

# THE LIVING STREETS INITIATIVE

*LOS ANGELES*



# The Living Streets Initiative

Los Angeles

**Presented by the Green LA Coalition**





# Streets for Everyone

**A STEADY, DRAMATIC SHIFT IS OCCURRING IN** the way Americans think about urban life—and the streets and highways that dominate it. We are moving toward cities that are more “livable” and streets that are more human-centered—and “complete.”

“Complete Streets” are streets designed and engineered to be safe and convenient for everyone—not just drivers, but bicyclists, transit riders, wheelchair users and pedestrians of all ages and abilities.

In just a decade, the idea of complete streets has evolved from a trendy buzzphrase among bicycle activists and progressive planners to an increasingly visible and broad social movement.

Transportation planners, street engineers, public health officers and elected officials—with a wide range of activist citizen groups in the vanguard—are talking about how to repurpose our city streets to allow everyone to get around safely and well, even if they’re not traveling by car.

The Living Streets Initiative is Green LA’s effort to apply the principle of “streets safe for all users” to the unparalleled vastness and complexity of Los Angeles. In this ethnically diverse, economically disparate metropolis ruled by the automobile, Green LA takes the concept of complete streets several steps further.

# Growing Momentum

## MANY CITIES AND TOWNS ACROSS THE U.S.

are moving beyond creating bike lanes and pouring new sidewalks. As they consider ways to retrofit their car-centric streets to accommodate all users, municipal agencies are also rethinking their regulations and retooling the way they evaluate the efficacy of their communities' networks of roadways.

### *Momentum is building:*

In Los Angeles, one sign of the **growing interest in repurposing roadways into inviting public spaces** is the rapidly multiplying enthusiasm for street festivals in celebration of non-motorized transit. In the summer of 2006, when the Pasadena Freeway was shut down for a few hours for the ArroyoFest Walk & Ride, 5,000 people showed up, most of them bicyclists and skaters. Only four years later, the first CicLAvia drew 100,000.

Reflecting an emerging, grassroots vision of street-scapes as welcoming venues where residents can walk, play, relax and socialize, a group of Silver Lake neighborhood activists began developing the concept for **L.A.'s first community-designed pedestrian plaza**. Completed in March 2012, **Sunset Triangle Plaza** is located in a triangle of asphalt formed by three intersecting streets. It features a sidewalk living room with movable tables and chairs, planters, and whimsically decorated pavement. This pilot project was brought to life by a unique public-private partnership, led by the Los Angeles City Planning Commission, called **Streets for People**. (See photo, p. 5)

Over the last six years, California lawmakers have passed a series of ground-breaking laws aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and requiring that our streets be designed to accommodate all road users (see sidebar). Since transportation accounts for a huge share of California's greenhouse gas emissions, **transportation planners and city officials are now mandated to find bold, innovative ways to help people shift from short automobile trips to walking, biking, and mass transit**. Creating more compact communities, and redesigning and retrofitting our urban roadways will be essential to reaching this goal.

## SUNSET TRIANGLE PLAZA IN SILVER LAKE

BEFORE



AFTER



### California Inches Toward Streets for Everyone

Assembly Bill 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, and Executive Order S-3-05 set ambitious goals for the reduction of greenhouse gases: by 2020, emissions will be reduced to 1990 levels; by 2050, emissions will be reduced to 80 percent below 1990 levels.

Senate Bill 375, the Sustainable Communities and Protection Act of 2008, includes goals to reduce greenhouse gases through transportation and land use strategies that support walking, bicycling and transit use.

Assembly Bill 1358, the Complete Streets Act of 2008 requires circulation elements within city and county general plans to provide safe travel for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, children, seniors, transit patrons and individuals with disabilities.

**NATIONWIDE, 25 STATES AND 275 CITIES** and towns have adopted regulations and directives recognizing the need for roads and streets that are safe and usable for walking, biking and public transit. In Los Angeles, several of such policies have emerged in just the last three years:

- **The City's 2010 Bicycle Plan** helps loosen the automobile's stranglehold on planning decisions—not only acknowledging that streets must accommodate bicycling, walking, and transit, but appreciating their potential as venues for recreation, retail and public gatherings.
- In 2011, the City adopted **Citywide Design Guidelines** to illustrate and guide ways that development projects can improve the streetscape experience and enhance neighborhood walkability.
- In early 2012, the County adopted the **Healthy Design Ordinance**, which promotes the creation of safe, convenient and pleasant places for pedestrians and bicyclists to help reduce the County's obesity rates.



Although bicycle enthusiasts are credited with coining the term "complete streets" and spearheading early efforts to bring it to life in localities as disparate as Portland, Ore., and New York City, **the movement has attracted the support of a variety of other interest groups**—from mainstream organizations like the AARP and the American Heart Association, to activist organizations like the Sierra Club and Paralyzed Veterans, to professional organizations like the American Planning Association, the Institute for Transportation Engineers, and the National Association of County and City Health Officials.



