



Final Report

#GoAve26 is a project to make getting to and from public transit hubs along Ave 26 easier, safer, and more welcoming.



What is Go Ave 26?

#GoAve26 is a project that supports pedestrians and public transit users near the Lincoln/Cypress Station on the Metro Gold Line in Northeast Los Angeles. This year-long project features physical design interventions to inform policy and programming for public transit hubs along Avenue 26. This is the Final Report!



1 About the Project	1
What is Go Ave 26?	1
Why Northeast Los Angeles?	2
What were the Project Goals?	2
Who was behind Go Ave 26?	3
Budget + Timeline	3
2 Community	4
Community Research + Engagement	4
Determining Need + What We Learned	5
3 Design	6
Previous Conditions	6
Design Elements + Approach	6
Streetscape Improvements Map	7
Installation Process	8
Before/After + Intervention Costs	9
4 Navigating Bureaucracy	10
Government Support	10
Leveraging Government Improvements	10
Permitting	11
5 Impact + Evaluations	12
6 What's Next?	13
A Appendix	14
i. Project Team	14
ii. Project Press	15

About the Project

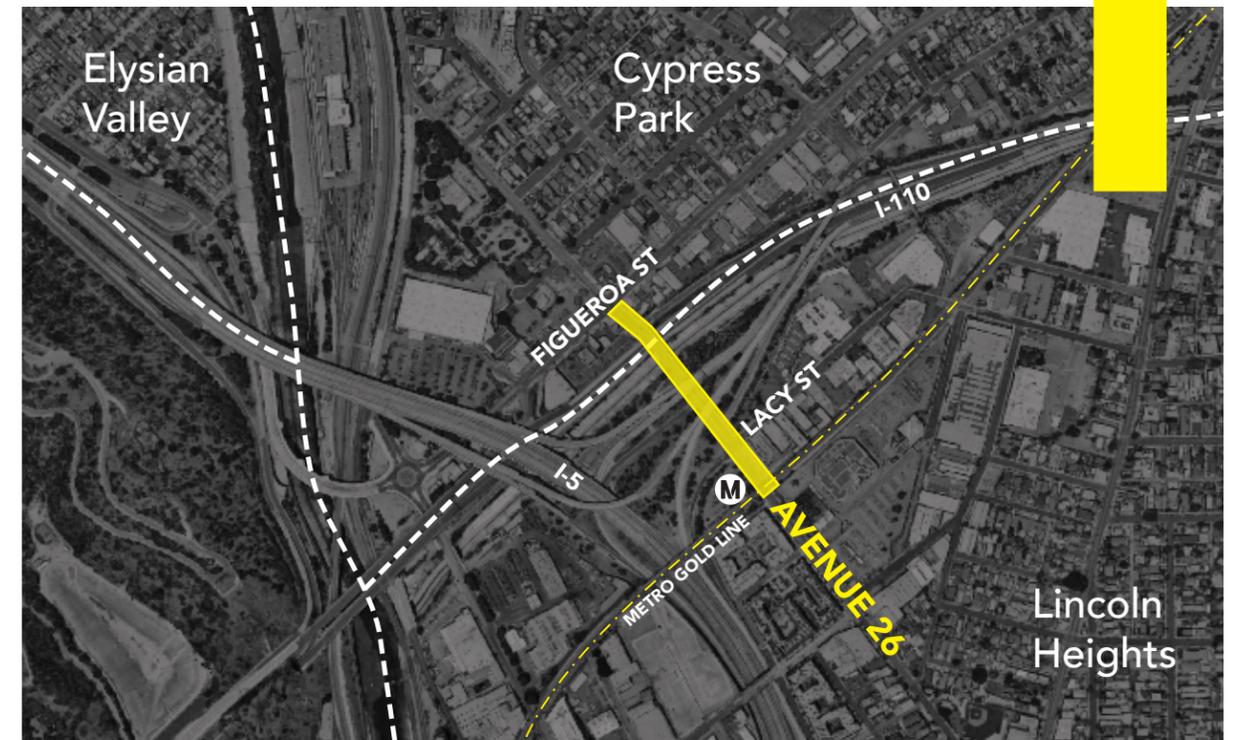
Why Northeast Los Angeles?

Northeast Los Angeles is a collection of several neighborhoods (including Lincoln Heights, Cypress Park, and Elysian Valley) along the Los Angeles River, just a few miles northeast of Downtown LA. The area is undergoing rapid development and change, raising issues around equity, displacement, and gentrification – all of which are connected to transportation.

Within Northeast Los Angeles, Avenue 26 between Figueroa Ave & Lacy Street is a ¼ mile stretch with a Metro Gold Line

station and several bus hubs. Most people who are walking or taking transit along Ave 26 do not own cars, and there is a lack of first/last mile* connections available to those who work and live in the area. The zone around the Metro station is car-centric, unfriendly to pedestrians, and feels disconnected from the surrounding communities.

This area was also selected because LA-Más is based in Elysian Valley and this area is the closest transit hub for our neighbors!



Previous Site Conditions:
Narrow and poorly maintained sidewalks; dark and unwelcoming underpasses.

What were the Project Goals?

This project served as an opportunity to test physical design interventions and engagement strategies that are scalable on a county-wide level, with the following goals:

- Expand the toolkit of first/last mile* strategies beyond expensive infrastructure investments
- Prove scalability and feasibility of similar projects in the region
- Build successful partnerships with and between transportation advocates, community organizations, and different government entities

We focused on serving existing pedestrians and transit users that already use this site, rather than working to attract new visitors.

***First/last mile** strategies work to improve the first and last mile connections to and from transit stations for public transit users. Most transit users in LA walk or roll to public transit stations, but the facilities provided are usually substandard since most LA street space is dedicated to the car.

Team • Budget • Timeline

Who was behind Go Ave 26?

