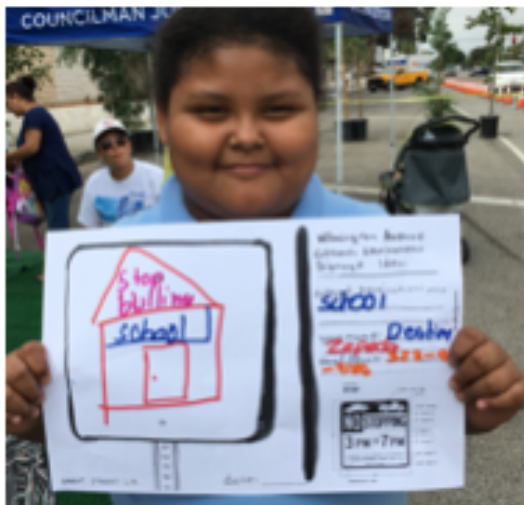
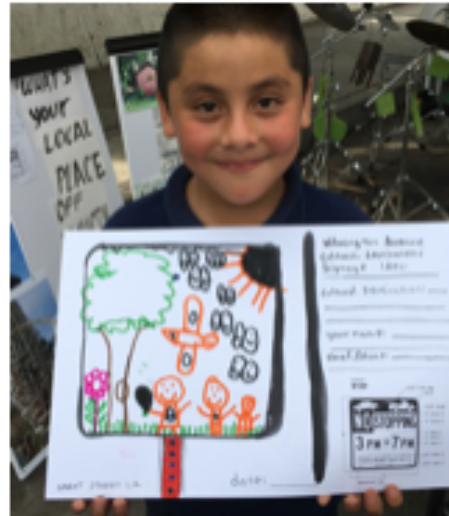


# Watts Wilmington Avenue : Wilmington Reimagined



## Final Report

This project was sponsored by Mayor Garcetti's Great Streets Initiative



September 27, 2017

# **Watts Wilmington Avenue : Wilmington Relmaged**

## **Final Report**

*prepared by*

**Grant Housing and Economic Development Corporation**

### **Project Partners**

Office of Los Angeles Mayor Hon. Eric Garcetti

Office of Los Angeles City Councilmember Hon. Joe Buscaino

City of Los Angeles Great Streets

Watts Century Latino Organization

GlobalGreen, Natural Resources Defense Council

Lot to Spot, LA-Más, MIG, Inc.

Rachel Dowd

Alan Hiroshi Nakagawa

Watts Gang Task Force members

Wilmington Avenue Businesses

Watts Residents



cover photographs: Alan Hiroshi Nakagawa

# **Watts Wilmington Avenue : Wilmington Relmaged**

## **Final Report**

### **Table of Contents**

1. Project Partners	2
2. Table of Contents	3
3. Project Overview	4
4. Introduction and Community Context	6
5. Planning Process	11
6. Project Implementation	15
7. Data Collection Methods	22
8. Data Analysis	24
9. Community Vision and Capacity	26
10. Prioritized Recommendations	28
Appendix	

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**3. Project Overview. A one-two page executive summary. Include goals, overview of community engagement, highlights from community engagement exercises, brief findings from data collection, and a summary of implementation/vision moving forward.**

The Wilmington Avenue initiative seeks to apply City of Los Angeles Great Streets resources and program principles to specific conditions along Wilmington Avenue in Watts. The effort will benefit Watts residents and help advance our shared agenda for City and community improvement.

The project has been carried out in the context of the City's commitment to sustainability and equity, as expressed in the Great Streets effort, pLAn and related programs, tailoring this city-wide vision to the strengths and challenges of urban core communities such as Watts.

Watts community organizations made initial application for a Great Streets "implementation" project, but we were grateful to be selected for a demonstration project, understanding that many worthwhile sites exist across Los Angeles.

From the outset, the project goal was to create a final product that could serve as an actionable document for funding needed improvements. The demonstration pop up was envisioned as a valuable part of the process, not as an end point but as a starting point for the long-term effort. The pop-up also was a very beneficial gathering of residents and an immediate, visual representation of future possibilities.

The project benefited from a base line of many useful prior studies - Watts Community Studio, Central Avenue Master Plan, CRA-LA Watts Corridor program - but we were well aware that extensive community engagement and site-specific analysis were essential precursors to development of the final Wilmington Avenue plan.

In addition to planning documents, the project team understood that health statistics and other social and economic data indicate serious need for addressing priority issues for residents along the Wilmington corridor.

A site survey, project team discussions and a series of total-corridor engagements allowed us to assemble a meaningful understanding of stakeholder concerns.

It became evident that the project challenge would not be to identify concerns, as these are immediately clear from Wilmington Avenue issues inventory and first contacts with stakeholders. Rather, the chief challenge was to organize the information received into a structured form which could readily serve as a funding platform for the next phases of work.

Responding to a fortuitous opportunity, the project team shifted to prepare a comprehensive funding application in mid-summer. Intensive exercise, what would ordinarily be 6 -12 month process accomplished within 2 months. The result was a comprehensive funding



# WATTS:REIMAGINED PROJECT LOCATION



proposal of \$23.0 million dollars. While not successful, this proved to be a very useful exercise. It demonstrated that the Wilmington initiative is not an abstract planning exercise, but a practical, committed work program to deliver results for residents. The document will serve as a solid basis for future funding opportunities as they present themselves over the next 2-5 years. Full document link: <http://bit.ly/2wXZU0e>

The effort to secure implementation funds is already underway as of September 2017, with Grant HEDC working closely with other community partners to secure State of California funding for a set of interconnected greening, mobility and safety projects in Watts.

**4. Introduction and Community Context. Provide a background summary of the local neighborhood context for the area surrounding your Great Street and how this motivated your application to the challenge grant program. You may include your project overview from other reports in this introduction. This will help frame your work for someone who has never been to your neighborhood. What are the demographics? What kinds of character (residential or businesses) line your street? Is there any important history to call out?**

The Great Streets project area is Wilmington Avenue in Watts, running 1.75 miles north-south from 103rd St to Imperial Highway.

