

ch. 5

PROGRAMS



Programs can complement infrastructure investments by encouraging more people to walk and to walk more often, educating all roadway users to enhance pedestrian safety, and addressing both perceived and real personal safety issues.

Programs are also a way for the County to engage directly with community members to understand other issues that may hinder their ability to walk and to identify additional pedestrian projects needed in their community.

During the development of this Plan, stakeholders provided input on programs and activities to support walking in their communities. The programs described in this chapter reflect input received from stakeholders, and are a mix of existing and new County-led and community-run programs in various unincorporated areas. While the County is responsible for the implementation of this Plan, contingent upon sufficient funding and resources and engineering analysis, several of the programs identify opportunities to work with external stakeholders such as community members, community-based organizations, the California Highway Patrol (CHP), school districts, neighboring jurisdictions, and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) to develop and implement programs.

The programs initiated by community members and organizations in unincorporated communities have helped support increased walking by residents. By uplifting these existing community-led programs, the County hopes to highlight

the important role individuals and organizations play in creating more walkable unincorporated communities. Their efforts lay the groundwork for culture change by encouraging more people to walk, reducing crime and fear of crime, and creating awareness and support for enhanced pedestrian infrastructure.

Currently, the County relies on a mix of grant funding to run the various programs identified in this chapter. In order to grow and sustain these programs, the County will need to pursue more grant opportunities and identify long-term, consistent revenue streams. For this reason, short-, medium-, and long-term steps have been identified for each program. Short-term steps are those that have an anticipated time frame of five years. As additional resources are secured, the County can support medium- and long-term implementation steps.

This chapter also outlines how the County can support existing programs led by community-based organizations and individuals. By supporting community-led programs and by implementing its own programs, Los Angeles County can further enhance the mobility, safety, and comfort for all people residing in and visiting unincorporated communities.

## PROGRAM 1: SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Enhancing roadway safety for our children is paramount. Motor vehicle collisions are the leading cause of death for children 5 to 14 years old<sup>1</sup> across Los Angeles County unincorporated communities. Schools are the heart of our unincorporated communities. As one of the only regularly occurring points of contact between local government and residents, schools serve as a perfect venue for County departments to engage with residents - who are also parents,

<sup>1</sup> Data from Los Angeles County Public Works' Collision Geo-database, based on California Highway Patrol records from 1/1/11 to 8/31/16 (analyzed 12/13/16)

students, and school officials - to understand traffic safety concerns and work together to identify community-supported solutions.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs have many goals including: (1) teaching youth the rules of the road, so they are more prepared to navigate their community on foot and eventually become safe drivers; (2) encouraging active modes of getting to school, which will help students arrive at school more alert and ready to learn; (3) decreasing the prevalence of childhood obesity through increased physical activity; and (4) reducing traffic congestion around schools and cut-through traffic on residential streets due to school drop-off and pick-up.

Metro provides regional SRTS resources including: a SRTS Resource Manual that guides schools on building successful SRTS programs; a SRTS Action Route Map that outlines methods for implementing a SRTS program; and educational, encouragement, trainer/teacher, and evaluation materials.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> These resources can be found on Metro's website at: [www.metro.net/projects/srts-manual/](http://www.metro.net/projects/srts-manual/)



*Safe Routes to School assemblies teach children important lessons about being a safe pedestrian*

Los Angeles County's existing SRTS program is multifaceted and involves multiple County agencies to implement infrastructure projects around schools, in conjunction with school-based education and encouragement programs. As part of the County's program, Public Works developed "Suggested Routes to School" maps to provide proposed walking routes to a specific school. These maps identify the locations where crossing the street is suggested based on the presence of sidewalks. Other factors, such as whether intersections have marked crosswalks, traffic signals, or are served by crossing guards, are also taken into consideration when suggesting walking routes. These maps are available to the public through the Public Works website.

In 2011, Public Works developed a Suggested Routes to School map for multiple schools and contacted the schools to provide them with the maps. However, the County has not had the capacity to follow up with schools each year to ensure maps are shared with parents at the start of each school year. Public Works also translates SRTS information for non-English proficient individuals. As the funding and resources become available, the County will consider a more robust SRTS program.

In addition, Public Works helps coordinate the County's School Crossing Guard Program in partnership with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE). The program includes warrants and a policy for assigning adult crossing guards to elementary and middle schools. The general warrant for crossing guards considers intersection geometry, vehicular volumes and vehicle speeds, and sight distance at the crossing. California Vehicle Code (CVC) 42201 (e) authorizes the Board of Supervisors to provide school crossing guards. The Board adopted a policy in 1995 that provides criteria for assigning crossing guards throughout the county at school crossings servicing elementary school children. The Crossing Guard Program warrants were updated in 2014 to include crossings servicing middle schools.