This project was designed and led by **LA-Más**, funded by **TransitCenter**, and completed in partnership with a diverse set of **government agencies**, **transportation advocates**, and **community partners**. (To see the full project team, see Appendix A.i.)



LA-Más Go Ave 26 team

Opportunity for Cohesion + Collaboration

Los Angeles is undergoing a **transportation transformation**, and these transit-related changes impact all of the communities that they touch. However, the different sectors affecting and addressing these changes (government agencies, transportation advocates, and community-based organizations) are **often working independently** with minimal communication. This project attempts to **bring together various sectors** to create conversations and actions based on the shared value of making **transportation access better for all Angelenos**.

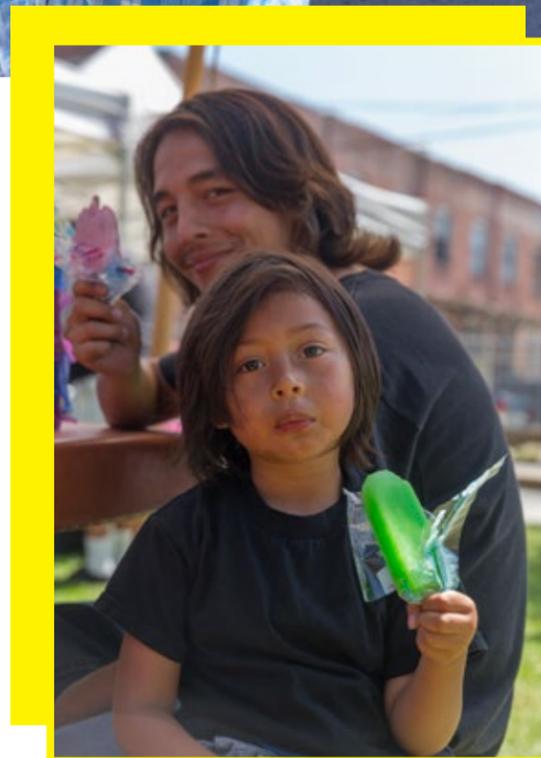
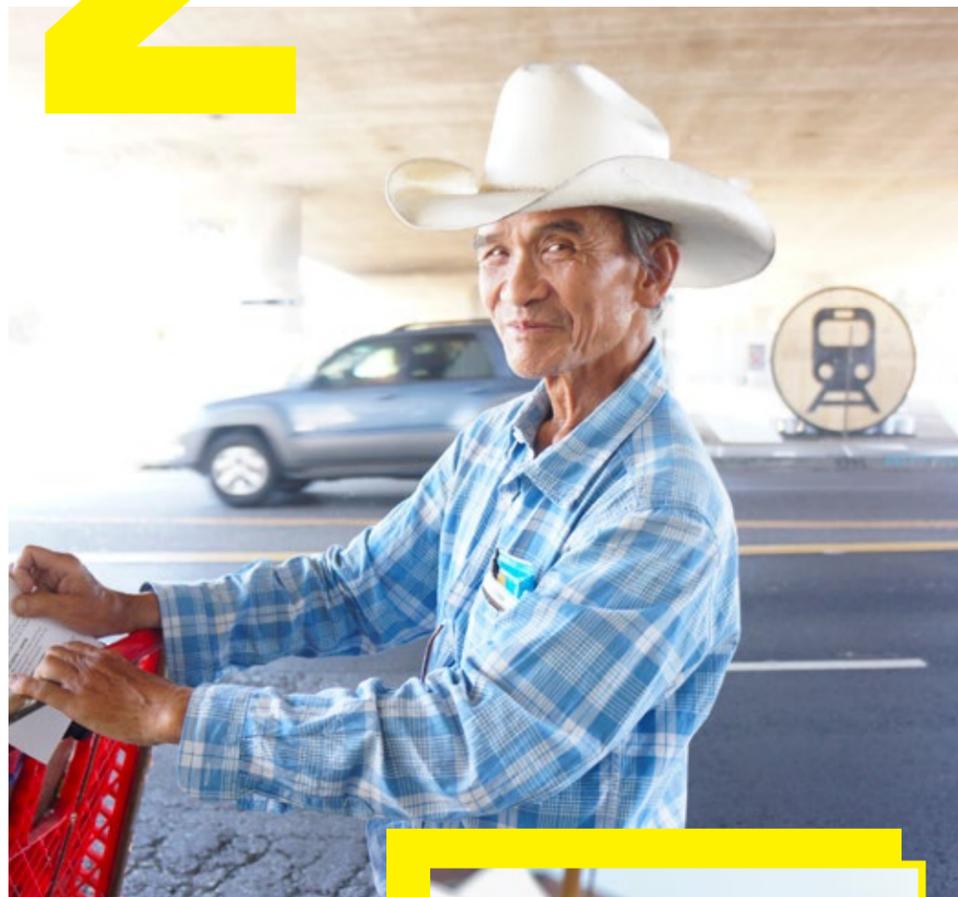


Budget + Timeline

LA-Más received a grant for **\$147,850** from TransitCenter to fund Go Ave 26. The table below explains how these funds were allocated, along with the project timeline from **January – December 2017**.