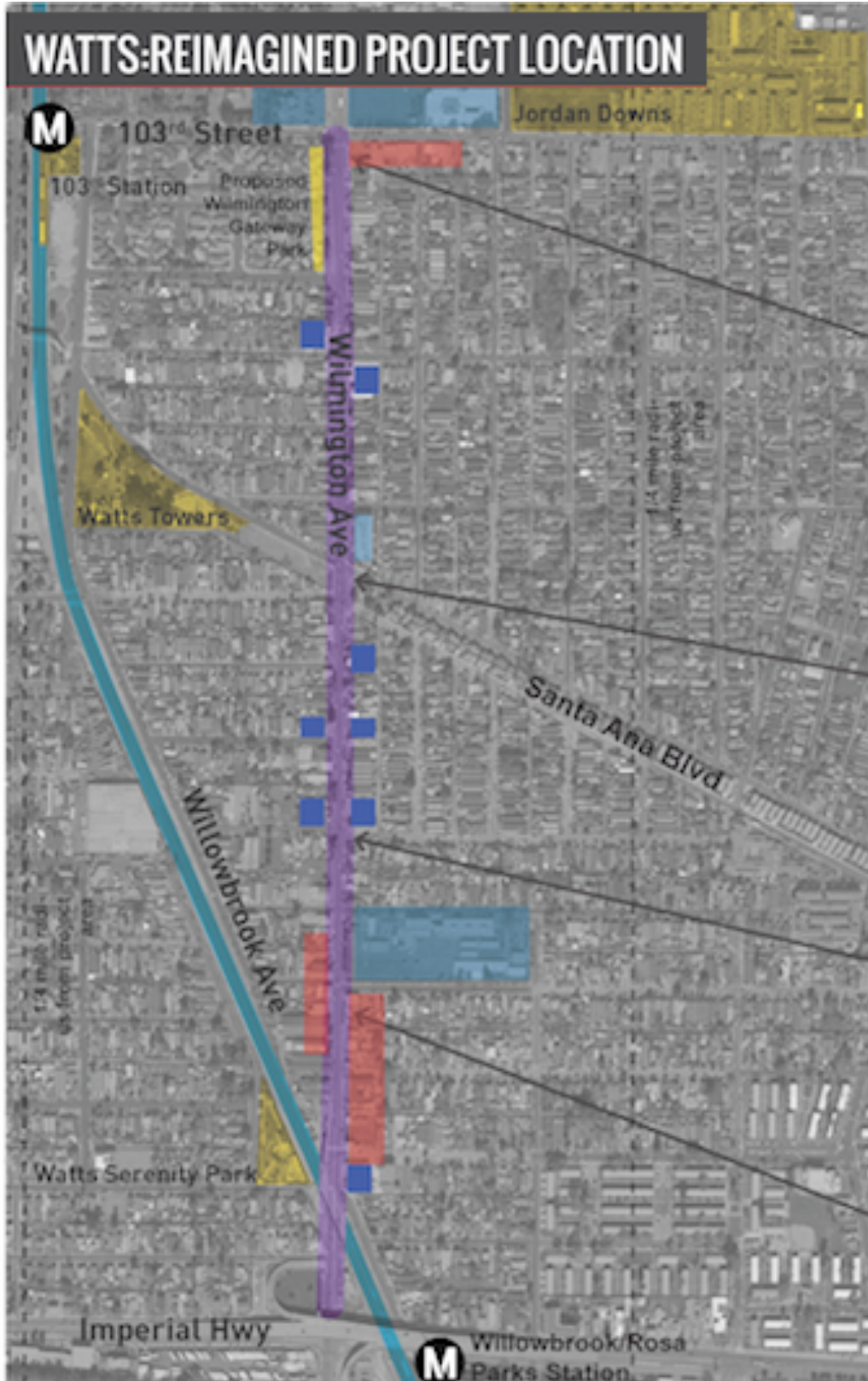
Wilmington Avenue Watts is a community-oriented corridor, with schools, places of worship and many small businesses serving the nearby diverse, working-family community.

With only one travel lane in each direction, Wilmington Avenue is not a main north-south arterial. Local residential streets branch off Wilmington, with many resulting striped and unmarked pedestrian crossings along its length. As a result, nearly the entire project area has, for urban Los Angeles, a small-neighborhood scale which extends from 103rd Street until the METRO Blue Line grade crossing.

After the rail line crossing, Wilmington widens out, taking on a more industrial, engineered hardscape character, with a criss-cross of freeway access ramps for the I-105 and Imperial Highway over the METRO transit center at Rosa Parks / Willowbrook Station.

Wilmington Avenue's neighborhood scale contrasts especially with Central Avenue, the main north-south corridor in Watts. Central Avenue has two traffic lanes in each direction, much longer blocks with corresponding distances between traffic lights, and a freeway entrance at its southern intersection with Imperial Highway. Consequently, Central Avenue is used as a fast-traffic connector, while Wilmington is very much more a neighborhood-serving secondary street. Still, traffic and safety are a priority concern in the area, as will be discussed further in the report.

The diverse range of small businesses is a distinctive feature of Wilmington Avenue. Shops serve as centers of social life as well as sources of daily necessities for residents. Residents generally access these businesses on foot; there are no medium-to-large retail stores with



Intersection of Wilmington Ave and 103rd St



Intersection of Wilmington and Santa Ana Blvd



Area between 109th St and 110th St

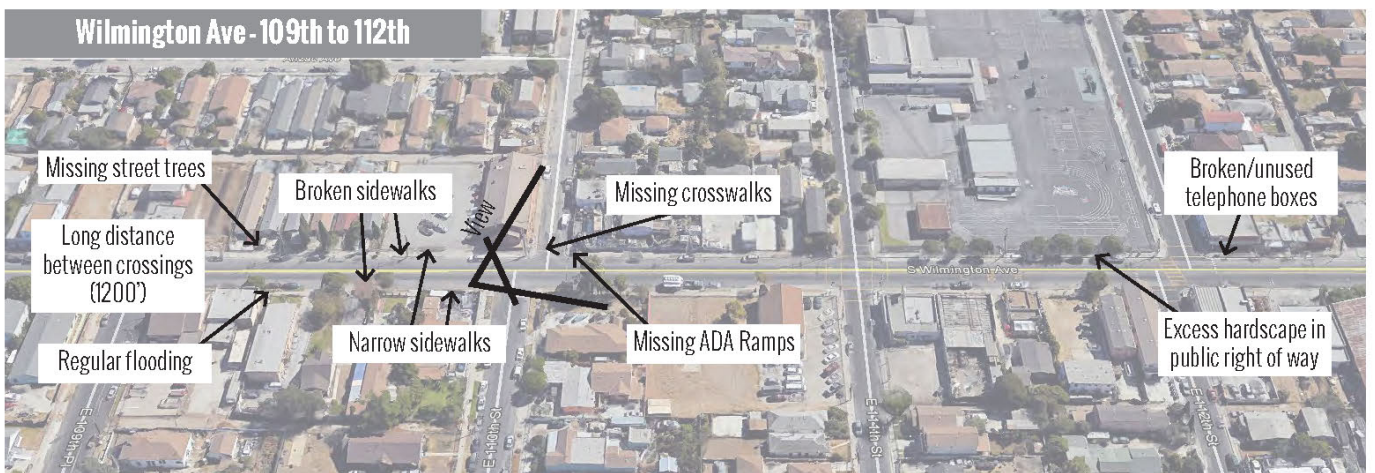


Commercial Area at 112th St





## VIEW OF MISSING CROSSWALK AND ADA RAMPS AT 111TH ST



parking lots along the corridor and the surrounding residential neighborhood is densely populated.

Stores range in condition from the disordered to the spotless. Some places have installed thick bullet-proof glass, while others are entirely open, with family kitchens in the back and the aroma of lunch cooking drifting in the air. Ambient popular music is a constant in all the shops.

The 3 immediate bordering census tracts along Wilmington Avenue have a total population of just over 16,000 people as of 2010, all within an area measuring 1 mile by 1.75 miles.

There are homes interspersed with businesses all along Wilmington Avenue. These are nearly impossible to access, as residents put up gates, keep dogs and are generally apprehensive of uninvited visitors, as well as being away at work for good parts of the day.

As is common throughout Los Angeles, new stucco construction is evident, as is hodgepodge additions over time to add new dwelling units beside, above and in back of original wood-frame bungalow homes.

The front yards contain a great variety of materials, ranging from tractor trailers under repair to chickens and vegetable gardens, flowering plants and ceramic figures. Watts has a long-time tradition of folk-art fabrication, with several examples along Wilmington such as empty bottles turned upside down on tree branches, ribbons and metal strips tied to sections of wrought iron fencing and intricate constructions of small windmills or car mufflers painted with face images.

This home-made creative ability found its best known expression in the Watts Towers of Simon Rodia, which is immediately west of Wilmington Avenue along the Cultural Crescent at Santa Ana Avenue.

Project artist Alan Hiroshi Nakagawa brought beneficial awareness of this creative tradition to the project, initiating conversation with Watts Towers artists and incorporating community ideas into signage and project graphics.

The State of California public health data maps indicate that the entire area bordering Wilmington Avenue is in the 95% + percentile of “most burdened - most disadvantaged” based on combined measurements of household income, toxic pollution and other key vulnerability indicators. (CalEnviroScreen 3.0 for census tracts 6037242700, 6037243100, 6037243000). <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-30>

These severely impacted residential areas bordering Wilmington Avenue show markedly varying conditions property to property. Carefully tended homes coexist with debris-strewn vacant lots, as along Wilmington popular barbershops and well-provisioned carnicerias front on broken lampposts, cracked sidewalks and abandoned cars.

