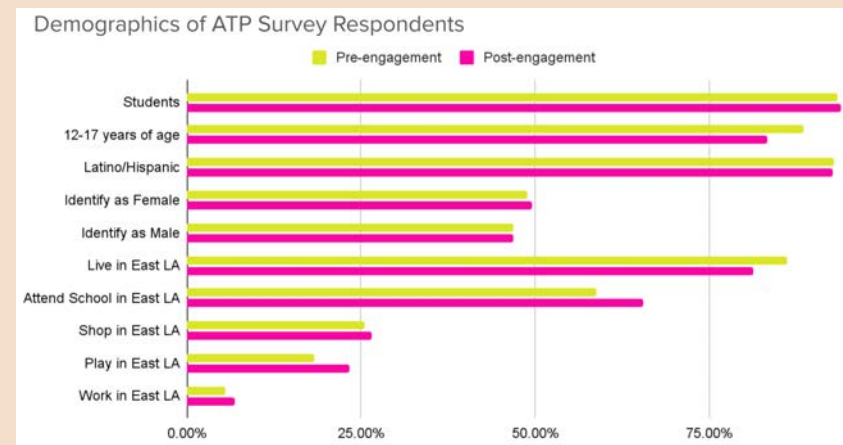
- » Influence people's use, attitudes, and experiences around active transportation
- » Demonstrate the merits and value of deeper, early, and consistent community engagement in relation to infrastructure projects; and
- » Empower community members to help shape decisions about the built environment in their community

SURVEY CO-DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Pueblo Planning co-developed the survey with a cohort of about 25 students from Renaissance over the course of three days. This iterative process allowed students to unpack the issues and contextualize the questions ultimately being asked in the survey. The process also gave students an opportunity to think about how they move through space, and helped them to understand the value of community input.

RESULTS

The pre-engagement survey was completed by 285 students and 20 parents (n = 305), and the post-engagement survey was completed by 180 students and 12 parents (n =192). A majority of survey participants were students (94%) and identified as Latino/Hispanic (93%). More than 80% of participants live in East LA, while about a quarter of participants said they shop or play in East LA.

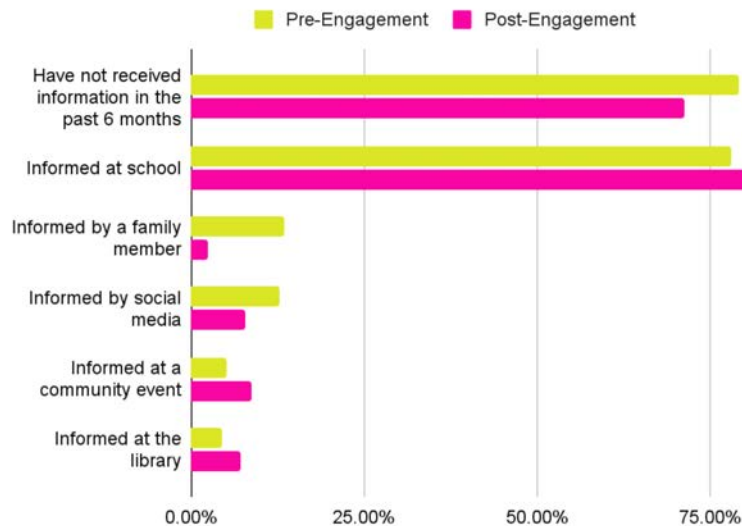


East Los Angeles Active Transportation Education and Encouragement Program

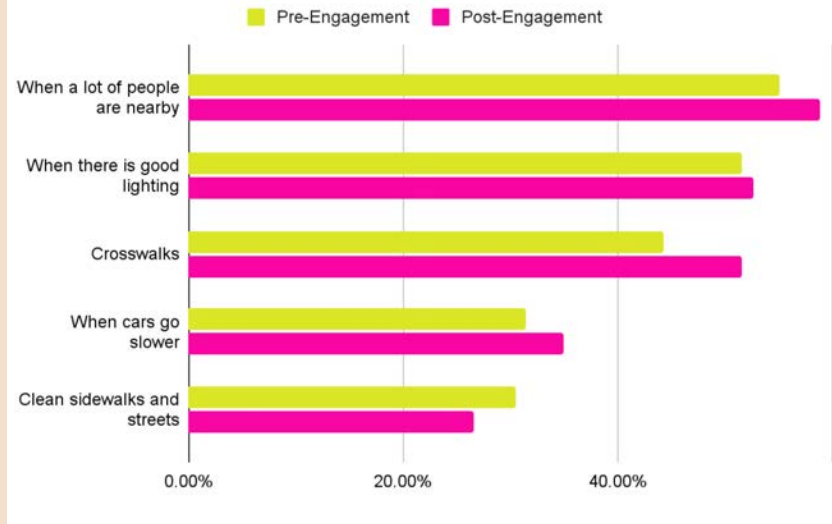
79% of respondents said they had not received information about transportation improvements in their neighborhood in the past six months during the pre-engagement survey. This decreased to 71.4% of respondents in the post survey. Similarly, more respondents said they were informed about transportation improvements at school (83.3%), at a community event (8.7%), and at the library (7.1%) during the post engagement survey. Although there were slight changes, these results are not statistically significant. However the data shows the importance of schools and community spaces such as libraries as trusted places to disseminate information.

People surveyed said they felt safest and happiest using alternative transportation when there are a lot of people nearby (59%), when there was good lighting (53%), at crosswalks (52%) and when cars go slower (35%). There was not a significant difference in perceptions of safety from the pre- to postengagement survey, indicating that these perspectives are likely representative of the community at large. People feel safest on the street when more people are nearby, strongly indicating that investing in placemaking and community gathering spaces, while designing streets to accommodate more types of street users can increase street safety, happiness, and thus usability for people in East LA.

How ATP Survey Respondents Received Information about Active Transportation



What makes you feel safe and happy when walking, biking, rolling/skateboarding, or taking public transit?





EAST L.A. MOVES **EL ESTE SE MUEVE**