The purpose of the Crossing Guard Program is to safely assist elementary and middle school-aged children with crossing the roadways on their walk to and from school. School crossing guards help draw driver attention to the presence of pedestrians and can help parents feel comfortable about their children walking or bicycling to school. While the primary role of a crossing guard is to

guide children safely across the street, children also remain responsible for their own safety. In this manner, a guard also serves as a role model helping children develop the skills necessary to cross streets safely at all times.

LACOE runs the County's Crossing Guard Program and is responsible for training and assigning crossing guards to intersections along walking routes for elementary and middle schools in unincorporated communities. Public Works' role in the Crossing Guard Program is to conduct traffic studies based on requests from residents received from local school districts and other stakeholders. Public Works determines whether the request meets the minimum criteria to have a crossing guard present, established by the Board of Supervisors and according to the current edition of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. As of October 2018, there are approximately 232 locations across the unincorporated areas that are serviced by crossing guards.

Currently, much of the County's SRTS in-school education and encouragement efforts are grant-funded and not offered on a regular basis. The County values the benefits of SRTS and as resources allow, is committed to seeking funding to expand on existing efforts, while supporting overall program growth. The County recognizes that in order to increase the number of students and parents walking to school, it needs to empower school champions;

therefore, immediate steps focus on providing more resources to support community-led SRTS efforts. The County will work with its partners at Metro and LACOE to raise awareness of SRTS and deliver resources to parents and school officials.

### Short-Term Steps

- ▶ Establish a Safe Routes to School Program to provide traffic safety education to students, identify safety enhancements around schools, and promote walking and bicycling.
- ▶ Seek funding to expand on existing Safe Routes to School Program efforts, while supporting overall program growth.
- ▶ Create a Safe Routes to School page on Public Works' website that could include, but is not limited to:
  - ▶ Information for parents and school officials about Safe Routes to School programs with links to resources developed by the County, Metro, state, and national partners. Examples include the Department of Public Health's "Let's Walk to School Together! A Walking School Bus Training Manual" in English and Spanish developed by the PLACE Program, guidance on how to implement events to celebrate International Walk to School Day, and general education materials on walking and bicycling to school safely

- ▶ Suggested Routes to School Maps GIS page
  - ▶ “Request a Crossing Guard” information and information on what qualifies a site for a crossing guard
  - ▶ Descriptions and status of completed, in-progress, and forthcoming infrastructure projects around schools
  - ▶ Descriptions of past and forthcoming Safe Routes to School education programs, such as field-based pedestrian safety education (Walk/Bike Rodeo)
- ▶ Work with LACOE to expand the School Crossing Guard Program to serve additional school sites if criteria is met, as resources allow.
  - ▶ Partner with LACOE to promote annual Walk to School Day event to school districts serving unincorporated areas using resources developed or provided by the County and Metro on how to organize Walk to School Day.
  - ▶ DPH staff will continue to support community-led efforts to organize annual Walk to School Day events by providing walk leader trainings to school champions, and staffing events, providing incentives, connecting school officials to law enforcement partners for traffic control support, and/or other resources as available.
  - ▶ Collect contact information for key school stakeholders and champions across unincorporated areas to coordinate future programs and project implementation.
- ▶ Seek funding to support the development of a County Safe Routes to School Action Plan.
- Medium-Term Steps**
- ▶ Develop a Safe Routes to School Action Plan.
  - ▶ Work with schools to develop updated Suggested Routes to School maps and identify locations where pedestrian infrastructure projects are needed. Provide to all unincorporated community schools at least bi-annually.
  - ▶ Work with Metro to enhance current County efforts for Walk to School Day, and to develop a mechanism for school stakeholders to register and order incentives, request training, and/or coordinate law enforcement support for annual Walk to School Day events.
  - ▶ Evaluate participation in annual Walk to School day consistent with national best practices for SRTS program evaluation.
  - ▶ Evaluate crossing guard placement on an annual basis to consider changing pedestrian conditions, and continue to follow the guidelines and criteria set forth by the Adult Crossing Guard Program and California Vehicle Code 42201 (e).
- Long-Term Steps**
- ▶ Evaluate establishing full-time coordinator position(s) at the County for on-going coordination with school districts and to expand delivery of SRTS programs.
  - ▶ Implement the Safe Routes to School Action Plan, and update it regularly.

## Community-led SRTS Efforts

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The West Whittier School District serves residents of West Whittier-Los Nietos and is committed to implementing SRTS strategies at its schools. In 2017, West Whittier Elementary School participated in Walk to School Day, an international program that encourages students to walk to school on the same day.

In Walnut Park, parents, non-profit community partners like YWCA, and school staff from Academia Moderna Charter School, Walnut Park Elementary School, and Walnut Park Middle School have worked together to host Walk to School Day events for the last three years (2015-2017). Los Angeles County staff have supported these efforts by providing annual trainings on how to organize a walk to school day event, and programs such as a walking school bus. Walnut Park Middle School has also worked to educate parents and drivers by distributing SRTS pedestrian safety information.