Existing conditions along Wilmington have been documented and are detailed in report narrative and in future action recommendations.

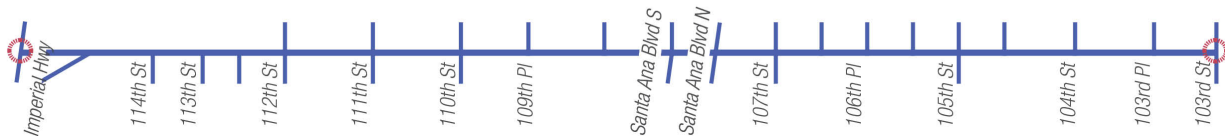


CITY OF LOS ANGELES: GREAT STREETS INITIATIVE

# WILMINGTON RE:IMAGINED

City of Los Angeles Great Streets Initiative aims to improve our streets. To create change on our streets in Watts, Mayor Eric Garcetti, Councilmember Joe Buscino, and Grant Housing & Economic Development Corporation would like to partner with YOU to transform Wilmington Ave as one of the seven Great Streets Challenge projects. Wilmington Re:Imagined will include a five-month outreach process to create a community-driven vision for Wilmington. We need your input to reimagine Wilmington Ave.

## GET INVOLVED! GIVE INPUT ON THE FUTURE OF WILMINGTON



### We need your input on these potential improvements:

- Sidewalks
- Signs
- Crosswalks
- Parkways
- Street trees
- Bike lanes
- Utility poles



### WHAT:

Re:Imagine and GIVE YOUR INPUT on potential improvements for Wilmington Avenue



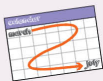
### WHERE:

Wilmington Avenue from Imperial Hwy to 103rd St



### WHO:

We NEED You, your neighbors, and businesses



### WHEN:

Outreach Process from March 2017 to July 2017



### WHY:

We need you to create a safer Wilmington Ave

**YOUR OPINION COUNTS and WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

**You'll have two key opportunities to share your thoughts.**

**May 2017 - Design Workshop**

**July 2017 - Demonstration Lab**



### GET IN TOUCH!

Great Streets Initiative  
Ph | 213.978.1912  
[greatstreets@lacity.org](mailto:greatstreets@lacity.org)

Grant Housing & Economic  
Development Corporation  
Ph | 310.221.0080

The Avenue has several spots where residents gather to socialize, with chairs set outside and passers-by greeted with friendly remark. The presence of two schools creates busy sidewalks, with parents shepherding young children during the morning and afternoon.

This social aspect of Wilmington Avenue, with people gathering in shared spaces, reveals a residual trace of residents' cultural history, suggesting how things once might have been around a courthouse square back in Texas and Louisiana or a plaza down in Mexico.

The value residents' place in spontaneous appropriation and informal improvement of shared spaces was confirmed during the demonstration event, with strong support shown for "gathering spots" and "public seating" improvements.

Still, even with these welcoming places, the presence of hard times is never far away along Wilmington. Several low-cost motels serve the indigent, and cases of mental illness, drug and alcohol issues or just bad breaks and setbacks in life among the people is evident to see.

Watching parents hurry past with their children firmly in-hand suggests the everyday challenges of this place, and, when observing groups of teens skylarking after being set free from class, it's an obvious concern as to how they will navigate the choices and situations ahead.

Our project team suggested Wilmington Avenue as a possible Great Street candidate, primarily because our past work had focused on 103rd and Central Avenues, and Wilmington Avenue was a logical, synergistic extension of this effort.

After selection and as the project advanced, it became evident that Wilmington was a good fit for the Great Streets Initiative: many serious issues warranting attention, at a scale large enough to make a significant difference but small enough to consider within the budget and time limits of the program.

**5. Planning Process. Provide a summary of how your team conducted outreach and solicited input about your work. In this section, convince the reader that your project and the process leading up to implementation was inclusive and comprehensive to the community. Please describe the partners who were involved in your project, the meetings that you hosted, the community partners/organizations, schools and churches you engaged, the volunteers you recruited, and the political organizations you engaged.**

### **Outreach and Community Engagement**

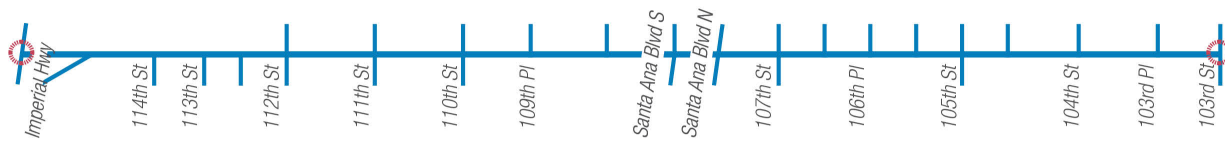
Outreach and community engagement has been a main feature of the Watts Wilmington Avenue Great Streets Challenge.

The process began with a total street survey in February and March 2017, consisting of observation and documentation of all City-related street conditions.

These conditions include such issues as street trees, crosswalks, signage and power poles. Special attention was given to immediate public safety and health improvement opportunities. A copy of the existing conditions inventory is included in the Appendix.



# WILMINGTON RE:IMAGINADO



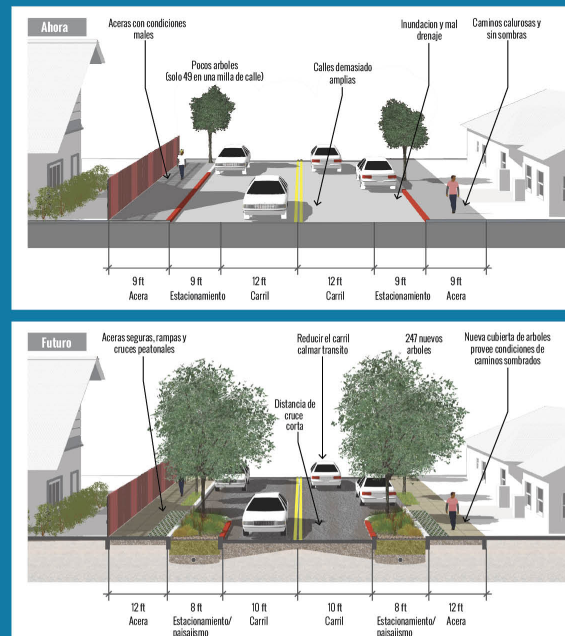
## 1. LO QUE ESCUCHAMOS DE LA COMUNIDAD

- Calles seguras
- Calles "verdes" y sostenibles
- Calles caminables
- Calles atractivas

## 2. LO QUE HEMOS HECHO

- Buscando oportunidades de fondos y subsidios para apoyar la **implementación de los elementos de infraestructura y ecología urbana** en Wilmington Ave
- El propuesto proyecto extiende de **Imperial Highway a 103rd St**
- Incluye **296 árboles**
- **1.8 millas de aceras** y caminos de cercanías
- **0.4 acres de plazas publicas**
- **49 facilidades de peatones nuevas** incluyendo rampas y cruces peatonales sumisos ha regulaciones ADA

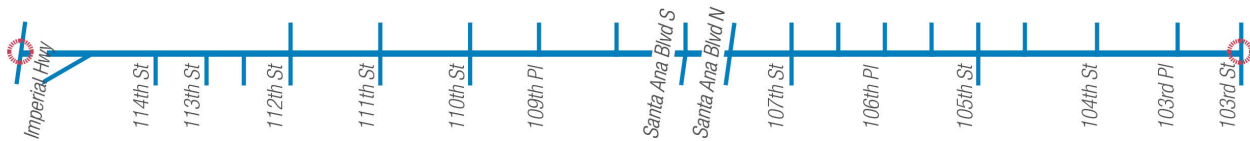
## 3. COMO SE MIRARÍAN LOS CAMBIOS



## 4. SIGUIENTES PASOS

- Esperamos **captar la comunidad local** para dar la oportunidad de **compartir los próximos pasos clave** y **pedir su opinión** sobre las metas y objetivos del proyecto