# Green LA's Living Streets Initiative

## THE LIVING STREETS INITIATIVE IS GREEN LA'S EFFORT TO APPLY THE PRINCIPLE OF STREETS SAFE FOR ALL USERS

to Los Angeles. We are concerned not just with creating roadways that fairly and inclusively balance the needs of walkers, bicyclists, transit riders and drivers. Because environmental restoration and economic equity are core values for Green LA, we also are dedicated to revitalizing neglected neighborhoods. Working to transform streets in the City's urban core into vibrant, inviting and green community spaces is a great place to begin.

*As conceived by Green LA, Living Streets are designed to:*

- **involve local residents** in the street design and planning process, using their priorities and needs to bring improvements to specific streets;
- **enhance a neighborhood's social and economic vitality** without inviting "gentrification" and displacement of longtime residents and businesses;
- **improve residents' health and quality of life** by transforming their key streets into enjoyable public spaces that are conducive to walking, biking, and social interaction;
- **create inviting, pleasing places**, with appealing street furniture, landscaping and public art that reflect the neighborhood's cultural uniqueness and diversity;
- **help restore our urban ecosystems** by adding trees and green space, and incorporating features that capture rainwater and clean urban runoff.



ABOVE: Photos via Deborah Murphy



## What Makes a Street a Living Street?

Although their characteristics vary depending on the density and other particularities of given communities, Living Streets are meant to have as many of the following features as possible:

- **Continuous, well-maintained sidewalks** of adequate width.
- **Improved crosswalk safety**—high-visibility crosswalks; curb extensions and crossing refuges to shorten crossing distances; ADA compliant curb ramps; on-demand pedestrian signals.
- **Streetscape improvements**—sidewalk furniture such as benches, trashcans and planters, shade trees and pedestrian lighting.
- **Place-making**—features that facilitate social interaction: sidewalk living rooms, street plazas, paseos, parklets, public art.
- **Bicycle infrastructure**—bike lanes, bicycle-friendly streets, bike racks, changing and locker facilities.
- **Traffic calming**—curb extensions or corner bulb-outs, traffic circles; sidewalk configurations that facilitate social activity and create elements of surprise.
- **Green infrastructure**—landscaped parkways and curb extensions incorporating water recapture and management features such as rain gardens where appropriate.

# The Need

**THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT** structures and constrains much of our daily lives, including whatever choices we might make about living active or passive, healthy or unhealthy lifestyles. The nearly 500 square miles that comprise greater Los Angeles are the very definition of car-dependent urban sprawl. In this enormous city, a central fact of life is that our roadways and asphalt pavements, which take up some 20% of available land, exist to serve the automobile. This makes active ways to get around like bicycling and walking not only inconvenient, but uncomfortable and even dangerous.

Behind Living Streets is the idea that by focusing on moving people, not traffic, we can envision a healthier built environment; and we can begin by transforming a key part of our infrastructure, our roadways, into a healthier, more balanced circulatory system.

Putting the needs of people first is a reminder that streets are not just thoroughfares, they are public spaces. By thinking of roadways as destinations, not just as traffic corridors, we can envision converting substantial portions of our streetscapes into engaging, vibrant places that can draw people out of their cocoons, whether cultural, residential or automotive. By bringing a human-centered approach to rethinking our streets, we may even be able to begin to transform the way of life that requires most Angelenos to spend so much time in their cars.

**OPPOSITE:**

People trying to cross a busy street with no nearby crosswalk.



**BELOW:** An unmaintained sidewalk, broken by tree roots, a common occurrence in Los Angeles.



# The Obstacles

**IN LOS ANGELES, WITH ITS 6,500 MILES OF PUBLIC STREETS AND RESOURCES TOO TIGHT EVEN TO COVER SUCH BASICS AS SIDEWALK REPAIR AND POTHOLE FILLING,** most of the features considered best practices to promote the health, safety and enjoyment of our streets are not easy to realize.

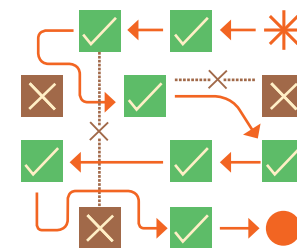
Although the Los Angeles General Plan includes policy language reflecting complete streets principles, the City has yet to put this intention into practice. Of the handful of LA streets with substantial pedestrian- and bike-friendly elements, most were created in connection with large private or public (Metro or CRA) developments. A few other limited, small-scale pedestrian-and/or bicycle-oriented sidewalk elements have been built on portions of blocks by community-based organizations.

