

Environmental Justice: Context-Sensitive Planning Grants

Improved School and Neighborhood Pedestrian Safety Planning

- **Grant Amount:** \$119,695
- **Grant Recipient:** City of Los Angeles
- **County:** Los Angeles County

Project Area – The project is concentrated around three Los Angeles Unified School District schools. The schools are located in Local School Districts 5, 7 and R. The project area will be the schools and the neighborhoods immediately surrounding each of the elementary schools.

Project Focus – The project is focused on three elementary schools: Norwood Elementary School, 20th Street Elementary School, and The Accelerated School. All of the schools are located in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Project Goals – The project goals are to develop an individualized plan for each of the local schools and their neighborhoods. The suggestions and recommendations developed for each plan is to address, the high rate of child pedestrian injuries around the schools. In addition the plan will link the improvements to encourage child safety and walking to partially address the chronic problem of childhood obesity.

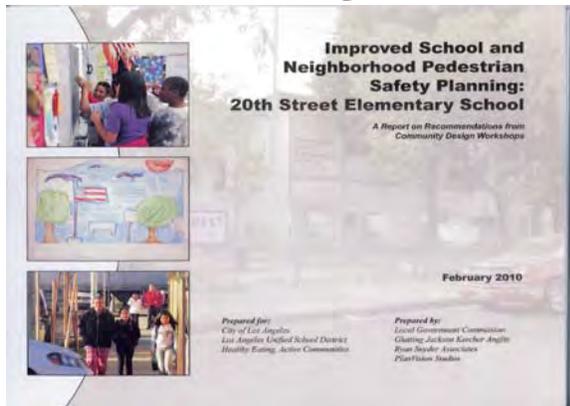
Community Outreach – For each school the project team held a series of interactive neighborhood planning exercises involving students, parents, teachers, businesses and community leaders. The Local Government Commission and members of Healthy Eating Active Communities (HEAC) extended outreach efforts to parents of each school. Outreach materials were developed

and sent home with students, mailed to residences and business within half a mile from the schools. Email versions of the outreach materials were sent to local community groups interested in pedestrian and child safety. But the most effective outreach method was the word of mouth of HEAC members. The project team held Walk Audits and Design Sessions with activities to discuss the issues that affect or discourage students from walking and bicycling to school. During the charrette process focus groups were formed with experts and participants to gather suggestions and improvement recommendations.

Environmental Justice Community Involvement – In line with environmental justice goals, the project team translated outreach materials into Spanish and sent them home with students. During the walkability audits and design sessions, translation was provided to explain walkability and safe routes to school elements. Most importantly the students who attend these schools and the location of these schools are in the heart of South-Central Los Angeles. A predominate low-income and minority populated neighborhood.



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Project Outcome – The final products are three different plans, one for each school. Each final report is a conceptual plan and a series of detailed context-sensitive recommendations for each school and the surrounding neighborhood. The reports include conceptual street development guidelines, sketches and renderings, and other graphic materials that help illustrate the plan. Parts of the plan will include no- and low-cost implementation activities and funding opportunities.



Challenges

- Community outreach and enhanced participation were difficult to accomplish.

Successes

- The student and youth interest was very high. Full classrooms participated in walk audits and classroom discussions.
- Community participants became very interested in walkability concepts and energetic conversations were held.