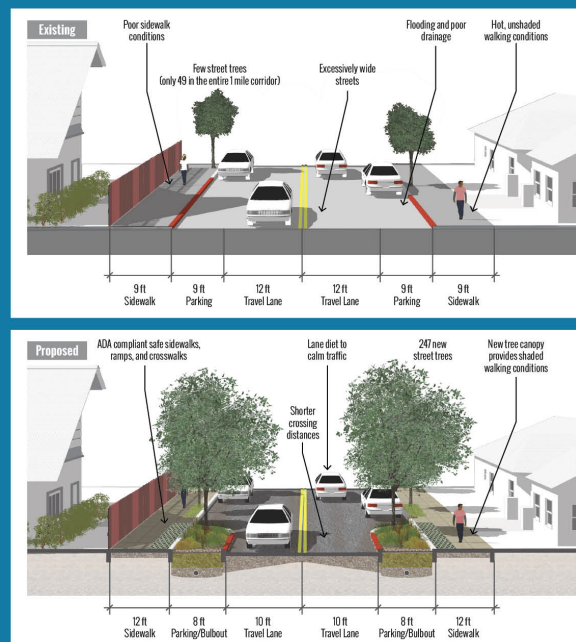
## 1. WHAT DID WE HEAR FROM THE COMMUNITY?

- Safer streets
- Walkable streets
- Green, sustainable streets
- Attractive streets

## 2. WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING?

- Pursuing grant funding opportunities to support **urban greening and infrastructure element implementation** on Wilmington Ave
- The proposed project extends from **Imperial Highway to 103rd St**
- It includes **296 street trees**
- **1.8 miles of sidewalks** and commuter pathways
- **0.4 acres of public plaza**
- **49 new pedestrian facilities** including ADA ramps and crosswalks

## 3. WHAT MIGHT THE CHANGES LOOK LIKE?



## 4. WHAT'S NEXT?

- We anticipate **engaging the local community** in an opportunity to **share key next steps** and to **ask for your input** on project goals and objectives

and houses of worship was carried out in March 2017. See Appendix for a list of these stakeholders.

The initial contact consisted of introduction of the Great Streets program and invitation to each stakeholder to provide any comments and suggestions as to priority improvements along Wilmington Avenue. This initial contact included distribution of an English-Spanish information sheet with phone and email contact information. See Appendix for all flyers.

Feedback received during this initial period confirmed direct street survey results, with stakeholders consistently pointing out existing conditions which could benefit from city improvements. Businesses were appreciative of any improvements, but asked that work not interfere with their customer access if at all possible.

All stakeholders on this list were directly contacted at least 3 times during the project.

Stakeholders expressing particularly strong interest in the project, or with strongly-held concerns about specific project elements, were contacted at least twice more for further, detailed engagement. Examples very typically involved immediate conditions at their property or business, such as inadequate drainage or broken utility poles.

While mindful not to raise expectations as to immediate action by the City on their issue of concern, residents and businesses were assured that their issues were taken seriously and that every effort would be made to include their concerns in any subsequent actual work. Where possible, contact information for the responsible City Department was provided.

At this stage in the outreach / engagement work, it was evident that Wilmington Corridor stakeholders were extremely busy working, operating their businesses and carrying out responsibilities of family life. Consequently, convening a central-location event was not deemed effective; rather a consistent, regular presence meeting people where they were proved to be the most effective way to share information and receive feedback.

The project team reviewed and discussed the results of outreach and field surveys. City staff prepared a Department-specific list of contact information, indicating which Department was responsible for each existing street condition. This information was provided to Wilmington Avenue businesses during subsequent door-by-door contacts during May and June 2017. See Appendix.

In July 2017, a follow-up full project area canvas was completed, using again a bi-lingual flyer. The project sheet provided a project update, listing results received so far and letting people know what would be happening next. Comments received during this outreach phase was the same as during the initial contacts.

In August 2017, a further full project area contact was carried out, inviting all Wilmington Avenue stakeholders to a design meeting to consider alternative versions for a signage program. At the same time, the project team completed a business guide and cultural destination guide to the project area.

With project culmination in September 2017, a full Wilmington Avenue door-by-door canvas, social media and email list contacts informed and invited all stakeholder to the “pop-up” event. At the same time, residents were informed of the street closer process and consent obtained for the one-day event.

### **Parallel Work With City Officials and Other Community Partners**

As part of the site documentation work, a project area “slide show” was prepared, with photographs and narrative.

The photographs and narrative linked Great Street program purposes, feedback received from Wilmington Avenue stakeholders and actual existing conditions along the corridor.

This slide show was shared with the project team and made available to City officials during project update meetings.

Community partners were well aware of existing conditions, so collaborative work here focused on organizing the one-day “pop-up” event.

Partners provided essential assistance with volunteer labor, volunteer recruitment, supplies, community notification and day-of-event organization.

Social media was also deployed, with event postings on our Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Event flyering also was carried out at key community gathering spots: Watts Public Library, the Watts Tower Art Center and the MLK Shopping Center.

Finally, individual word-of-mouth networks were engaged by formal presentations at key community gatherings such as the Watts Gang Task Force and by informal conversations as they occurred during the course of the work program.

**6. Project Implementation. After you describe the planning process, describe what elements went into the demonstration or build-out of your project. On the day(s) of your event(s) how many people attended? What kinds of activities happened? Anecdotally, explain the responses and feedback you heard from community members.**