## PROGRAM 2: SAFE PASSAGES

Safe Passages is a program that focuses on providing safety to students as they travel to school in high violence or high crime communities. Safe Passages programs are specifically designed to ensure that students can travel to school without fear of intimidation or harm due to gang activity, drugs, or crime. Safe Passages programs have also been initiated to enhance safety for community members walking to parks in communities with high violence or crime to ensure that they can access resources, be physically active, and engage with neighbors.

There are several models for how Safe Passages programs are organized. Some are operated by school districts or a community agency in partnership with County government or public agencies, using security professionals or peer specialists trained to intervene in violent incidents and negotiate and maintain peace along routes in rival gang neighborhoods. Some programs are a volunteer model operated by community-based organizations or schools working with parent, resident, and business owner volunteers who are stationed in predetermined areas along walking routes, forming a neighborhood watch that communicates with law

enforcement to intervene when needed. The collaborative model brings together public agencies, service providers, community groups, parents, residents, and other stakeholders to implement a multifaceted program, which employs various tactics to ensure student safety, including both volunteers and/or professionally staffed route monitoring or patrols.

The County Department of Public Health (DPH) Injury and Violence Prevention Program is implementing a Trauma Prevention Initiative (TPI) in four unincorporated communities in South Los Angeles - Westmont/West Athens, Willowbrook, Florence-Firestone, and unincorporated Compton. The goal of TPI is to build a comprehensive approach to violence prevention and intervention by connecting the dots across different forms of violence, leveraging resources of existing programs, and developing innovative strategies, policies, and partnerships. DPH is investing in a peer violence intervention model, which stems the incidence of violence and retaliation, and links gang-impacted community members to needed services and positive opportunities. DPH funds community-based organizations to implement street outreach and

community violence intervention services in the four TPI communities. Their work will include crisis response, conflict mediation, peace negotiation and maintenance, community activities, youth development, and safe passages to and from schools and parks.

DPH is also working closely with the Sheriff's Department, Parks and Recreation, and local schools to develop protocols for implementing intervention and safe passages services in TPI communities. For example, these partners met to discuss expanding the impact of the Parks Are Safe Zones campaign that took place in South Los Angeles during summer 2017. The goal of

this campaign included 1) encouraging community members to use the parks through signage, flyers, and social media; and 2) working with interventionists to communicate to local gangs that parks are off limits for violence. The long-term goal of TPI is to build a sustainable model for intervention and safe passages that can be scaled countywide, and enhance the safety and resilience of unincorporated communities. This will be achieved by evaluating the impact of the above strategies, determining how partners can work together to promote safety, and identifying other Safe Passages programs that can be leveraged.

## Community-led Safe Passage Programs

In Westmont/West Athens there are at least two community based organizations operating Safe Passage programs, R.A.C.E. and A.P.U.U. These community based, non-profit organizations have staff who have been trained in gang intervention work. They operate a Safe Passage Program around Helen Keller Park on weekdays to support safe access to the park for recreation and structured exercise. The program is run by another non-profit, Community Coalition, and is funded by a federal grant. R.A.C.E and A.P.U.U. organizations also help provide Safe Passage around several schools in the same unincorporated communities.



**Short-Term Steps**

- ▶ Implement Safe Passage programs in TPI communities and evaluate impact.
- ▶ Identify where Safe Passage programs are being run by school districts and community partners and work with them to identify how the County can help support and sustain these efforts.
- ▶ Utilize information from Safe Passage program volunteers and staff to help understand what infrastructure projects may be needed to enhance personal safety around schools and parks.

**Medium-Term Steps**

- ▶ Develop a model for Safe Passage programs at schools and parks and a strategic plan for scaling up to more communities.

**Long-Term Steps**

- ▶ Identify funding and policy changes needed to sustain and expand Safe Passage programs.

**PARKS ARE SAFE ZONES**

**KIDS PLAY HERE**

**#parksafezone • #safetoplay**

*Investing in our communities through unity to create more positive opportunities.*

Campaign developed by Westmont West Athens Community Action for Peace. Supported by the Los Angeles County Trauma Prevention Initiative.

**LOS PARQUES SON ZONAS SEGURAS**

**LOS NIÑOS JUEGAN AQUÍ**

**#parquessonzonasseguras • #segurosparajugar**

*Invirtiendo en nuestras comunidades a través de la unidad para crear más oportunidades positivas.*

Campaña desarrollada por la Acción Comunitaria por la Paz de Westmont-West Athens. Apoyado por la Iniciativa del Condado de Los Angeles para la Prevención del Trauma.