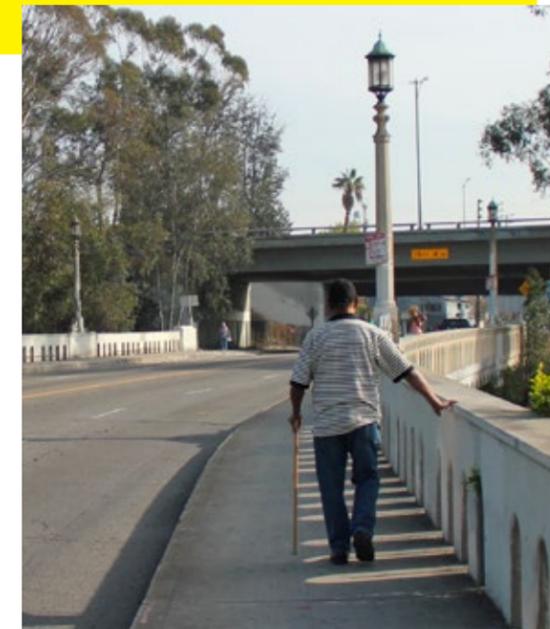
Phase/Task	Cost	Timeframe
Build Partnerships	\$12,000	January - March (3 mo)
Community Research	\$15,000	January - March (3 mo)
Community Outreach + Events	\$24,000	February - October (9 mo)
Physical Pilots	\$80,500	February - December (11 mo)
Design	\$20,000	February - July (6 mo)
Permitting (Time + Fees)	\$10,000	April - July (4 mo)
Material + Labor Costs	\$47,000	July - August (2 mo)
Maintenance (Materials + Labor)	\$2,000	September - December (3 mo)
De-Install (Materials + Labor)	\$1,500	December (1 wk)
Evaluations	\$8,350	November (1 mo)
Project Administration + Management	\$8,000	January - December (12 mo)
TOTAL	\$147,850	January - December (12 mo)

2 Community



Community Research + Engagement

We prepared a comprehensive **Community Findings Report** that you can read to learn more about our research and community engagement process! You can find it online at: www.mas.la/go-ave-26

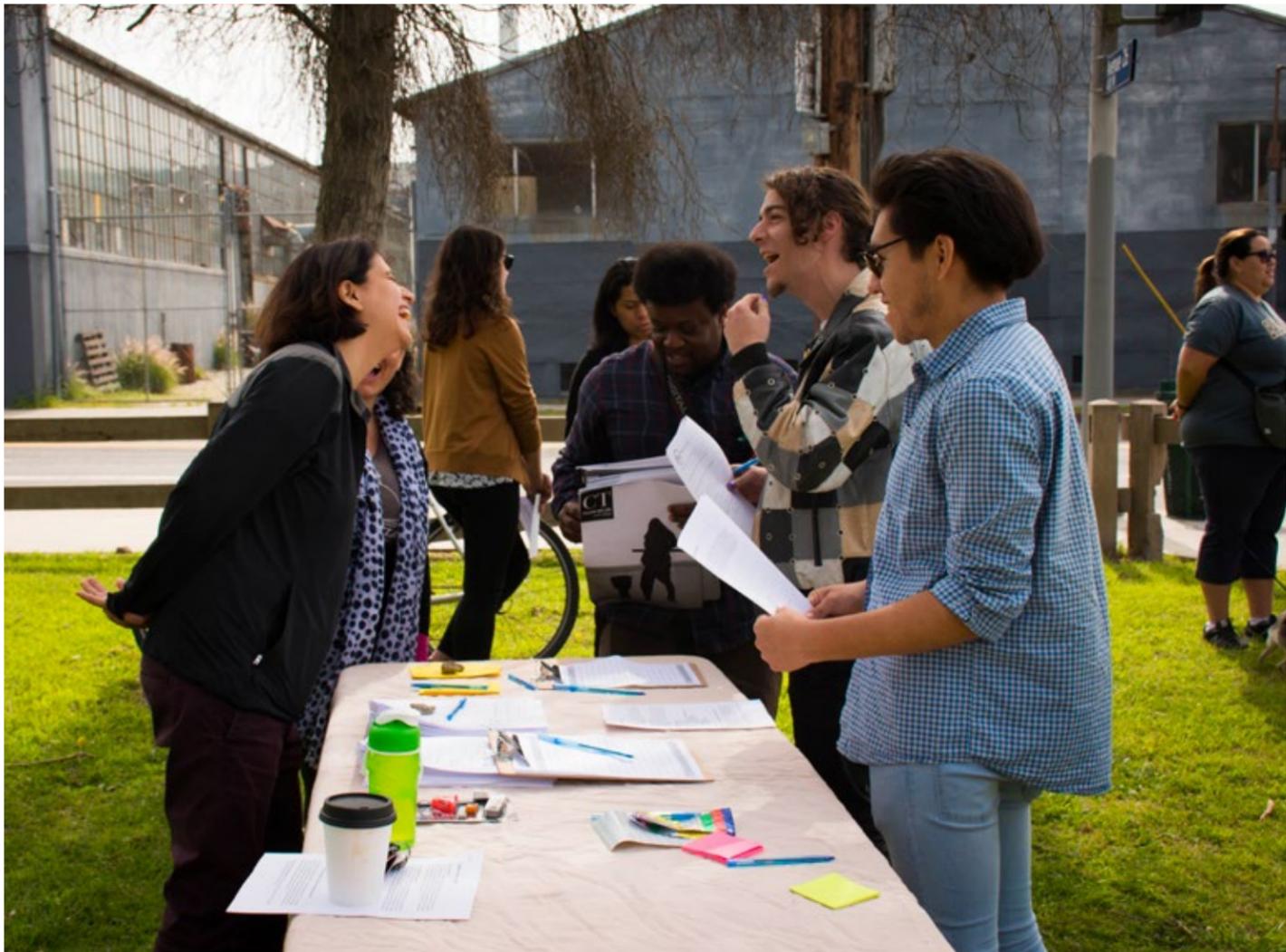


Here are highlights of what we learned:

- The people living in this area are young, working class, and ethnically diverse.
- The City of LA finds this Metro Station highly walkable. However, pedestrian connectivity and further infrastructure investments are needed.
- People in this area mostly walk, ride the Metro, and drive, but public transportation is not often used for daily activities.
- Signage in the area is primarily geared towards drivers, with limited signage for pedestrians and transit riders.
- The Lincoln/Cypress Metro station is underutilized by local residents, but has strong potential.
- People transferring between transit hubs and waiting for the bus need better pedestrian infrastructure.
- Avenue 26 scores very low on safety, aesthetics, and accessibility in Metro's First/Last Mile Walk Audit.
- Community members want to feel more safe and welcomed along the Avenue 26 corridor, with clear pathways to key destinations that create a sense of place.