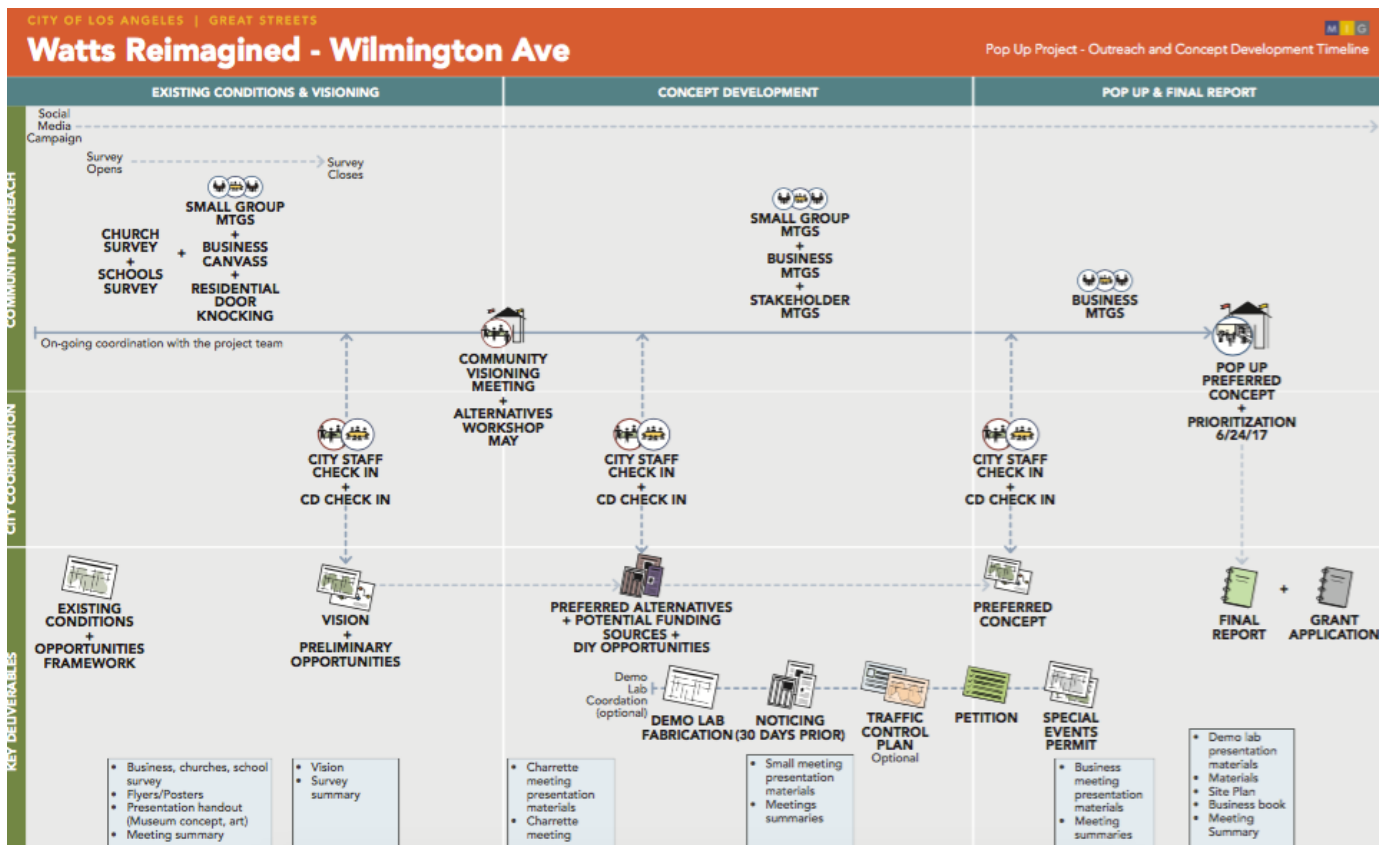
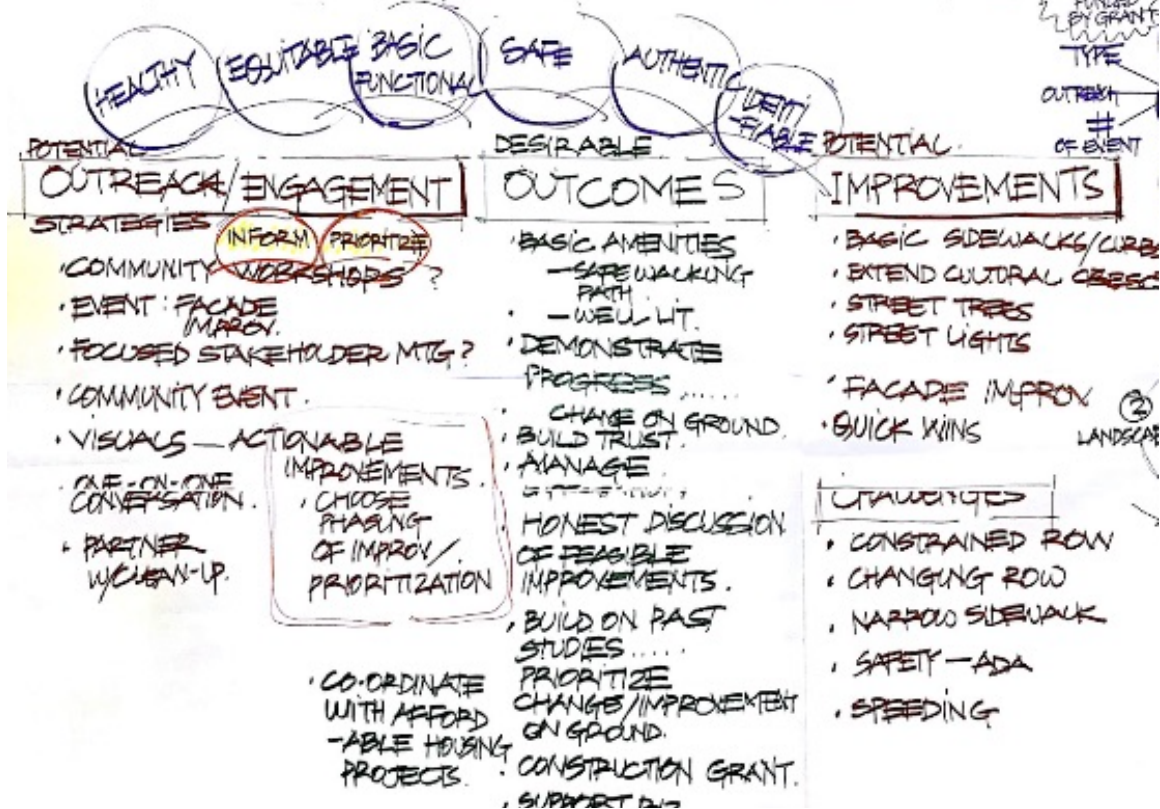
Preliminarily, it’s important to note that regular project team meetings were necessary complements to the outward facing community engagement work during the entire project span.

During these project meetings - usually by conference call but in person within Watts at key project junctures - Great Street City team members and the expert planning and design firm, team artist and business opportunity - provided Grant HEDC and other local partners essential insight and guidance as to the process structure.

Specifically, we discussed recent results, identified immediate next steps and confirmed the long-lead time project requirements. Documentation of this project team work exists in extensive emails, project update memos and charts.

# GREAT STREETS CHALLENGE

WILMINGTON AVE · GRANT HEDC X WATTS RE-IMAGINED





CITY OF LOS ANGELES: GREAT STREETS INITIATIVE

# WILMINGTON RE:IMAGINED

## ART WORKSHOP

**WHO:**

**YOU!** Especially if you live, work, or play along Wilmington Ave

**WHAT:**

**Arts Workshop**

**WHEN:**

**Wed, August 23  
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm**

**WHERE:**

**10345 S. Central Ave  
Los Angeles**

Join us in this opportunity to **discuss local cultural destinations** and **make Wilmington Avenue art** to be used at the September 20 Pop-Up event.



interactive art



## POP-UP EVENT

Join us in this opportunity to **learn about the key next steps** for Wilmington Re:Imagined and **give us your input** on how you would like to see Wilmington Avenue transform!

**WHO:**

**YOU!** Especially if you live, work, or play along Wilmington Ave

**WHAT:**

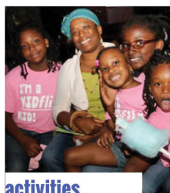
**Community Pop Up**

**WHEN:**

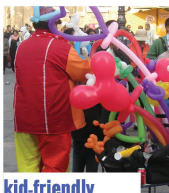
**Wed, September 20  
2:00 pm - 6:00 pm**

**WHERE:**

**Wilmington Ave and  
103rd Pl**



activities



kid-friendly



food/market



**GET IN TOUCH!**  
City of Los Angeles  
Great Streets Initiative  
Ph | 213.978.1912  
greatstreets@lacity.org

**GET IN TOUCH!**  
Grant Housing & Economic  
Development Corporation  
Ph | 310.221.0080



Thus, “Project Implementation” had two essential, interconnected features : community engagement and project team collaboration.

These two interconnected features combined to inform basic elements of the “pop-up” demonstration project.

The “pop-up” took place on Wednesday, September 20, 2017. The location selected was along the west side of Wilmington Avenue between 103rd and 104th Streets. This location was chosen as an existing wide striped buffer area along Wilmington could be easily re-configured for safe and accessible public use.

Importantly, the site had immediately bordering intersections across and along Wilmington at 104th Street where temporary demonstration crosswalks could easily be installed and used by residents.

Finally, the site offered simultaneous visibility and logistical advantages, in that while being very close to the busy 103rd Street intersection, no businesses were disrupted by the event and no private homes have entrances along that section of Wilmington Avenue.