"Parks are Safe Zones" flyers created by Westmont/ West Athens Community Action for Peace

## PROGRAM 3: PEDESTRIAN WAYFINDING

Wayfinding systems help pedestrians navigate to major community-serving destinations such as transit stations, parks, libraries, schools, and business districts. They can also serve as an encouragement program by providing walking time to destination information, helping people orient themselves with less confusion or stress, and encouraging the discovery of new places or services. Wayfinding can also be used to highlight the local identity of a community. A wayfinding system can take many forms, but it typically includes a combination of physical signs, markers, and/or information kiosks.

There are several County departments responsible for providing pedestrian wayfinding including Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and Beaches and Harbor in the unincorporated community of Marina Del Rey and coastal areas managed by the County.

Public Works' Wayfinding Program is centered on enhancing access to Metro rail stations located in the unincorporated communities of Westmont/West Athens, Willowbrook, Florence-Firestone, Lennox, Del Aire, East Los Angeles, West Carson, and East Pasadena. As of 2017, Public Works

had secured two grants from Metro to implement pedestrian wayfinding signage around the Vermont Green Line Station in Westmont/West Athens and around the Slauson and Firestone Blue Line Stations.

The Parks and Recreation Wayfinding Program is focused on enhancing access to County trails, typically within County parks. In some urban areas, pedestrian wayfinding is provided to expand recreation opportunities beyond the boundaries of County parks. For example, in the community of Willowbrook, a walking path at George Washington Carver Park was extended beyond the park boundary onto the Compton Creek flood control channel and along the sidewalks that frame the park. The wayfinding signage encourages physical activity by providing mileage information so residents are able to know how far they have walked or run.

In 2016, Beaches and Harbors completed the Marina Del Rey Design Guidelines which identify a number of actions to create a cohesive wayfinding program for pedestrians as well as for people bicycling, driving, and boating.

### Short-Term Steps

- ▶ Implement existing Metro-funded projects.
- ▶ Collaborate with Metro on First Last Mile plans and new/future station plans to include wayfinding signage highlighting the local identity of the community.
- ▶ Continue coordination efforts between Parks and Recreation and Public Works to expand recreational opportunities beyond County park boundaries (especially in park-poor communities), with wayfinding along sidewalks, flood control channels, and utility corridors where the County has jurisdictional rights or can secure agreements or easements for recreational access.

### Medium-Term Steps

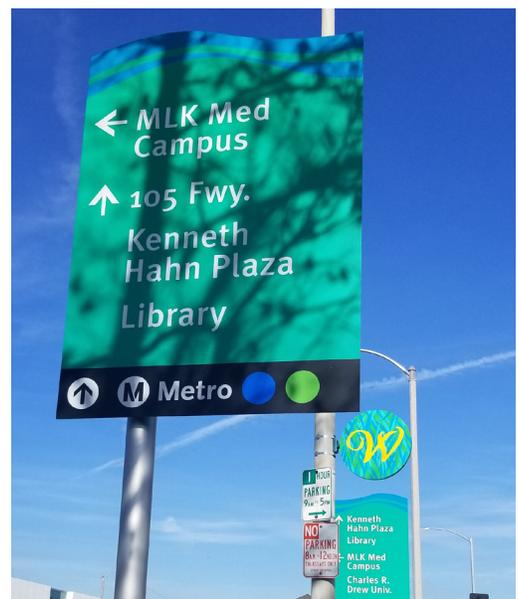
- ▶ Continue to seek additional funding from Metro to expand the installation of transit-oriented pedestrian wayfinding around all existing Metro stations within a half-mile of unincorporated communities.
- ▶ Expand transit-oriented wayfinding to include locations up to two miles from stations.

*Wayfinding in Willowbrook directs people to local destinations and the nearby Metro Green and Blue Lines*

- ▶ Implement the wayfinding actions identified in the 2016 Marina Del Rey Design Guidelines (Actions DG.9 - DG.18).

### Long-Term Steps

- ▶ Work with community members, organizations, and Supervisorial Offices to develop wayfinding signage that incorporates community identity and implement community-wide wayfinding programs across all of the urban unincorporated areas. Expand coordination of program with additional County departments, such as the Arts Commission and Community Development Commission.



## PROGRAM 4: OPEN STREETS AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

### **Open Streets Events**

Open streets events temporarily close streets to vehicular traffic, allowing people to use the streets for people-powered activities like walking, jogging, bicycling, skating, dancing, and other social and physical activities. These events are great for bringing the community together and promoting transportation options, place-making/placekeeping, and public health. Open streets events are also excellent at building community; they bring together neighborhoods, businesses, and visitors alike.

Open streets events can serve as a tool to engage with the public about how their roadways can better serve their needs. For example, the County can use open streets events as an opportunity to demonstrate new infrastructure ideas such as roundabouts, protected bike lanes, wider sidewalks, or enable residents to test out ideas like bike share. They provide an opportunity for the County to directly engage with residents and local businesses and receive feedback on new ideas at the moment people are experiencing their streets and community in a new way.