*IMPROVING THE LIVABILITY OF LOS ANGELES STREETS IS IMPEDED BY A TANGLED THICKET OF REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS, BUREAUCRATIC PROCEDURES AND OTHER REAL OR PERCEIVED CONSTRAINTS:*

- **A long tradition of planning that is carried out development-by-development and site-by-site.** This disjointed, piecemeal process favors the higher-income areas that attract development. Since developer fees are the primary way that street improvements are financed, the few state-of-the-art street or streetscape enhancements that have been tried tend to be in wealthier parts of town, rather than where the need is greatest, in the low-income areas where a large percentage of residents depend on transit, walking and biking to meet their daily needs.
- **Illogical, “catch-22” transportation planning criteria** under which pedestrian and bicycle safety enhancements can occur only if the need for such improvements can be measured—i.e., expressed numerically or statistically. This requirement is often unattainable.
- **Reliance on vehicle level-of-service (LOS) metrics that measure and evaluate traffic flow,** but no other conditions affecting pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders. By focusing only upon reducing the average vehicle delay, these metrics give equal weight to the delay experienced by a single person in an automobile to the delay experienced by sixty passengers in a public bus; moreover, these metrics completely ignore negative impacts on bicyclists or pedestrians.
- **Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the City must assess the potential transportation impacts** of prospective development projects. To quantify these impacts, the City relies exclusively on LOS metrics. Paradoxically, this makes bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure and infill development difficult to implement, since progressive projects of this kind often yield metrics that (accurately) project a slowing of automobile traffic.
- **Deeply entrenched, rigidly auto-centric engineering practices** and street design standards that have emerged as transportation engineers have worked for over half a century to meet their single, overriding mandate: to keep the City's automobile traffic moving.

## FOR PLANNERS OR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

interested in developing a Living Street project, no public records exist that document the City's limited forays into non-standard street improvements. And no guide exists that might explain how to navigate the six or more different city departments and agencies that have a say in retrofitting existing streets and/or building new ones. Moreover, any effort to repurpose L.A. streets is hampered by circumstances on the “other side of the counter,” where balkanized City departments rarely communicate or collaborate with each other.







# The Solution: Good Practice

## **GREEN LA BELIEVES THE BEST WAY TO SPARK SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE IS TO LEAD THE WAY WITH GOOD PRACTICE.**

Policy change at the state and municipal level may indeed be a start. But it will not lead to meaningful, transformative implementation without, at minimum, the creation of well-built model projects co-designed by local residents.

Projects conceived and executed in this way can help policymakers, agency staff and residents visualize what Living Streets might look like. In addition, they can demonstrate to the City's elected officials and relevant department managers that Living Streets are not only appealing, but achievable and affordable.

*TO THIS END, GREEN LA'S LIVING STREETS INITIATIVE HAS CREATED A THREE-PRONGED STRATEGY:*

**DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS:** Design and build demonstration projects featuring a few simple, easily removable elements such as sidewalk living rooms and street porches.

**PROTOTYPE STREETS:** Build three prototype Living Streets in the Boyle Heights neighborhood selected and designed by community residents. These streets feature permanent street improvements such as state of the art pedestrian crossings, bicycle lanes, street trees and bioswales.

**IMPLEMENTATION BLUEPRINT:** Monitor and catalogue the main obstacles to implementing the prototype Living Streets, and identify practical ways to overcome them. Make this blueprint available to others on the Living Streets LA website.

**ABOVE:** Photo by Gary Leonard; The first CicLAvia open streets event in Los Angeles on 10/10/10.



# DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS:

**GREEN LA'S LIVING STREETS DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS AIM TO SHOW THAT UNDERUTILIZED PAVEMENT CAN RELATIVELY EASILY BE CONVERTED** into welcoming and dynamic public spaces. They are designed to be simple and inexpensive to build and install; they are also temporary, with easy to move features and components.