Determining Need

A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods helped us understand local need – including intercept surveys, online surveys, community events, site analysis, and social media outreach.



Intercept Surveys

We launched a simple questionnaire in both English and Spanish to better understand the trends, needs, and experiences of people walking, biking or taking public transit on the Avenue 26 corridor. A total of 100+ people were interviewed during various times of the day in order to capture different users of the corridor including students, seniors, commuters, etc.

Online Surveys

A more elaborate 5 minute online survey, in both English and Spanish, was widely shared to reach a wider audience and include neighborhood residents that may not usually use transit. This survey was completed by 219 people.

Social Media

We collected email addresses of interested residents and partners to create a robust mailing list with 100+ followers. We also engaged community members via social media platforms ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#).) Check out the Go Ave 26 Facebook page [here!](#)

Community Events

We hosted several Go Ave 26 events (a community walk, volunteer day, community bike ride, community celebration) and also attended events planned by other groups. Many local organizations helped spread the word and bring people to events.



3 Design

Previous Conditions: What were we working with?

Previously, the site had dark underpasses, narrow sidewalks, an under-used park without any furniture, damaged fences, crosswalks without high-visibility stripes, and lots of trash and debris. It was not always clear in which direction the Metro & bus stops were located.



Design Elements: How did we decide where and how to intervene?

- **Park** — This is the only space where we could incorporate the most popular idea: seating, shade, and a place to hang out.
- **Signage** — To make it clear that the Metro station was just ahead, a new large sign provides some level of certainty for transit users.
- **Murals** — To create a sense of light, these underpasses are filled with patches of white with playful shapes.
- **Sidewalk/Fences/Poles** — To reclaim space for pedestrians, sidewalk patterns indicate clearer pathways, fence weavings provide a sense of movement, and utility pole wraps alert both drivers and pedestrians.

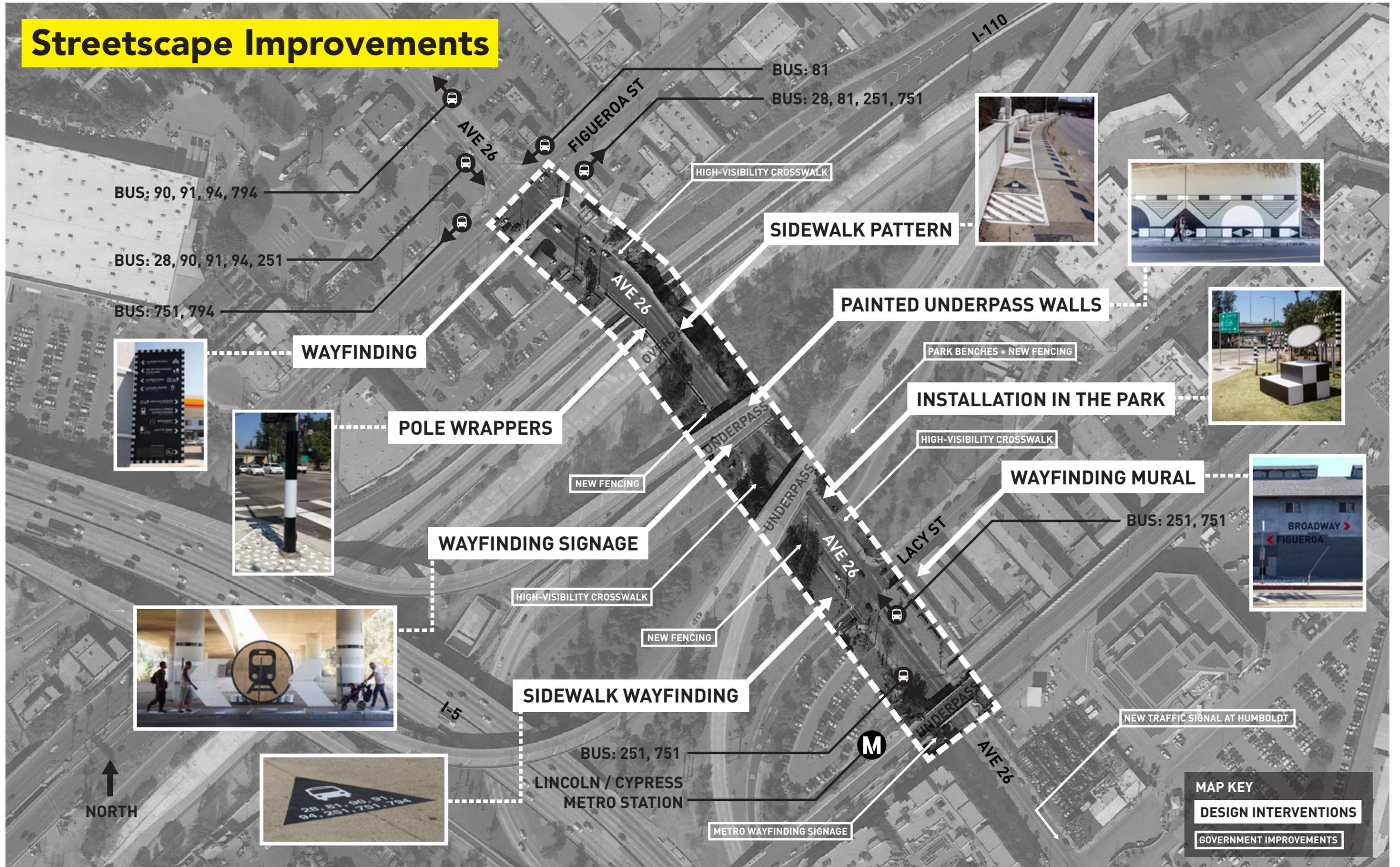


Design Approach

- **Why black and white?** — These colors are the easiest to maintain and reflect colors found on the street. We wanted to test using a super simple color palette rather than imposing a selection of bright colors that might not appeal to all the different communities that use this site.
- **Why these shapes?** — We were inspired by the simple shapes found across our urban landscape.
- **How long will this project last?** — This was designed as a short-term demonstration project and was up until December 2017. Given the warm reception to the project, the murals on the underpasses are now in the process of becoming permitted to be permanent installations.