### **Demonstration Projects**

Demonstration projects can also be done as standalone events. Unlike open streets events, demonstration projects typically maintain vehicle access so community members are able to experience how an existing roadway could function with projects such as wider sidewalks, new crossings, bike lanes, and more. Demonstration projects enable the County to work with community members and Board offices to test out infrastructure project ideas for a day or a few weeks to inform permanent enhancements.

In 2018, the County implemented its first-ever demonstration projects; the first was a small demonstration of curb extensions and a high-visibility crosswalk on Denker Avenue in Westmont/West Athens, followed by a considerably larger demonstration on Pacific Boulevard in Walnut Park.

For this more extensive project, the County partnered with the City of Huntington Park and the Southern California Association of Governments for Camina en Walnut Park, a four-hour event along Pacific Boulevard with entertainment, County resource booths, and feedback stations

along a mile-long route. Approximately 800 attendees experienced how a re-imagined Pacific Boulevard as proposed in Step by Step Los Angeles County could encourage physical activity and save lives, through temporary installations including a scramble crosswalk, a multi-use trail, curb extensions, and high-visibility crosswalks. The event also allowed the County to gather direct community feedback on its proposed safety projects, and to better understand the potential for this powerful outreach and engagement tool.

### **Short-Term Steps**

- ▶ Use the 2018 Camina en Walnut Park planning and implementation process to guide future community engagement strategies.
- ▶ Evaluate partnering with experienced open streets events organizations (for example, CicLAvia) to seek funding for unincorporated communities in one or more of their events annually.

### **Medium-Term Steps**

- ▶ Evaluate partnering with open streets event organizations, sponsors, and/or neighboring jurisdictions to seek funding to produce open streets events as resources allow.
- ▶ Document procedures and create a toolbox for open streets events so that lessons learned from past implementation are captured.

### **Long-Term Steps**

- ▶ Work with neighboring jurisdictions, key stakeholders, champions, and Metro to fund, plan and implement a series of annual open streets events in unincorporated communities.

## Past Open Streets Events in Unincorporated Communities

### *CicLAvia: Heart of Los Angeles - October 5, 2014*

In 2014, with the support of Metro, the County worked with the CicLAvia organization to expand their Heart of Los Angeles route into the unincorporated community of East Los Angeles. The route extended along Cesar Chavez Boulevard and down Mednik Avenue to the East Los Angeles Civic Center and the adjacent Gold Line Station. Thousands of people participated in the event.



### *May 15, 2016 - CicLAvia: Southeast Cities*

In 2016, the County worked with the CicLAvia organization, Metro, and the neighboring cities of South Gate, Huntington Park, Lynwood, and Los Angeles to host an open streets event that connected the unincorporated communities of Walnut Park and Florence-Firestone with the aforementioned cities. The route traversed Pacific Boulevard in Walnut Park and Firestone Boulevard in Florence-Firestone. Thousands of people participated in the event.

## PROGRAM 5: BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The Business and Community Partnership Program pulls together two initiatives - a Parklets Program led by Public Works, and a business Facade Improvement Program led by the Los Angeles County Community Development Commission. The two programs require the County to partner with local businesses and/or community groups in order to be implemented.

One of the ways the County is interested in working with business and community organizations to increase pedestrian activity and expand public space is through developing a Parklet Program. Parklets extend the sidewalk to provide more space for people and feature amenities such as seating, outdoor dining space, plantings, bicycle parking, and/or elements of play.

Parklets encourage pedestrian activity by providing an expanded sidewalk for the community to gather, which is especially beneficial in areas that lack sufficient sidewalk width or access to parks and public space. Parklets require the partnership of a local business or community organization to accept responsibility for the operation, management, and maintenance of the parklet.

Three parklets were installed by Public Works in East Los Angeles in 2015 and a formal Parklet Program, as well as a Parklet Application Manual, is currently in development. The Parklet Application Manual will provide comprehensive guidance to community stakeholders interested in constructing and operating a parklet in unincorporated Los Angeles County.

The Community Development Commission's RENOVATE Program provides grants and technical services to assist with the improvement of building facades along designated commercial corridors in unincorporated communities. The program enhances the appearance of buildings and entire commercial centers, which enhances community identity and pride, and makes these areas more inviting places to walk and shop. Businesses can apply to the program by contacting the Commission, but the Commission also works with the Board of Supervisors to identify areas where business facade rehabilitation is needed in their districts. At the request of the Board, Commission staff may conduct door to door outreach to local businesses to inform them about the program and solicit participation.

To develop a formalized Parklet Program, Public Works is working with the Commission to market the initiative to businesses the Commission has previously worked with or is currently working with on facade enhancements. Information about parklets could also be included in Facade Improvement Program informational materials. Funding from the Community Development Block Grant Program could help support the design and installation of parklets.