## Demonstration Project #1 El Sereno Street Plaza, Huntington Drive

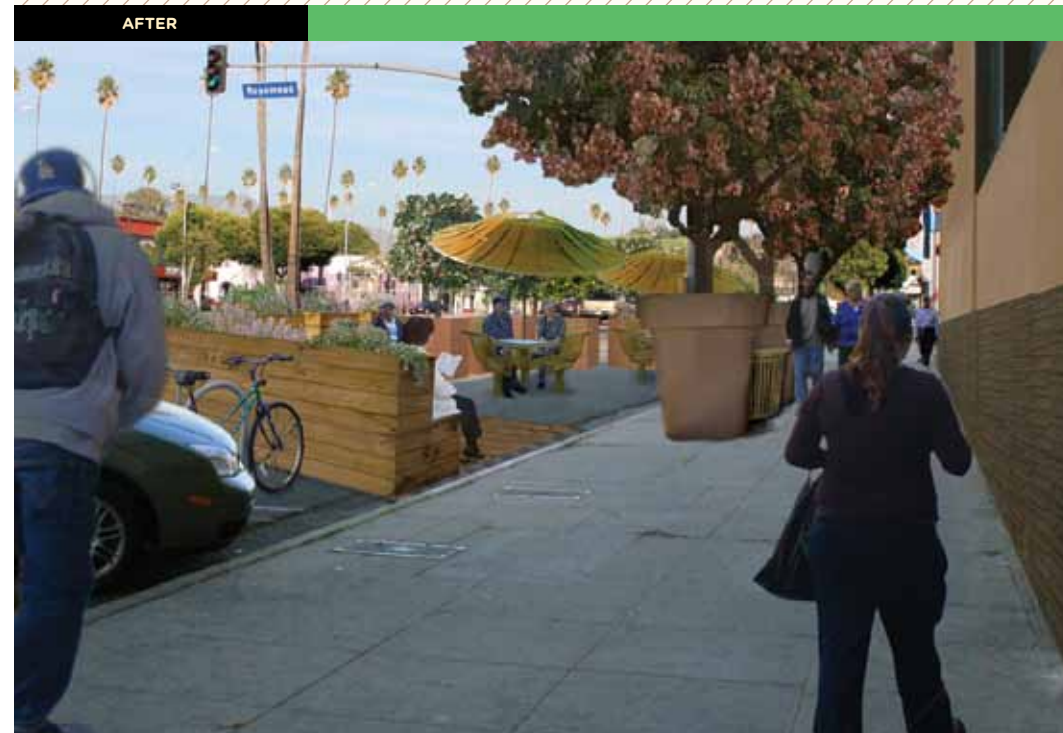
**FOR A PILOT PROJECT IN EL SERENO, LOCAL RESIDENTS WORKING WITH COUNCIL DISTRICT 14 AND GREEN LA CHOSE A CENTRAL SPOT** in the downtown business district adjacent to a busy Food 4 Less store and the local hardware store and across the street from the Barrio Action Youth & Family Center. The extra wide parking buffer adjacent to six-lane-wide Huntington Drive, and the pedestrian and retail activity in the area make this an excellent location. Residents also specifically decided to choose a location not adjacent to a restaurant or café **to be sure the space would be seen as 100% public.**

14th District Council Member José Huizar Identified funds to help pay for the project, and through five community workshops, **residents created a design that captures local character** through elements including giant terracotta pots, locally popular fruit trees and ornamental plants and the silhouette of the iconic Elephant Hill cut into the metal fence screens. Part of the plaza is on a wooden platform at sidewalk level, with the remainder at street level, providing multiple spaces and experiences—and universal accessibility.

**Community members will help build** the custom designed benches, planters and platform working with members of the Los Angeles Conservation Corps. Residents chose built-in tables, chairs and metal umbrellas to create the sense of a permanent public space and avoid the need to move the furniture in and out every day. Because the project will be installed on an existing red curb area, no parking spaces will be lost.

**STATUS**—Green LA applied for permits in fall 2011 and expects is to obtain approval and complete installation by the end of 2012.

