

Community-Based Transportation Planning Grants

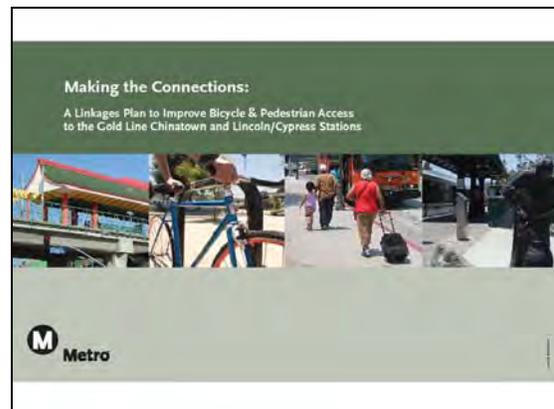
Making the Connections: A Pedestrian and Bicycle Linkages Plan for two Low-Income Latino and Asian Communities Adjacent to Gold Line Stations

- **Grant Amount:** \$200,000
- **Grant Recipient:** Los Angeles County Metropolitan Authority
- **Sub-recipient:** Livable Places, Homeboy Industries
- **County:** Los Angeles

Project Area – The area surrounding the Chinatown and Lincoln Heights/Cypress Park Gold Line located between downtown Los Angeles and Pasadena

Project Focus – Characterized by a large amount of very low density light industrial development, the area surrounding the Chinatown and Lincoln Heights/Cypress Park Gold Line Stations has tremendous opportunities for sustainable development. However, the opportunity to create a vibrant and “pedestrian friendly district” could be lost indefinitely without significant community input, thoughtful planning, and urban design that recognizes the relationships among residents, businesses, environmental quality, future development and transportation. The presence of freeways, major thoroughfares, and the absence of sidewalks, bike paths, adequate street lighting, and eyes on the street all serve as barriers to revitalizing these neighborhoods and deterrents to creating livable communities in areas receiving significant private and public investment.

Project Goals – The planning areas have historically been home to low-income people of color who have lived on the margins of downtown Los Angeles in neighborhoods that have been neglected, abandoned, or deemed obsolete by the largest employers. However, as Los Angeles continues to grow, these areas that have been overlooked are now becoming popular targets for private investors, potentially leading to gentrification and displacement of these historically under-represented communities. The goal of this project is to engage community stakeholders in a planning process that leads to conceptual designs for safe and enjoyable pedestrian and bicycle linkages from the old industrial areas surrounding the Chinatown and Lincoln Heights/Cypress Park Gold Line Stations. Ultimately, these designs can be used to enhance mobility and improve access of low-income Latino and Asian residents to the new light rail, the new state park, the envisioned improvements on the Los Angeles River, and new and established commercial areas. Expanding the transportation options of low-income households that may not be able to afford a car creates economic and social opportunities and promotes healthier living environment for the full spectrum of society.



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Community Outreach – Livable Places met with seven community groups to describe the Making the Connections project, get new ideas for the connections, and confirm that key connections settled upon made sense for each study area. At most of these meetings Livable Places asked residents to share their experience of the streets including what works well, what does not work well, and what routes they take. Participants reported very few conditions that were working well for their streets including, inadequate bus stops, crossings, lighting, sidewalks, street design and safety. As another avenue for refining ideas for the six key connections, Livable Places held a community workshop where the proposals for the street typologies, vegetation, and key connections were presented. Participants indicated that pedestrian/bicycle/transit priority streets, landscaping, and bicycle improvements were the most important elements for

improving the streets. Participants liked the key connection proposals as a whole and were excited that they reflected subtle ways to calm traffic through the use of chicanes, bulbouts, and landscaping. The first workshop included an overview of the project and a discussion of potential constraints. Proposed alternatives were presented at the second workshop where the alternatives were well received.

Project Outcome- Making the Connections is a blueprint for creating streets for a variety of transportation choices. The next generation of children living in the neighborhoods of Chinatown, William Mead Homes, Lincoln Heights, and Cypress Park are counting on this generation to do the right thing and make these connections.

Challenges

- Throughout the City of Los Angeles, streets have been designated for additional automobile capacity. These streets are widened whenever development occurs along the street. While fostering additional automobile throughput, these widenings, especially in older core neighborhoods, can have negative consequences including endangering pedestrians and bicyclists by increasing car speeds and volumes and reducing the amount of land available for housing, parkland and development.

Successes

- The comments Livable Places received about their proposal was overwhelmingly positive with no requests for major revisions; participants did leave suggestions for specific issues to further examine.