**Short-Term Steps**

- ▶ Develop a standard maintenance agreement for parklets.
- ▶ Develop parklet program and design guidelines to allow for a range of parklet uses based on community stakeholders' input.
- ▶ Continue the Facade Improvement Program.

**Medium-Term Steps**

- ▶ Finalize the in-development Parklet Application Manual.
- ▶ Create an online application process for community groups and local businesses to host a parklet.
- ▶ Integrate information about the Parklet Program into all Community Development Commission Facade Improvement Program outreach materials and other relevant business outreach materials.

**Long-Term Steps**

- ▶ Expand the Parklet Program to include Public Plazas.

## Lessons Learned from the East Los Angeles Parklets

In 2015, Public Works installed three parklets in East Los Angeles: SoCal Burger Parklet (Mednik Avenue/Civic Center Way), El Machin Parklet (Whittier Boulevard/Ford Street), and El Kiosko Parklet (1st Street East/Alma Drive). Their locations were determined based on guidance from then-Supervisor Gloria Molina. The SoCal Burger and El Machin Parklets are maintained by the adjacent businesses and are an ideal example of the type of partnership needed to sustain parklets in unincorporated communities.

Unfortunately, the El Kiosko Parklet was removed due to vandalism. Based on this experience, the County is updating siting guidelines to ensure future parklets are located where there is consistent pedestrian traffic and a number of local businesses nearby to keep an eye on them.



Top to bottom: SoCal Burger Parklet, El Machin Parklet

## PROGRAM 6: ARTISTIC STREETS

The County is interested in highlighting local community identity through artistic expression. While the County has an existing Civic Art Program operated by the County Arts Commission, it is primarily focused on art at public buildings such as libraries, hospitals, parks, etc. The County is interested in developing new programs that would enable community members and local artists to bring art to the sidewalks and streets in their communities.

For centuries, murals have been an important public art form. Murals can serve as a focal point, increase community cultural assets, and foster an increased sense of neighborhood pride. In many

parts of the county, murals are often the only form of public art that is shared by an entire community. Furthermore, murals have been shown to deter vandalism by increasing public ownership and pride through art creation. In 2017, the Board of Supervisors directed the Arts Commission to work with Regional Planning and Public Works to create a Mural Ordinance for Los Angeles County. The Mural Ordinance will establish a process for the permitting of murals on private property.

Traffic signal cabinets are often a predominant feature on sidewalks near intersections. They contain the computer systems that operate traffic signals and provide a unique canvas for art in the streetscape. There are several ways the County can support this program, either through partnerships or contests with local artists, schools, or community groups, and/or by having an application process. Working together, the Arts Commission, Regional Planning, and Public Works will identify how to structure a sustainable Traffic Signal Cabinet Art Program for unincorporated communities.



*A painted traffic signal cabinet in Los Angeles*

The County is also interested in exploring other placemaking/placekeeping programs, such as artistic intersections. Placemaking/placekeeping programs promote community building and can help encourage drivers to slow down and respect the neighborhood they are traveling through. A placemaking/placekeeping program would be driven entirely by a community working together to develop and maintain their project. The County will need to develop program guidelines, an application process, and identify how or if the County will financially support the implementation of placemaking/placekeeping programs.

### **Short-Term Steps**

- ▶ Develop and adopt a Mural Ordinance.
- ▶ Establish a mural application web-page on the Regional Planning website with information and links cross listed on the Arts Commission and Public Works websites.
- ▶ Identify how to fund, structure, and administer a sustainable Traffic Signal Cabinet Art Program, including responsibility for developing program and technical guidelines and an online application process.

### **Medium-Term Steps**

- ▶ Establish a Placemaking/Placekeeping Ordinance, as well as program and technical guidelines and an online application process.
- ▶ Develop materials to promote Traffic Signal Cabinet Art and other future placemaking/placekeeping programs to community stakeholders.

## PROGRAM 7: GREEN STREETS

The County is dedicated to making its unincorporated streets greener and more sustainable. One way to achieve this is through a Green Streets Program that expands the urban forest, a system of trees, other vegetation, and water within an urban area. Street trees make communities more livable in many ways, including removing air pollutants often associated with respiratory illnesses, reducing stormwater run-off, helping cool the region's hot summer temperatures, beautifying neighborhoods, and even helping calm traffic.<sup>1</sup>

The County's existing tree planting program encourages resident participation in the expansion and renewal of the urban forest. To ensure the proper species selection, planting, and sustainability of the new trees, the County requires that all tree planting be coordinated with Public Works' Urban Forestry Unit. In general, trees are planted in one of three ways – Public Works plants a tree, a property owner plants a tree, or trees are planted through partner organizations as part of a community tree planting campaign. Residents of unincorporated areas can request Public Works to plant trees through an online Parkway Tree Request Form on their website.