Streetscape Improvements



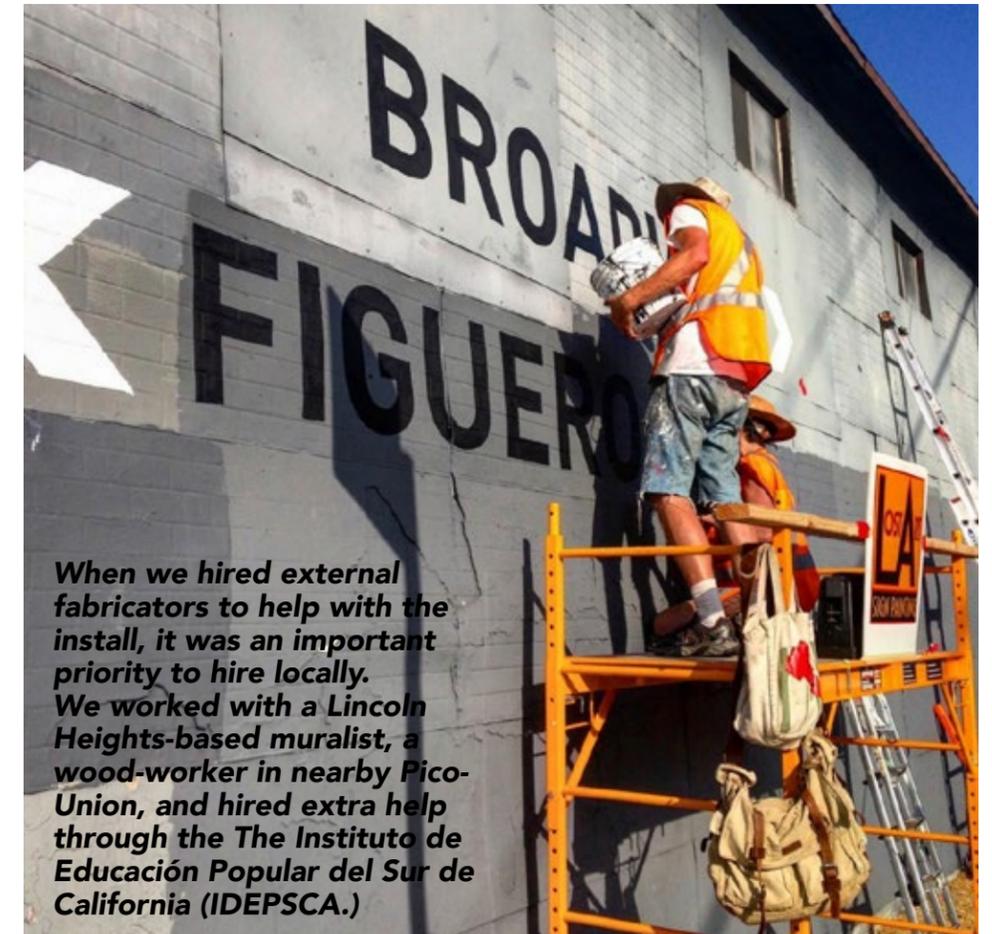
Install



The LA-Más team led the fabrication and installation process with lots of help from local residents & partners.



We hosted several volunteer days where folks came out to help paint the sidewalk, wrap poles, and weave plastic ribbons into fences.



When we hired external fabricators to help with the install, it was an important priority to hire locally. We worked with a Lincoln Heights-based muralist, a wood-worker in nearby Pico-Union, and hired extra help through the The Instituto de Educación Popular del Sur de California (IDEPSCA.)



We worked with an external testing lab to ensure all materials met City standards.