**BELOW:** Community visioning workshop for El Sereno.



# Demonstration Project #2

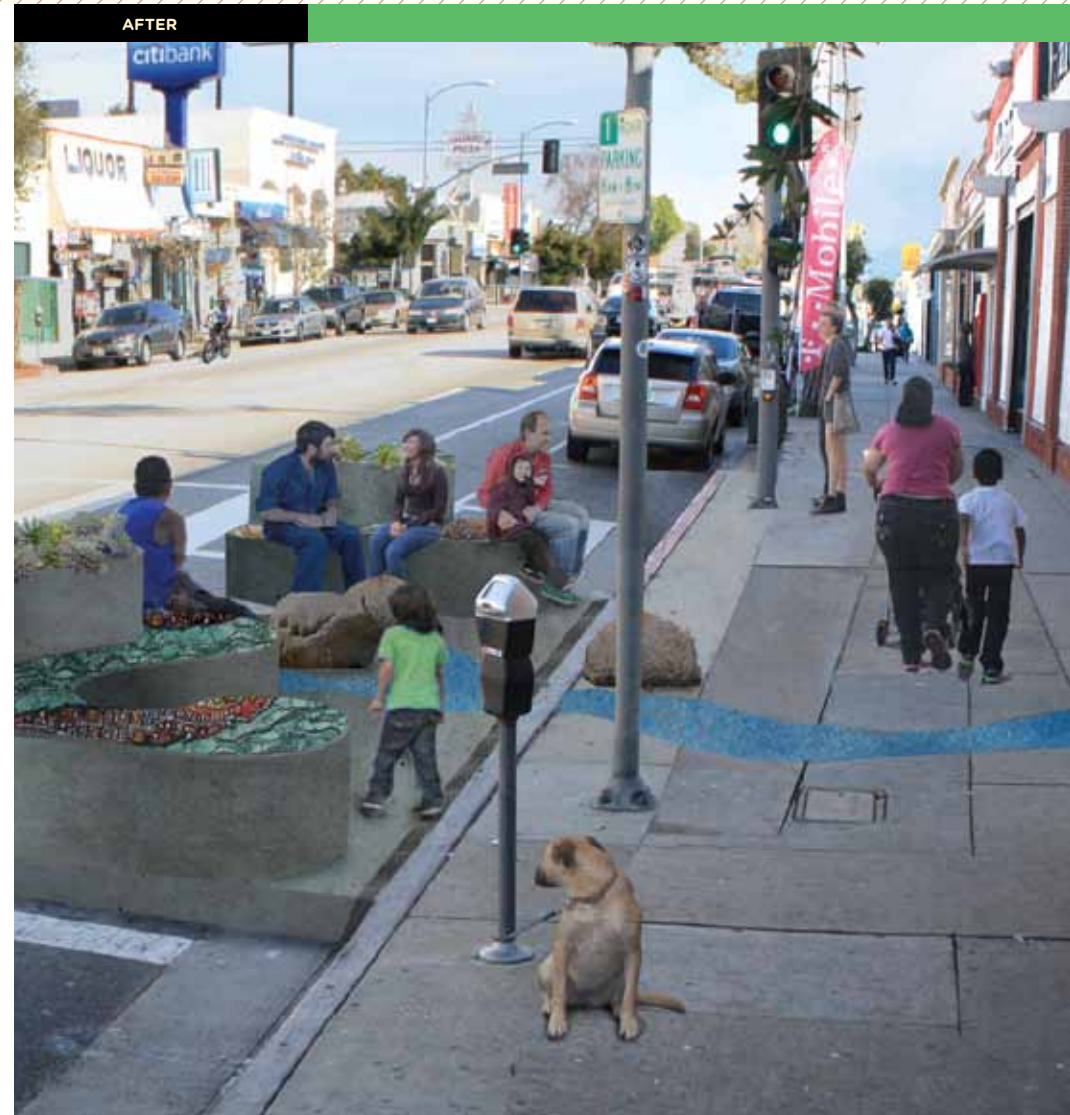
## York Boulevard Street Porch, Highland Park

**DURING THE COMMUNITY DESIGN PROCESS** for the York Boulevard demonstration project in Highland Park, community members, working with Council District 14 and Green LA's Living Streets team, selected what will become the first "street porch," in Los Angeles. Located on the shady side of the street on the most active block of York Boulevard, and intentionally not attached to any particular business, **the street porch will provide community social space and support all nearby businesses.**

Council Member José Huizar identified city funds to pay for the project, and through four workshops and many committee meetings, **the community developed an organic design featuring inset tile mosaic and river rocks**; the motif alludes to the history and natural environment of Highland Park and honors and engages the area's emerging creative community.

**The porch creates a social focal point** and adds a bit of aesthetic appeal adjacent to a lackluster paseo leading to a public parking lot. It also features an elevated platform that puts it at the same level as the sidewalk. Because of its location between an existing bike lane and the curb in a red curb area, no parking spaces were lost.

**STATUS**—Green LA applied for permits in fall 2011 and expects to obtain approval and complete installation by the end of 2012.



BEFORE



*Located on the shady side of the street on the most active block of York Blvd., and intentionally not attached to any particular business, the street porch will provide community social space and support all nearby businesses.*



# PROTOTYPES:

**GREEN LA'S LIVING STREETS PROTOTYPES ARE CAREFULLY DESIGNED, PERMANENT STREET ENHANCEMENTS** whose main purpose is enabling residents to safely and pleasantly walk, ride their bikes and get to transit stops. The Prototypes aspire to be cohesive models of pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly streetscapes, with the kinds of features that residents of L.A.'s urban core most urgently need.

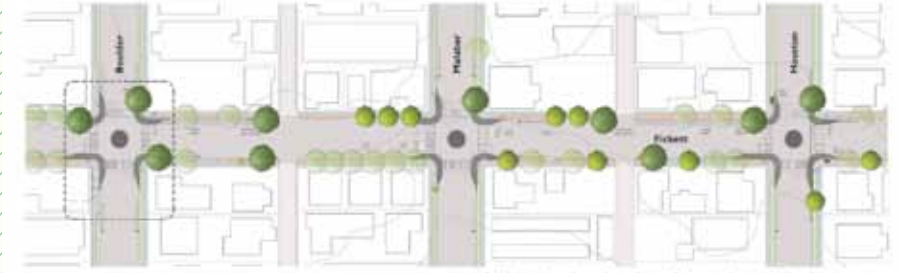
Green LA selected Boyle Heights for its three prototype Living Streets because it is one of the city's most neglected areas, with an urgent need for infrastructure upgrades of all kinds. Although Boyle Heights is a culturally rich neighborhood known for its diverse ethnic history, nearly a third of its residents now live below the poverty line. At 14,229 people per square mile, it is also one of the city's highest density areas. About 95% of Boyle Heights' 92,000 residents are Latino and Hispanic, 37% have no access to a car or do not drive, and 63% are renters.