111 community participants registered at the event and participated in data yielding activities. Many more visitors stopped by, asked about the displays and accepted the free fruits and vegetable offered; we estimate that 76 people took home the food.

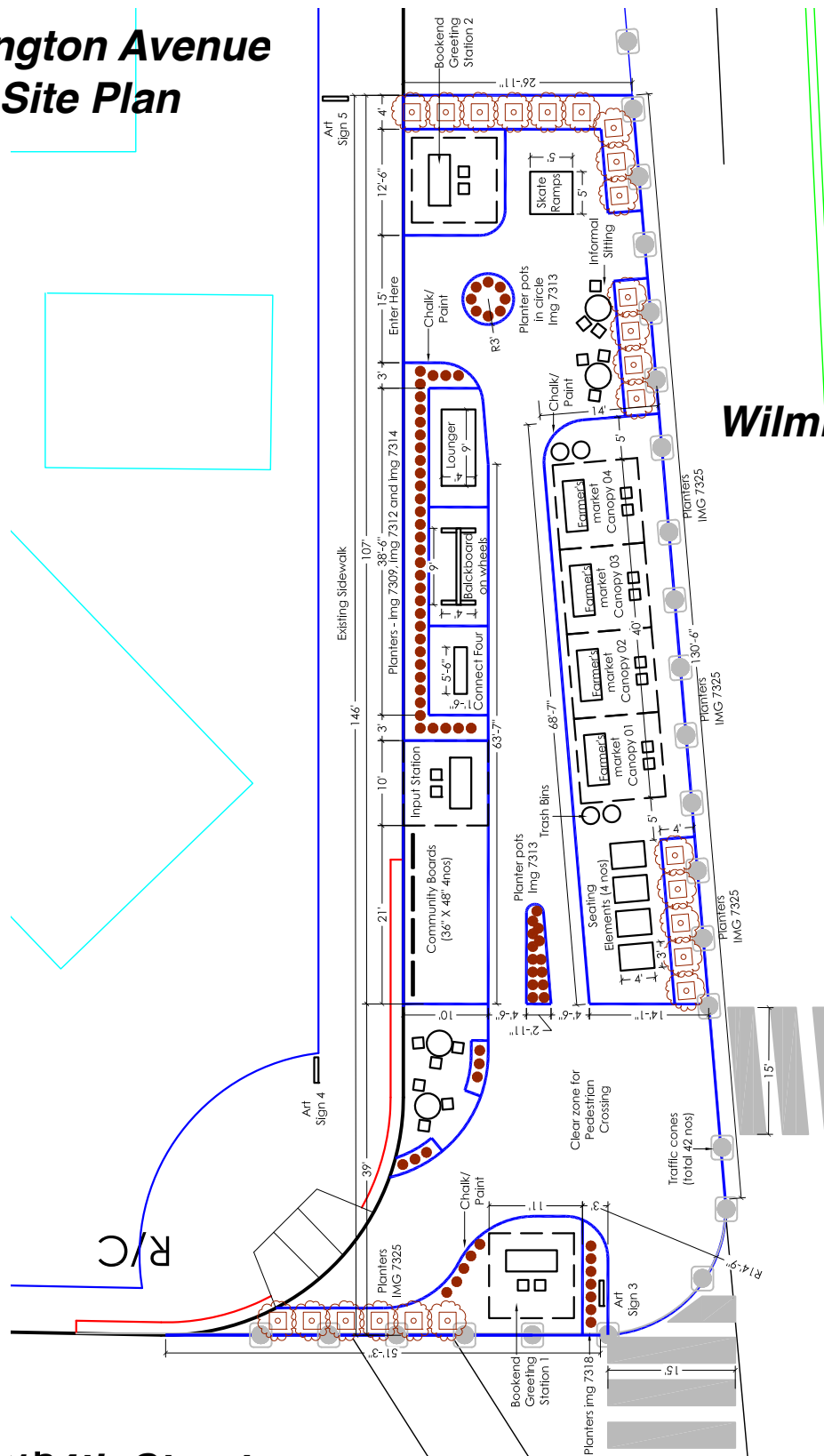
Residents attending provided written and descriptive feedback on the displays. This feedback is summarized below and illustrated on the attached.

Safe Crosswalks: 65 points  
Pedestrian Lighting: 29 points  
Street Trees: 22 points  
Landscaped Curb Extensions: 20 points  
Plaza/Gathering Spaces: 19 points  
Public Seating: 19 points  
Native Drought Tolerant Plants: 14 points  
Signage Kiosks: 2 points

A selection of event photos are also included and a full set of photographs have been posted to a shared cloud drive.

In addition to the adult engagement elements, Alan Nakagawa developed and provided an activity center for children that included musical instruments available for them to play as well as opportunities to demonstrate their artistic talents through the creation of posters expressing their ideas and imaginative vision for the neighborhood.

# Watts Wilmington Avenue Pop Up Site Plan



< - 103rd Street - >

Wilmington Avenue



North



< - 104th Street - >

# Pop Up Site Street View

VIEW OF INTERSECTION AT 104TH AND WILMINGTON AVE



↑  
**North**



←  
**North**



PHOTOGRAPH #1



## Community Priorities with Scores Indicated



**7. Data Collection Methods. Describe the process you undertook to collect information about your project. What survey questions did you ask; what did you count; what other information did you seek? If you collected surveys, describe whom you collected from and where you collected. If you conducted counts, describe where, when and how you conducted counts.**

Data collection consisted of a comprehensive qualitative field survey, photo-documenting existing conditions and preparing a list of all City-responsible issues along the Wilmington Corridor.

Next, via door-to-door survey, businesses and residents were asked to provide unprompted views on what they considered the most important issues to address.

Answers were consistent, with respondents expressing a generalized concern about all conditions taken together, or specific concern about an immediate issue directly at their property. For example:

“Everything”

“Just take a look”

“Do you see that abandoned car? It’s been there for a month”.

“Everytime it rains, that basin overflows. Last week there was a pool of water that completely ran over the curb.”

When asked to say which among their concerns were most important, responses divided into two basic categories:

First, concerns related to traffic and safety, such as “cars really speed along here sometimes, especially in the morning and afternoon. It’s just dangerous to cross, especially for kids”.

Second, concerns relating to the overall condition of the street: “It just looks neglected”.

Solicitation of views almost inevitably turned to requests for action, as in “when is the City going to do something?”

Importantly, every business would ask that any street repairs create minimal disruption for their customers, an entirely understandable priority for small, local businesses.

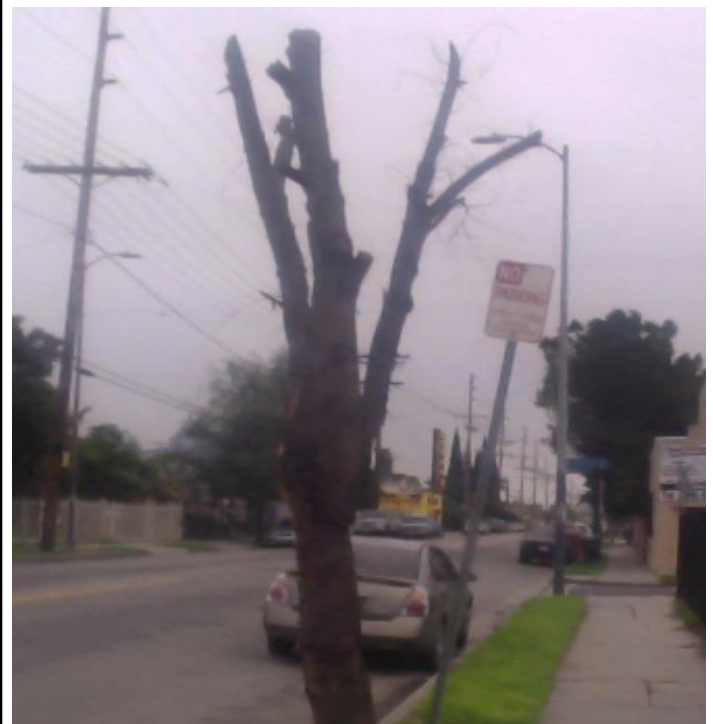
Indeed, most businesses and residents had only limited time and patience for extended inquiry, needing to get back to work or to continue about their day.