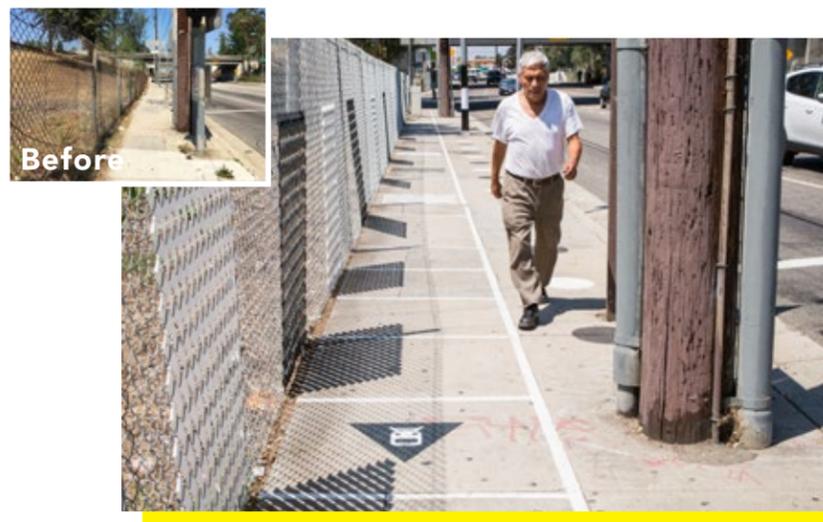
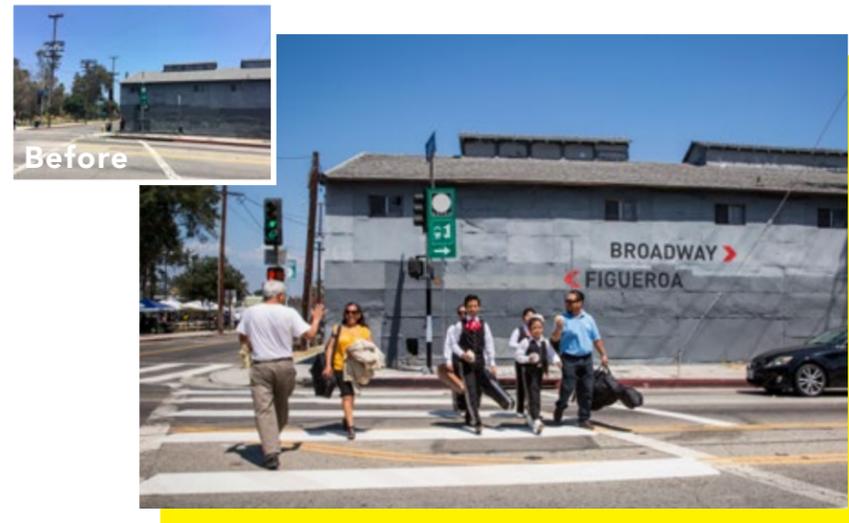
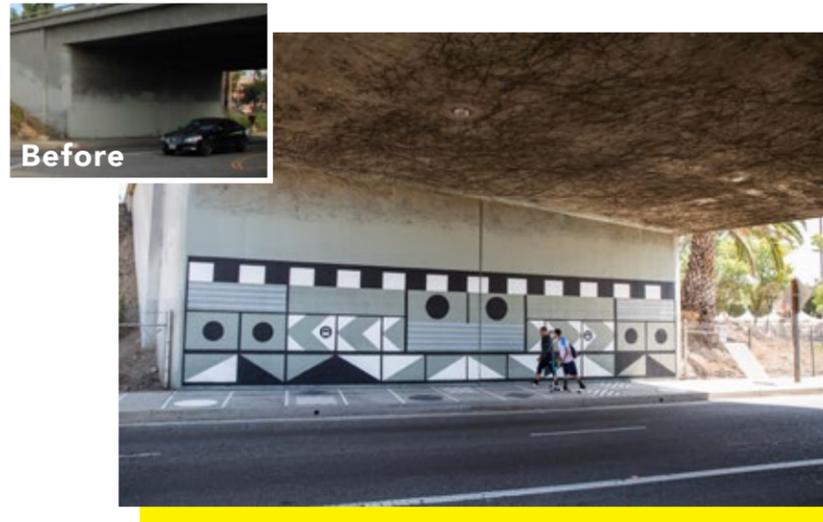


Throughout the installation process, we received lots of help from our government partners at Caltrans and the City in helping keep the site clean.



We developed unique low-cost installation strategies (like stamps and stickers) to complete install as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Before/Afters



Material Costs

Physical Intervention Costs

Here are approximate costs of all the different design interventions, including materials, fabrication, and installation:

- **Park — \$8,000**
including hiring a nearby woodworking team
- **Signage — \$3,200**
including hiring a local professional sign-painting team and wood/steel fabricator
- **Murals — \$6,000**
including hiring a local professional sign-painting team
- **Sidewalk/Fences/Poles — \$20,000**
including a labor-intensive sidewalk painting process

4 Navigating Bureaucracy

Government Support

We were fortunate to have the support of both elected officials and agency executives at all levels of government. They helped us understand the existing rules, and together we explored alternative options to make this project feasible.



Leveraging Government Improvements

We worked closely with city, county, and state agencies to prioritize improvements that were already within their capacity, including:

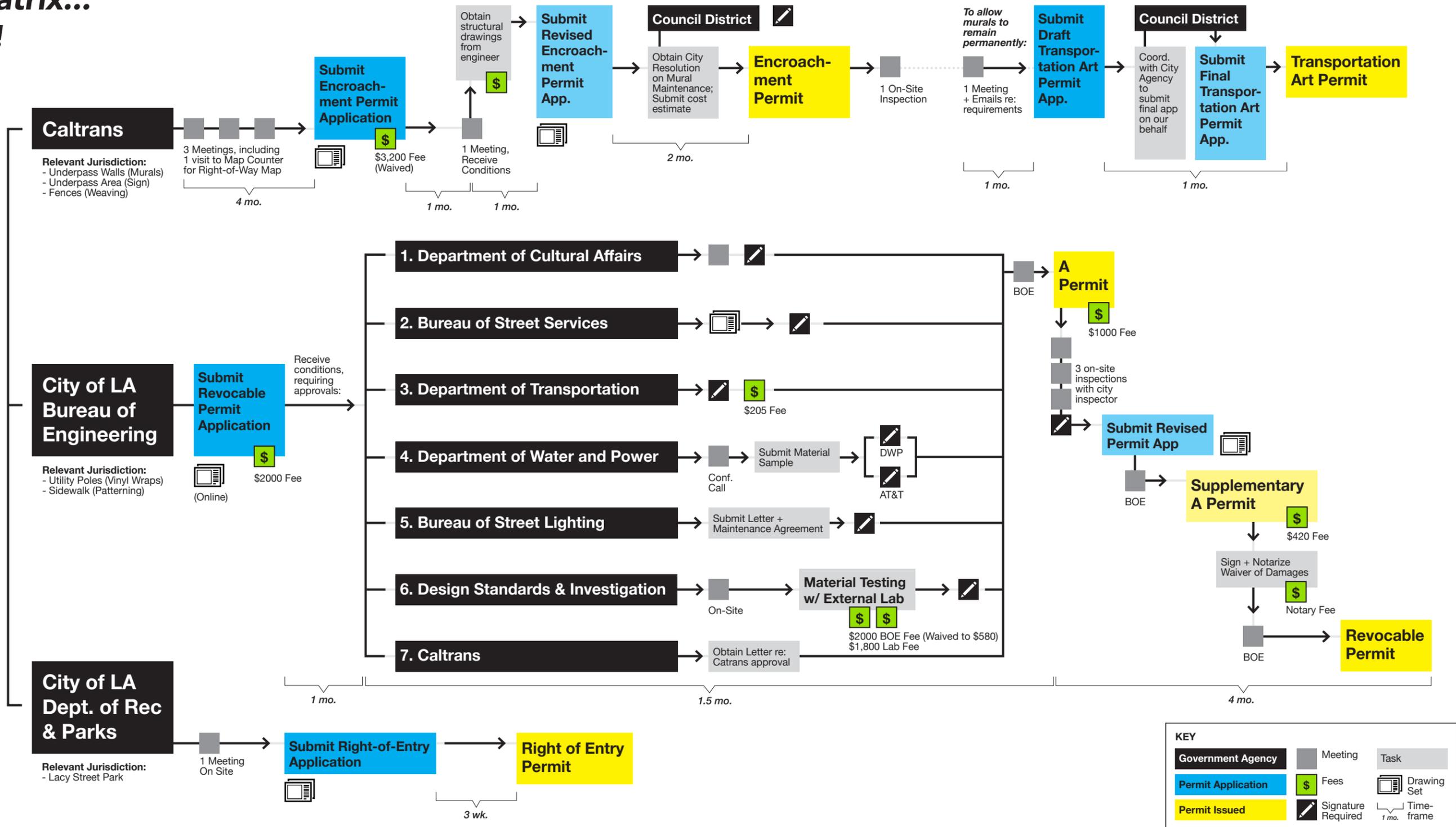
- **Fencing + Landscaping** — Caltrans replaced broken fencing and removed bags of debris.
- **Crosswalks** — Caltrans painted high visibility crosswalks on four on/off ramps; Councilmember Gil Cedillo ensured crosswalks were added at Ave 26 & Lacy St.
- **Signage** — Metro added new wayfinding signage at the Lincoln/Cypress Metro Station.
- **Seating** — The Department of Recreation & Parks installed two permanent picnic tables and new fencing at Lacy Street Neighborhood Park.
- **Traffic Signal** — LADOT and Councilmember Gil Cedillo ensured that a new Traffic Signal was installed one block away at Humboldt St.