## Prototype #1 — Fickett Street

**THIS PROTOTYPE, ON A RESIDENTIAL STREET** that is typical of Boyle Heights, includes the following pedestrian safety and green elements:

1. **high-visibility zebra-stripe crosswalks** with advanced stop bars and yield lines
2. **shade trees**
3. **pedestrian lighting** to illuminate sidewalks
4. **curb extensions** on all four corners of each intersection
5. **paired curb extensions** at entrances to alleys
6. **bioretention areas** (in planters surrounded by low curbs) incorporated into curb extensions where appropriate

PLAN



BEFORE



AFTER







## Prototype #2 — Wabash Avenue

**THIS PROTOTYPE, ON A TYPICAL NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR,** includes the following pedestrian safety and green elements:

- **high-visibility zebra-stripe crosswalks**, with advanced stop bars and yield lines
- **a mix of large-canopy palms and more traditional shade trees**
- **curb extensions** to provide bus bulb-outs at all stops
- **curb extensions continuing at lengthy red curbs**, to provide more space for activity
- **add bike lane** in place of continuous painted median, retaining left turn pockets at intersections
- **bioretention areas** (in planters surrounded by low curbs) incorporated into curb extensions where appropriate

BEFORE



**LEFT:** Residents designing a sala publica (community living room).



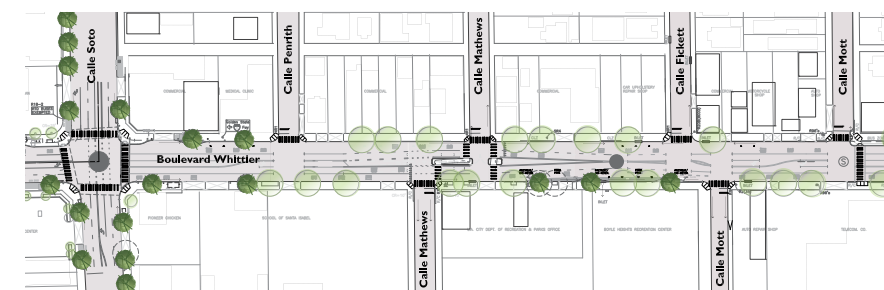
BEFORE



AFTER



PLAN



## Prototype #3 — Whittier Boulevard

**THIS PROTOTYPE, ON A MAJOR ARTERIAL BOULEVARD**

with several bus lines, includes the following pedestrian safety and green elements:

- **high-visibility zebra-stripe crosswalks**, with advanced stop bars and yield lines
- **pedestrian refuge median** at key intersection with Mathews Street
- **existing Ficus trees retained**; lifted sidewalks repaired and renewed; new planting areas
- **bus shelters, shade trees and planting areas** on all four corners at Soto, a major transit intersection
- **curb extensions** to provide bus bulb-outs where space allows and for new activity areas along edge of park
- **bus- and bike- only lanes** to improve transit service and bicycle access
- **bioretention areas** (in planters surrounded by low curbs) incorporated into curb extensions where appropriate



**LEFT:** Residents at community meeting identifying possible priority street improvements.

# Community Engagement in the Selection & Design Process

**THE HEART AND SOUL OF GREEN LA'S LIVING STREETS INITIATIVE** are the people who live in the neighborhoods where our prototypes and demonstration projects will be built. Green LA firmly believes that **community change must be community driven**; we therefore launched our initiative by first engaging local residents.

By linking up with local neighborhood organizations, **we engaged in a lively, instructive, and creative participatory design process** in each of our three project neighborhoods—El Sereno, Highland Park, and Boyle Heights. The most extensive process occurred in Boyle Heights, where our project partners are the East Los Angeles Community Corporation (ELACC) and the Union de Vecinos (see sidebar). Because of their deep roots in the community, these grassroots organizations were able to bring together over 50 Boyle Heights residents to form a Community Task Force that led the selection and planning of the prototypes.

Architect Holly Harper, the initiative's coordinator, and designer Steve Cancian of Shared Spaces led task force members in putting Living Streets principles into practice, explaining phases of the design process and coordinating construction. **In workshops and "walk audits" spanning six months, members studied and assessed eight sets of interconnected streets**, identifying those four zones most urgently needing safety improvements; they then weighed and mapped out various site and design options, finally selecting smaller stretches of two to three blocks within each zone where the prototypes are being developed.