In light of these responses, and in view of the totally apparent existing conditions along Wilmington, continuing with a “checklist” survey was deemed unlikely to yield additional useful data.



## ***Existing Conditions Examples***

### ***Broken Trees / Tree Wells***



### ***Abandoned Cars***



At that point, effort turned to incorporating feedback received into a meaningful, comprehensive work plan and to structuring the “pop-up” event so as to best reflect input received.

During the pop-up, project boards provided residents opportunity to designate their priorities. “Scoring Dots” applied to improvement categories - indicating 1st, 2nd and 3rd ranked improvement preferences - quantified community preferences.

This approach allowed residents time to consider options and ask questions of the project team. Photographs, maps and the pop-up configuration with potted trees and temporary cross-walks help illustrate the improvement options.

This information is described further in Section 6. and the Exhibits.

**8. Data Analysis. Analyze your data findings in this section. What does the data tell you about the impact of your project? Remember to only draw conclusions in this section from your data collection, as opposed to anecdotes from other sources. You may include case studies and stories in other sections of this report instead.**

As described above in Section 7. Data Collection, a survey of stakeholder priorities is not a simple exercise of tabulating different responses by separate neat categories.

The simple act of soliciting opinion about street issues can be a fraught exercise.

First, people are very busy and are not willing to devote more than a few minutes to such questions.

Second, and more significantly, questions about neighborhood conditions can quickly trigger suspicion, resentment, resignation, anger and amused skepticism.

Most people contacted along Wilmington Avenue do not think conditions there are likely to change. Asking their opinion about a matter with which they contend every day - ie broken sidewalks and so on - but about which they feel no sense of control - elicits basic observations as to the neglect, which conditions are readily evident to anyone in a position to see.

In this situation, data analysis can take two useful directions:

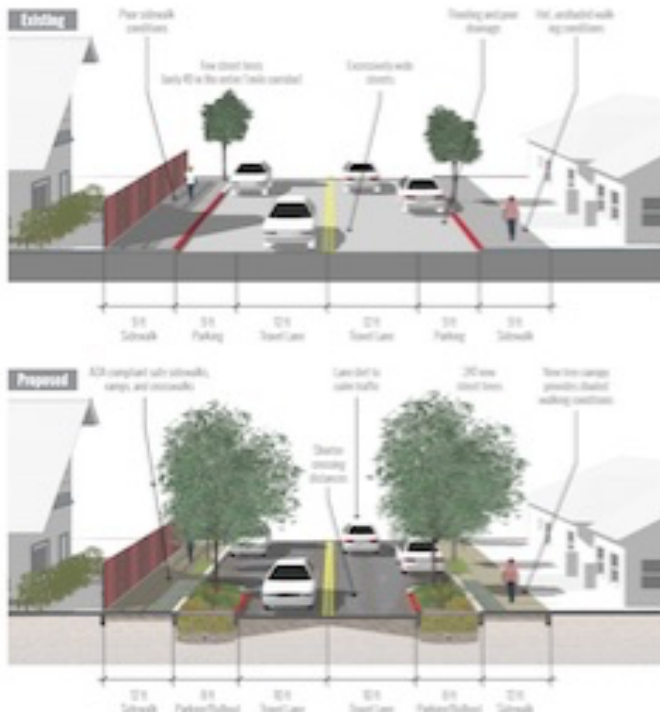
- A. Evaluation of clearly evident existing street conditions and creating a prioritized list of action
- B. Analysis of causes and recommendations as to process and procedure measures which might result in positive change ie work to improve conditions identified

Fortunately, the Great Street program provides a meaningful structure for addressing both these outcomes of data analysis.

The combination of community input, local knowledge and expert experience helps translate the clearly evident work needs into an actionable, prioritized list. This list can become a funding platform to move forward with actual beneficial projects where people work and live.



# WATTS:REIMAGINED GREEN STREET BENEFITS



## TRANSFORMATION TO A GREEN STREET

### Green Streets:

- Capture 80% of rainwater
- Reduce flooding
- Clean the air and provide shade
- Calm traffic
- Shorten crossing distances



Additionally, the Great Streets program helps surface the underlying systemic issues that have contributed to the adverse conditions documented. While systemic change is exceedingly difficult, that the Great Streets program seeks the analysis is an essential initial step.

**9. Community Vision and Capacity. Based on the engagement process, data collection and project demonstration/implementation, describe what you believe is your community's vision for the corridor, include a visual graphic that communicates the community vision. Perhaps that vision is not singular. If so, provide more details about competing or diverse visions. How might they be reconciled? Are those visions mutually exclusive?**

The project site survey, data collection and issues inventory, outreach process and the culminating "pop-up" event demonstrated a clear and consistent community vision for Wilmington Avenue.

As described, the community vision emphasizes basic infrastructure needs such as sidewalk repair and safety measures such as new crosswalks especially at heavily used community locations.

The Great Streets project team provided invaluable technical assistance and professional planning expertise to translate these consistently expressed vision elements into a cohesive, actionable list of priority steps.

**Describe existing assets and resources within your organization and the community that will help achieve the community vision. What skills, resources, and existing capacity does your organization / community have to achieve this vision.**

Grant HEDC has practical experience and long-standing commitment to the Watts community. Local project partners have similar and complementary skills, resources and capacity. Participating in the Great Streets challenge has itself greatly helped expand community knowledge.

Risk exists that having now educated the community about possible changes, that community leadership and the City will not promptly deliver on improvement possibilities presented in the visioning process.