Permitting

The permitting system requires a matrix... enough said!

This permitting and approvals matrix is a telling example of how complex a simple project like this can be. It's important to know that before this project, there was no clear process for receiving permits for low-cost interventions like these. The overlapping jurisdictions also provided added complexity.

GoAve26 Permissions



Impact + Evaluations

5

Feedback + Project Evaluations

In order to collect project feedback in innovative ways, we created fun ways for people to experience the Go Ave 26 project. At each of the public events (walk, bike ride, and party) we received written and oral feedback. In collaboration with partner organization **Community Arts Resources (CARs)**, we hosted a large community Block Park event to celebrate the completion of the design installations and to collect feedback. At the Block Party we created Passport booklets and stations that attendees participated in, answering questions and giving feedback at each station spread throughout the project site. We then collected and analyzed this qualitative and quantitative feedback data.

We also partnered with **Special Service for Groups (SSG)** to gather additional post-improvement feedback. We collaborated with SSG to create a 24-question survey to evaluate the pilot projects' success, and the SSG team conducted 60+ on-site intercept surveys. Highlights include:

- 75% were aware of the new improvements;
- Almost half reported feeling this area was more visually welcoming and enjoyable to be in now;
- 23% reported using the Metro station and/or public transportation more;
- 19% reported walking more frequently;
- 77% of pedestrians reported feeling that there was enough space while walking on the sidewalk (compared to 30% at pre-test);
- 68% of pedestrians reported feeling safe from cars while crossing the street (compared to 10% at pretest)



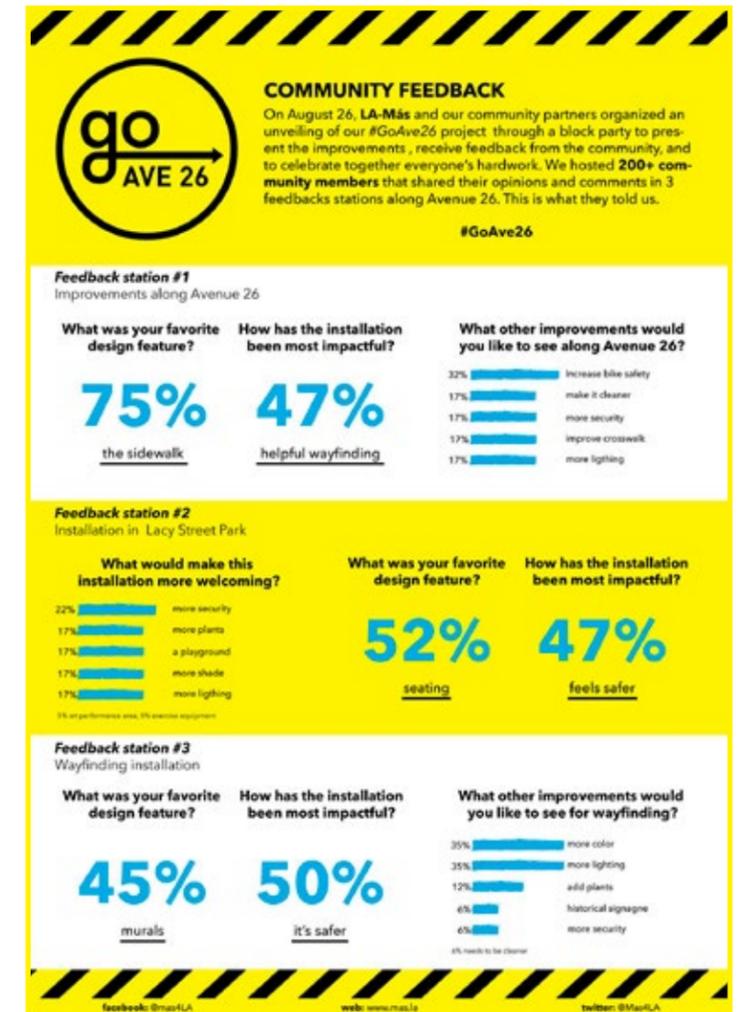
Community Block Party



Passport Booklets



SSG Surveys



Wrapping Up!