**PHOTOS:** Community members at participatory design workshops for the Boyle Heights Prototypes.



**ONE OF THE FIRST LESSONS GREEN LA LEARNED** from the participatory design process is that community-defined priorities and perspectives can be very different from the kinds of concerns identified and addressed through conventional urban planning. In Boyle Heights, residents' choices wound up being guided by four overriding objectives:

- **enhancing pedestrian safety**
- **creating space that encourages social interaction**
- **creating amenities and public space to facilitate economic interaction**—i.e., space for street vending and support for local small businesses
- **making more space available for sidewalks, trees and plants**

In a further series of brainstorming sessions, the task force created specific conceptual plans and design configurations for two groups of simple, small-scale, inexpensive sidewalk enhancements to be built by community members on St. Louis and Fickett Streets.

Residents themselves will work together in two committees to install salas publicas or outdoor living room sitting areas, paint a series of pavement murals within five consecutive intersections, add trees and planters, and erect a community bulletin board. As this publication was going to press, completion was slated for early Spring of 2012.

## Our Partners in Boyle Heights

**EAST LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY CORPORATION** advocates for economic and social justice through affordable housing development, community organizing and education. ELACC has been in operation since 1995.

**UNION DE VECINOS** is a grassroots community based organization that promotes civic participation, democracy, and the development of community power in Boyle Heights and the City of Maywood. Union de Vecinos started in 1996 working for the preservation of the Pico Aliso public housing projects. Sixteen years later they have a Network of Neighborhood and Issue Committees working for participatory democracy, economic and environmental justice, affordable housing, and healthy and safe community neighborhoods.





## Charting Ways to Overcome Implementation Obstacles

**AS GREEN LA STARTED SCOPING OUT OUR PROTOTYPES AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS**, and project staff began exploring design options with the City departments having jurisdiction over street improvements, it quickly became evident that the bureaucratic and regulatory impediments to Living Streets would be even more daunting than we originally thought.

In the course of numerous informal discussions with planning and engineering staff, Green LA learned that **even basic pedestrian safety elements such as high-visibility crosswalks and added lighting are considered non-standard**. This designation means that approvals and permits are complicated and challenging to obtain.

To aid independent planners, advocates and community-based organizations interested in implementing future Living Streets projects in Los Angeles, Green LA has created an **Implementation Blueprint** that summarizes what we've learned about how to address the bureaucratic barriers to implementing Living Streets.

In matrix format, the Blueprint lists each of the specific design elements selected for Green LA's prototypes, and next to each element, lays out in detail the corresponding implementation obstacles and what it will take to overcome them. (See sample section on opposite page.) A reference to the numerous codes, regulations and standards that apply to each element is also included.

One clear pattern that emerges from the Blueprint is that many of the features most integral to Living Streets, such as placing planter boxes or small garden spaces beside sidewalks, or adding benches and lighting at existing bus stops, are challenging to realize, as they require private financing and management—i.e., finding businesses and organizations willing to pay for the improvements and take responsibility for their ongoing maintenance.

The Implementation Blueprint also highlights the kinds of policy changes needed in order to realize Living Streets in Los Angeles. For example, the City must adopt new measures of its transportation system efficacy, either moving away altogether

An example of the type of information contained in the **Implementation Blueprint**

Living Streets Element	Major Obstacle/ Issue	Controlling Agency/Code	Comments/ Other Plans Interaction	Strategies to Overcome Obstacle
High-visibility crosswalk with very wide stripes in direction of traffic	Los Angeles only installs the simple type of crosswalk consisting of two transverse lines, per standard plan S-481.0.	California's <i>Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices</i> (MUTCD), 2010 LADOT, <i>Guidelines for Marked Crosswalks Across Uncontrolled Approaches</i> , 2008	Caltrans' Complete Intersections recommends consideration of this treatment at all intersections.	High-visibility crosswalks have been installed by LADOT but only under pressure from local groups.

To view the full Implementation Blueprint please visit [livingstreetsla.org](http://livingstreetsla.org)

from automobile level-of-service analysis, or adopting meaningful, supplemental performance measures that will facilitate the creation of more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly streets.

Although traffic engineers are very good at solving problems, traditionally their one and only task is finding ways to move automobile traffic more quickly and efficiently. They have done a remarkable job in Los Angeles and the incidence of automobile collisions in the City is actually well below state or national averages—but at the cost of pedestrian collision rates that are among the nation's highest.