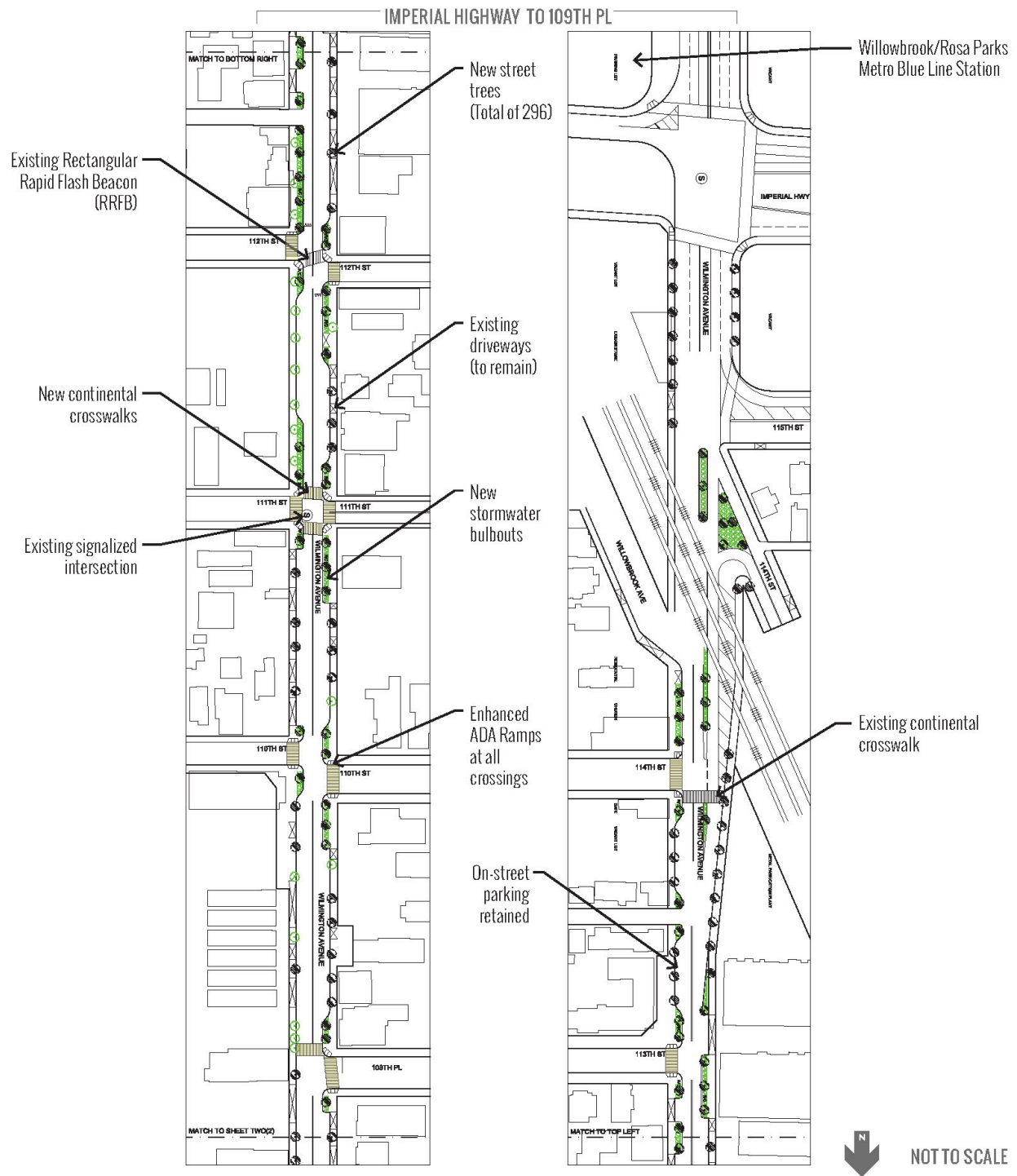
We and our local partners are fully committed to making visible progress and have the resources to help make the community vision a reality.

**Are there resources, skills, or capacity that your community does not have that may prevent your community from its vision?**

Basic challenge in community-based work in Watts and similar communities elsewhere is that most residents are busy making a living and providing for the families, often working multiple jobs or going to school while attending to children, parents and members of extended families.

It is not that community members lack resources, skills and capacity, it's simply that regular engagement with government projects is not possible due to everyday life demands.

# WILMINGTON RE:IMAGINED OVERALL CONCEPTUAL DESIGN



SITE PLAN (SEGMENT 1)

Residents regularly express disillusionment or skepticism as to the value of participation, accurately observing that many plans and promises have been made but the immediate neighborhood conditions offers decisive evidence that these plans and promises have no real value.

Finally, and especially recently, residents may feel apprehensive about any voluntary engagement with government officials, preferring to keep a low profile and simply continue about their everyday life business.

### **Are there other challenges to implementing the vision external to your community?**

There are significant cultural and social-economic forces which individually and collectively work against meaningful investment in communities such as Watts.

Media can sensationalize negative events for their own purposes and entirely miss the underlying truth of individual, family and community life. Further, material status and success may be glamorized, and long-time residents or new immigrants deemed to be entirely responsible for community conditions. Finally, where an insightful systemic critique may occur, this critique can sometimes take the form of individual attention-seeking and not the kind of focused, technical and tedious work required to make lasting positive systemic change.

It is not the task of City improvement initiatives to resolve these more pervasive cultural and social-economic concerns. It is useful to have awareness of them. External conditions can help shed light on community dynamics and assist in issue resolution and development of shared goals and common understandings.

The Great Street program has been a positive step in this regard and should be of great benefit to Watts residents as the next phase of work begins.

### **10. Prioritized Recommendations. How can the City support your community's vision?**

The City has already and continues to support the community's vision. The City provides this support in multiple ways, of which the Mayor's Great Streets program is the most recent and among the most important. As described further below, the most important way the City can assist local communities and stakeholders is through sustained attention within a structured, collaborative process.

In Watts and its counterpart communities elsewhere in Los Angeles, sustained attention is a critical success factor, as multiple, interconnected needs exist which cannot be resolved within short periods of time.

In addition, funding source cycles are such that multiples of years are required to accumulate resources sufficient to address the critical mass of improvement priorities.

**This is the conclusion of your report that should prompt the City into further action based on the Community's recommendations. Separate your recommendations into short, medium, and long term recommendations.**



Short Term: Focus on relatively low-cost, high-value measures under City jurisdiction

- Street trees. A full project area assessment and removal and / or replanting program
- City Utility Poles. A full project area assessment and removal and / or replacement
- Street Lighting. Full project area assessment, with retro-fit, replacement, repair
- Basic Infrastructure. Curbs, gutters, sidewalks, parkways and stormdrain repair

Medium : Focus on moderate cost measures requiring additional technical analysis

- Intersection improvement plan, consisting of cross-walks, bump-outs, signage, warning lights and other elements as feasible and appropriate
- Full avenue traffic analysis and re-striping program, accommodating transit stops, bicycle lanes, speed limit signs and related calming measures
- Alley / Street interfaces, addressing blighted conditions, inadequate drainage

Long-Term : Focus on higher cost, long lead time capital improvement measures

- Elimination of the rise and fall of Wilmington at Santa Ana Avenue
- Comprehensive safety and mobility measures at the METRO Blue Line - Wilmington Avenue grade crossing

**These prioritized recommendations should reflect your community engagement throughout the Challenge Grant project and the data that you have collected. Small-scale safety multi-modal transportation improvements should be included in short-term recommendations. This section is a special call-out sub section for the short term measures with emphasis on safety multi-modal transportation improvements.**

- Small-scale improvements should focus on the street-crossing locations most heavily used by the Wilmington corridor school students and parents, as at 111th and 112th Streets, which serve Grape Street Elementary School of LAUSD.
- There should be a comprehensive traffic analysis of the Route 612 METRO bus stops, with the goal of confirming outreach feedback that the bus stops are not conveniently located, are unsafe or not well-maintained and thus discouraging for public transit users.
- A safety-oriented, multi-modal detail review should be completed at the METRO / Wilmington Avenue crossing, which presents serious obstacles to pedestrian and bicycle access to and from the Rosa Parks / Willowbrook Station, especially for families with baby strollers or special need residents.

**Any suggested City-wide policy changes should be included in long-term recommendations.**

One possible City-wide policy change to consider is a project-priority ranking system that has objective, quantitative elements, so that resources are directed to areas of maximum need, irrespective of where they might be located.

**Provide some thought on how recommendations may be achieved. Be sure to include how the City might continue to work with and relate to your community and organizations.**

Recommendations may be achieved by continued collaboration among local stakeholders, City Departments and elected leaders. That there is a shared, agreed plan for Wilmington Avenue developed through this collaboration will make an important positive difference moving forward.

Each party within the collaborative team has appropriate roles and responsibilities. For the City, which has a very great number of interconnected priority goals, one way to work effectively with community stakeholders is to have in place a comprehensive, transparent process for identifying and prioritizing local street improvement projects.

Regular project convenings, whether by conference call or in person, with project report-outs, will help measure progress towards agreed goals. A Great Streets implementation score card issued quarterly could focus management attention and provide community stakeholders - as well as project funders - with insight into the work process.

Establishment of a City working group across Departments may help coordinate the often complex set of reviews and permitting requirements for these projects.

Finally, the City could help support groups working in different parts of the City by organizing regular “summit meetings” among these community organizations, allowing for shared learning and network building. This in-person network benefit could also be supported by an on-line and social media initiative common to all participants.

**Will your organization continue to have a presence on the street?** Yes, we are committed to continued work in Watts and along Wilmington Avenue. The Great Streets initiative provides a major new platform for future improvements which will benefit residents, businesses and the City.

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