

Community-Based Transportation Planning Grants

Planning to Stay: A Community Created Master Plan for an Improved Transit Village in Westlake

- **Grant Amount:** \$249,000
- **Grant Recipient:** Central City Neighborhood Partners
- **County:** Los Angeles

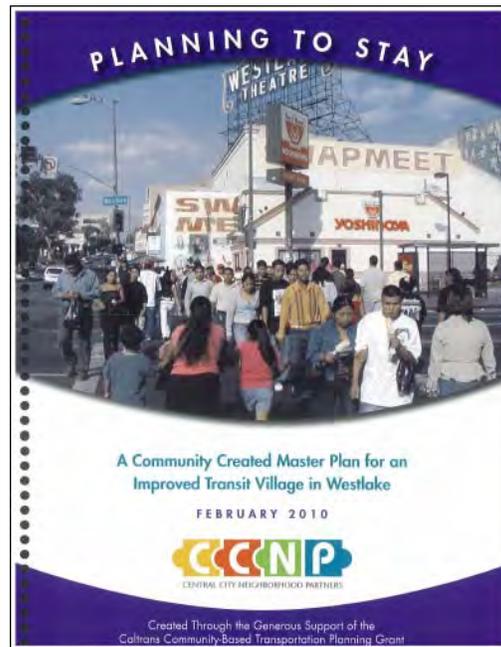
Project Area – Westlake Neighborhood

Project Focus – The Westlake Neighborhood is located just northwest of downtown Los Angeles. Westlake is characterized by being composed of predominantly Latino and low-income families. It is one of the most, if not the most densely population neighborhood west of the Mississippi. The residents of Westlake use transit as their primary means of transportation and 88% of the residents are renters. The project focused on a ½ mile radius around the Westlake/MacArthur park metro Rail Station.

Project Goals – The goals of the project was to empower Westlake residents with the skills and knowledge, technical staff, and organization they need to create their own plans for their own neighborhood. In addition, the projects mobilized and sustain a high level of resident participation; this project combined the best of community organizing and participatory planning in a step-by-step process.

Community Outreach – Over the course of this planning project, several public meetings were held. The communities meetings were used as tools to empower residents and for residents to empower other residents. A

representative base of community leaders was developed through one-on-one meetings. The goal was for the first meeting to be one with resident and community leaders that would be involved in a long term participator planning process. The core team of leaders received planning training and began taking steps any planning professional would in developing a master plan. The resident planners lead the participation process. They identified themselves as members of the community, collected information from other residents, set priorities issues and needs, and lead working groups. The working groups addressed specific interest groups and developed recommendations. Recommendations were presented to the larger group and priorities were set.



Project Outcome – Over the project development process residents met and worked in committees to develop their plans and implementation proposals in each priority area.

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The project outcome was a community created master plan for three specific areas for improvement and an additional chapter on priority sites areas of action. The first Transit Village Improve Area is Pedestrian, Transit and Bicycle Mobility and Access. This section makes planning recommendations that are appropriate to intersections and sidewalks. It also addresses that esthetics of the walking environment and bike ways. The Second area of focus is Safety and Health. From the project perspective the Safe and Healthy Communities component is inherently intertwined

with the first. The third area, Strategic Planning, Policy and Proposals to promote Affordable Housing and Jobs, aimed at preserving and increasing the stock of affordable housing and the availability of living wage jobs. The last section of the plan overlays different components and identifies potential sites for TOD. In addition it presents recommendations and actions that can be taken to link different land uses in Westlake.

Challenges

- The project was seeking to apply TOD best practices to solve and enable Westlake to realize its full potential, but soon realized that if traditional TOD master planning was applied to some of the problems, the plan could result in the displacement of many residents.

Successes

- The empowerment and leadership development of residents and their participation and ownership of the planning process was instrumental in completing a successful project.