A property owner can also apply for a permit from Public Works to plant a tree in the parkway adjacent to their property. Specific instructions on how and where to plant the tree is available on the Public Works website. However a tree is planted, it should be the right species in the right place, and planted in the correct manner so that it can thrive.

Alternatively, the County has initiated several community tree-planting campaigns that involve non-profit community partners in planting the trees as well as in educating community members about the public health, social, economic, and environmental benefits of trees.

When trees are planted in the public right-of-way, residents are required to water the tree for the first three to five years to ensure their survival. However, some residents may not want trees planted due to fears that they will uproot their sidewalks, drop leaves, or create liability concerns. Continued efforts to educate the public on the benefits of trees are vital to show residents that the importance of trees outweigh the real and perceived costs.

<sup>1</sup> Based on a study from Walkable Communities, Inc. (2016). Urban Street Trees: Specific Applications. [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/22\\_benefits\\_208084\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/22_benefits_208084_7.pdf)

### Short-Term Steps

- ▶ Increase efforts to implement robust public engagement and education that enhance communities' understanding of environmental stewardship and basic tree care, as well as the health, social, economic, and environmental benefits the urban forest provides. Community engagement and education efforts should focus on low-resourced, disadvantaged communities that experience the lowest tree canopy cover in unincorporated Los Angeles County.
- ▶ Continue Public Works- and community-led street tree planting in parkways in unincorporated communities.
- ▶ Balance the need for water conservation with the goal of preserving, maintaining, diversifying, and growing the urban forest. Young trees must be adequately watered to ensure strength and survival, and should not be dependent on broader landscape irrigation systems. For young trees, application of semiweekly, deep watering is important for long term tree survival. Once trees are established, water demands decrease, however it is still necessary to water trees during periods of drought. County policies and ordinances calling for water conservation should account for tree watering needs, which vary over the lifespan of trees.

### Medium-Term Steps

- ▶ Identify best management practices and develop strategies for preservation, maintenance, diversification, and growth of the urban forest.
- ▶ Establish an urban tree canopy goal to achieve an optimum degree of canopy cover for unincorporated areas. The tree canopy goal can be refined by further analysis to establish specific community tree canopy goals dependent on considerations that are unique to an area's particular circumstances, including climate zones, geography, climate projections, specific environmental concerns, local preferences, desired ecosystem services, land cover, land use patterns, resources, public health impacts, equity, and other factors.

### Long-Term Steps

- ▶ Develop an Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) to establish a clear set of priorities, strategies, and objectives related to maintaining a productive and beneficial urban forest throughout unincorporated Los Angeles County. The UFMP will be based on analysis of the County's tree canopy and existing tree inventories, and should be developed with input from community, relevant County departments, and arboricultural experts.

## PROGRAM 8: WALKING CLUBS

During the summer, the Department of Public Health (DPH) leads walking clubs at a number of County parks that participate in the Parks After Dark (PAD) Program. During the summer, the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) extends park hours and programming at 33 parks across the county, primarily in communities with higher rates of crime or violence involving youth. This annual seasonal program creates a safe haven for residents at their local parks.

The DPH Walking Club program at PAD gets residents, primarily women, engaged in physical activity while their children or grandchildren take advantage of park activities. DPH nurses provide health information during and after the walks. These nurses play an important role in providing additional educational resources when conducting walking clubs. Walking clubs are an opportunity to provide valuable public health information and referrals in a more casual environment.

DPH has also developed toolkits to help individuals, organizations and community groups lead their own walking clubs. The *Community Walking Club Toolkit*, developed by DPH in 2012, is used

to guide the PAD walking clubs and is a tool available for community members and organizations interested in organizing their own walking clubs. It provides nutrition and physical activity information to inform walking club participants. Walking clubs also build social cohesion as participants get to know their neighbors.

The DPH Veterinary Public Health Program developed a *Stride With Paws; Dog Friendly Community Walking Club Toolkit* as part of the 2020 Healthy Pets Healthy Families Initiative. The toolkit provides a walk leader with a week-by-week guide to conduct a 12-week walking program focused on reducing human and pet obesity through daily physical activity. Both toolkits are available online through the DPH website.