### Living Streets Need Squeaky Wheels

Our initiative coordinator recounts a conversation with a City transportation planner that reinforced Green LA's philosophy of change:

**Coordinator:** "Our Task Force wants to put in a high-visibility, zebra-style crosswalk on Fickett Street."

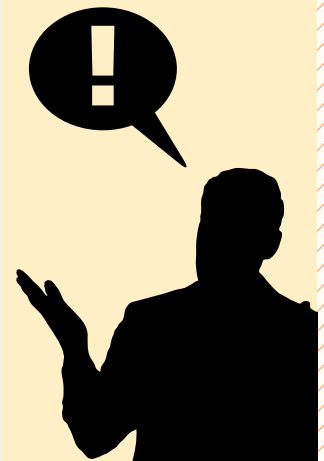
**Planner:** "Non-standard. We don't do those."

**Coordinator:** "Never? But I've seen a few of them around, like on State Street at Bridge."

**Planner:** "Only under exceptional circumstances do we ever do those."

**Coordinator:** "What kinds of exceptional circumstances?"

**Planner:** "The project will tend to come at the recommendation of a council office."



# Living Streets: Where We Go From Here

**GREEN LA'S LONG-RANGE GOAL IS TO FACILITATE THE BUILDING OF A CITYWIDE, NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED NETWORK** that can lead a grassroots advocacy movement for Living Streets. Because Green LA is already a working coalition of Los Angeles-based environmental and community-based organizations united by shared concerns with restoring our urban ecosystems and a shared commitment to environmental justice, we are well positioned to lead this kind of work.

Over the next few years, however, Green LA's advocacy work around Living Streets will focus on building the groundwork for transformation. Most of our work will continue to take the form of creating model projects that can inspire, educate, and help to raise the level of discourse about what kind of city we want to live in.

We will also expand the participatory design and planning process that we initiated in 2010, and advance our work on the Implementation Blueprint. Our specific objectives for 2012 and 2013 are to:

- **Obtain necessary permits** and raise funds to build at least one of the three prototype Living Streets in Boyle Heights that were selected and designed by a task force of Boyle Heights residents in summer and fall of 2011.
- **Expand on the vision of the prototype streets** by working with our Boyle Heights partners to complete community-created Pedestrian Safety Plans for larger areas surrounding the prototype streets.
- **Build an additional Living Street demonstration project** with community residents and stakeholders.
- In the course of the permitting and construction process for the prototypes, **continue to refine and update the Implementation Blueprint** to further document specific barriers that arise, and determine the best ways to overcome them.
- **Identify regulations, procedures and practices that may need to be modified,** and recommend possible policy solutions to ensure that developing and building Living Streets projects in the City of Los Angeles is easier to accomplish.



# Acknowledgments

Green LA's Living Streets LA Initiative was started by the Transportation Work Group's Living Streets Committee. The committee represents organizations and professionals committed to reclaiming street space for people, in order to build a healthier, more vibrant and sustainable Los Angeles.

Staff, consultants and key leaders on the Living Streets LA project are as follows:

**Holly Harper** is an architect and coordinator for Green LA's ¡Calles para la Gente! Boyle Heights.

**Alexis Lantz** is the Planning & Policy Director for the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition; she is on the steering committee for Los Angeles Walks.

**Ryan Lehman** is an urban planner and is working on Green LA's community-driven Living Street projects on York and Huntington Boulevards.

**Margot Ocañas** formerly of RENEW LA County, is a consultant working on projects that support Complete Streets policies and programs to affect health-positive change in LA's built environment.

**Steve Rasmussen Cancian** is a landscape architect with Shared Spaces, who led the participatory design processes for the ¡Calles para la Gente! Boyle Heights project and York and Huntington Living Streets projects.

**Stephanie Taylor** is Green LA's Executive Director. She oversaw the Living Streets Boyle Heights RENEW Initiative (¡Calles para la Gente! Boyle Heights).

**Partners:** East LA Community Corporation, Union de Vecinos and Councilmember José Huizar who is leading the way for new street projects including the El Sereno Street Plaza and York Boulevard Street Porch, and committed to help seek funding for the Boyle Heights prototype streets.

**Writer:** Becca Wilson [reachbecca@gmail.com](mailto:reachbecca@gmail.com)

**Graphic design:** Colleen Corcoran [designedbycolleen.com](http://designedbycolleen.com)  
and Joseph Prichard [josephprichard.com](http://josephprichard.com)

**Demonstration Projects After Renderings:** Kelli Rudnick  
**Boyle Heights Prototypes After Renderings:** Abby Jones

**Photographs by:** Deborah Murphy, Gary Leonard, Colleen Corcoran



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# About Green LA Coalition

Founded in 2005 by local environmental leaders, Green LA embarked on a singular mission to transform Los Angeles into a national leader in environmental health and equity. Green LA grew into a vibrant network that is building a movement to win campaigns that can transform Los Angeles into a just and sustainable city. Combining grassroots activism with insider knowledge of City Hall, Green LA plays an essential role in greening the city.

[greenlacoalition.org](http://greenlacoalition.org)  
[livingstreetsla.org](http://livingstreetsla.org)

Green LA is a project of Community Partners