What We Learned: A Few Take-Aways...

- ✓ A low-cost series of interventions to promote first/last mile infrastructure is **difficult to seek approval** for. We had to get sign-offs from many government agencies. For example, to paint the freeway underpass owned by Caltrans, we secured two separate permits from the state and city.
 - » *Implication: This pilot could inform an easier approvals process; paint treatment should not require the same rigor and standards as a new sidewalk.*
- ✓ Community **engagement processes** do not have to be transactional, but rather **informal and conversational**. Our community findings report highlights the many ways we approached community research and engagement.
 - » *Implication: All the interventions that will be in place reflect the experiences, priorities, and concerns of pedestrians, transit users, and community members.*
- ✓ Pedestrian safety is a right and this project is not about attracting ridership, but **supporting current pedestrian and transit users**.
 - » *Implication: We see this as a social justice initiative that is supporting existing pedestrians + transit users, many of whom do not have a car and have no choice but to rely on walking, bus, and train. The Go Ave 26 improvements are not art, but rather low-cost, high-impact treatments to the public right of way. They are not culturally or community specific. Rather, they are low-cost treatments that seek to enhance the pedestrian experience – creating the feeling of space, light, and safety.*
- ✓ The design treatments also incorporate **transit wayfinding** – which is not always clear outside of the Metro station itself.
 - » *Implication: Although this is a site specific project, the improvements are treatments that can be applied to spaces found through LA - freeway underpasses, on/off ramps, narrow sidewalks, fences.*
- ✓ Government agencies have a large role to play in creating infrastructure improvements for pedestrians. Some of the Go Ave 26 government improvements were already in the works but did not have high visibility/accountability, and others were direct asks resulting from community feedback.
 - » *Implication: Smaller projects like this can **leverage other improvements** that government agencies have the ability to do. Community members can work with government agencies to request these types of improvements.*



What's Next

At the end of December 2017, LA-Más received a **second grant from TransitCenter** to build upon what we learned during the Go Ave 26 project and help bring these types of projects to scale city-wide. We will work to leverage our relationships with government agencies and elected officials to **institutionalize a more streamlined process for implementing creative first/last mile interventions.**

As the LA region undergoes its largest transportation expansion in history, it is now especially important to build governmental capacity to identify high-risk routes to transit, prioritize funding for these corridors, and work effectively with community partners to successfully create many more safe and welcoming routes to transit. Given the relationships we have built with both political leaders and bureaucratic leaders, LA-Más is well-positioned to advocate from a grass-tops level to make sure Go Ave 26 was not a one off project, but part of the new norm.

This follow-up project – currently called **Institutionalizing Creative First/Last Mile Interventions** – will include additional Public Agency Research, Analysis and Strategic Planning, Partnership Development, and Policy Recommendations. **We are excited to share policy recommendations later in 2018 – stay tuned to hear more!**





Project Team

This project was designed and led by **LA-Más**, funded by **TransitCenter**, and completed in partnership with a diverse set of government agencies, transportation advocates, and community partners.

Project Lead

- LA-Más

Grant Provider

- TransitCenter

Transportation Advocates

- Investing in Place
- LA Walks
- LA County Bicycle Coalition

Community Partners

- Unidos por NELA
- Mujeres de la Tierra
- Children's Hospital Los Angeles

Government Partners

- *City Partners:*
 - Office of Mayor Garcetti
 - Councilmember Gil Cedillo (CD1)
 - Department of Public Works
 - Department of Recreation & Parks
 - Department of Transportation (LADOT)
- *County Partners:*
 - LA County Supervisor Hilda Solis
 - LA Metro (Office of Extraordinary Innovation & Office of Long Range Planning)
- *State Partners:*
 - CA Assemblyman Jimmy Gomez
 - Caltrans

Community Unveiling Event

- Community Arts Resources (CARS)
- El Paraiso
- Plaza de la Raza
- Mexicano 30-30 Restaurant

Project Evaluations

- Special Service for Groups (SSG)

Fabrication Partners

- Lost Art Sign Painting (Murals)
- Eastbridge Studio (Park+Sign)
- 2ndwnd (Laser cutting)
- Instituto de Educación Popular del Sur de California (IDEPSCA)



A.ii

Project Press



“Vibrant, pedestrian-friendly streetscape designs unveiled in Lincoln Heights” [\(link\)](#)

By Elijah Chiland
Curbed Los Angeles
August 28, 2017

“Lincoln Heights Metro Station Getting Streetscape Designs for Pedestrians” [\(link\)](#)

By Sandra Chen
Neighborhoods.com
September 1, 2017

“Go Avenue 26 – A Little Paint and a Lot of Listening” [\(link\)](#)

By Nolan Borgman
The Source (Metro’s Blog)
September 19, 2017

“Lincoln Heights/Cypress Park: Improving first and last mile access one street at time #GoAve26” [\(link\)](#)

by Jessica Meaney
Investing in Place (blog)
August 24, 2017

“The First Steps are Being Taken to Make Avenue 26 More Pedestrian Friendly” [\(link\)](#)

By Jacqueline Fernandez
The Eastsider
May 1, 2017

“Transit Lessons from Denver and Los Angeles” [\(link\)](#)

By Megan Fencil
Sustain Charlotte
October 05, 2017

“LA-Más is Building a More Equitable Los Angeles” [\(link\)](#)

By Patrick Sisson
Curbed
November 15, 2017

“This Week in Livable Streets” [\(link\)](#)

By Joe Linton
Streetsblog LA
September 18, 2017