### Short-Term Steps

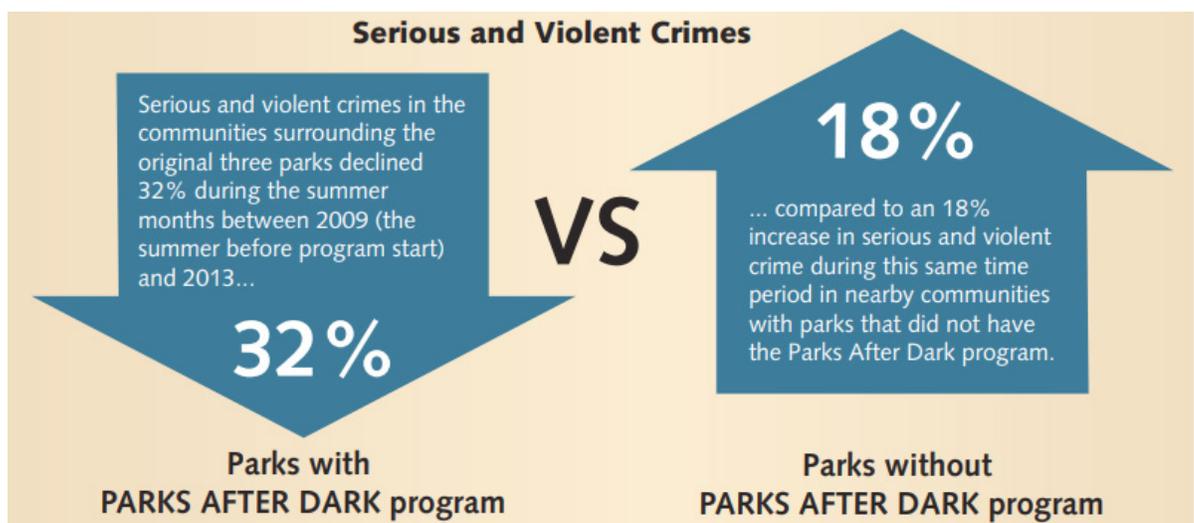
- ▶ Continue walking clubs during Parks After Dark.
- ▶ Include Public Health walking club toolkits on the Public Works and Parks and Recreation websites.
- ▶ Include walking club information on the Parks and Recreation web-pages for each Parks After Dark park.

### Medium-Term Steps

- ▶ Update the community walk audit materials on the Public Works website and distribute to Public Health nurses that lead walking clubs.
- ▶ Provide a training to Public Health nurses on how to conduct walk audits and help identify walking routes around parks to evaluate.
- ▶ Utilize walking clubs to conduct walk audits around County parks to identify infrastructure projects that could enhance pedestrian access to County parks.

### Long-Term Steps

- ▶ Lead year-round walking clubs at County parks.



*The County's Parks After Dark Program has helped reduce violent crimes in recent years*

*Source: Department of Parks and Recreation, 2014. Parks After Dark: Preventing Violence while Promoting Healthy, Active Living*

## PROGRAM 9: ONLINE INFORMATION AND SERVICE REQUESTS

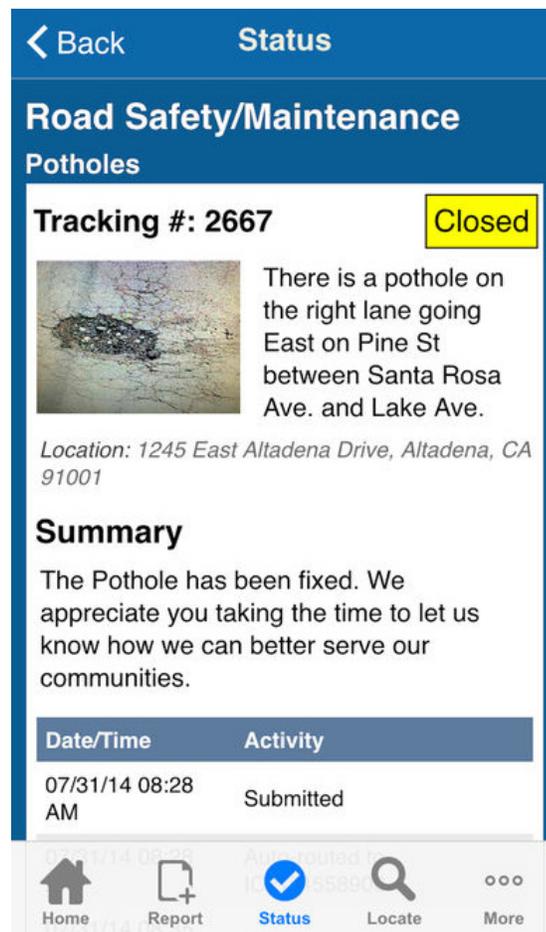
Los Angeles County Public Works has developed an online application, accessible through a smart-phone, called The Works that serves as a one-stop solution for County residents to report and track services. If the service is not handled by Los Angeles County, The Works will provide residents with the appropriate contact information.

### Short-Term Steps

- ▶ Update the Public Works website to include information about pedestrian projects and programs.

### Medium-Term Steps

- ▶ Add a sidewalk safety/maintenance option to app so people can report broken/cracked sidewalks, lack of curb ramps, ADA violations, etc.
- ▶ Provide a list and online map of pedestrian projects that are completed, in progress, and/or upcoming.



Example of a service requested, tracked, and completed through The Works

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