



How East Los Moves: Creative, Custom People Powered Transit

Organization:

Public Matters

Project Name:

How East Los Moves: Creative, Custom People Powered Transit

Reach:

11,250

Award Amount:

\$15,000



● City Terrace,
Los Angeles County



The following report was written by Public Matters about How East Los Moves: Creative, Custom People Powered Transit.

Overview

How East Los Moves! made the topic of people-powered transit accessible and engaging to East LA residents at the 2nd Annual City Terrace Art Walk (CTAW) through displays and expressions of creativity and hands-on artmaking workshops. The one-day event, in collaboration with local residents and LA County's Department of Public Works (including the Vision Zero Team), took over two blocks of City Terrace Drive which were closed to car traffic on Saturday, July 30, 2022.

By embedding How East Los Moves! at the CTAW, we were able to reach more than 800 attendees who encountered our displays of creative, custom people-powered transit and a bike lane demo from the *Go Human* Kit of Parts. 275 people participated in our workshops, customizing people-powered transit items such as skateboards and visors with guidance from local artists. We engaged people of diverse ages and mobilities. Including photo and video content shared and re-shared via social media, we estimate reaching over 11,250 people.

How East Los Moves! complemented other work Public Matters presented at CTAW: a complete street demonstration of City Terrace Drive and a showcase of City Terrace Complete Streets proposals by high school students from East LA Renaissance Academy at Torres High School (Torres). By design, the display of the people-powered transit fleet and the participatory workshops were intended as entry points to conversations about complete streets.

First District Supervisor Hilda L. Solis engaged with workshop participants and was taken on a tour of the exhibit by the Torres artists. Public Works staff noted that the Art Walk's inviting, celebratory atmosphere was conducive to community engagement. Community members were happy to talk to Public Works, who collected over 200 surveys and at one point, completely ran out. Public Works was so enthusiastic about the results that the Director of Public Works included the project in their monthly Director's Message, which goes out to all Public Works staff and the Board of Supervisors.

For the CTAW, we intentionally sought out local partnerships with people and organizations within the community to more effectively connect with residents. The Garage Board Shop, a local business that uses skateboarding and cycling as a vehicle for engaging local families and cultivating community, was a natural partner for our first workshop. For our second workshop, we collaborated with three artists (Kristine Garcia, Deseret Rodriguez, and Mia Martinez) rooted in the community. Las Fotos Project, a non-profit organization with Eastside origins that empowers teenage girls and young gender-expansive artists through photography, documented the entire event.

How East LA Moves! provided a space for community members to "see" what sharing the road with different modes of transportation could look like, before actual changes are made to the built environment. It also reinforced the diverse ways East LA residents get around—with style. Tapping the pride of place and the practice of custom culture enabled us to connect with CTAW attendees and workshop participants, and to direct them to surveys and conversations about complete streets with LA County Public Works Staff.



Lessons Learned

Partnerships with local community members like Belinda Martinez, founder of My City My Dreams, which led the City Terrace Art Walk, and Ariana Rodriguez of Visión City Terrace, are invaluable. Without their guidance and facilitation, we couldn't have connected as effectively with community members, especially given our tight timeline. It is good practice to compensate community members for their time and expertise, to recognize that their lived experience and local knowledge is indispensable to any community engagement effort.

The creative, vibrant, and participatory nature of How East Los Moves! made active transportation appealing, approachable, and easy to understand for community members. It enabled them to visualize what's possible in their neighborhood, made the concepts of complete streets and people-powered transportation more digestible, and reinforced that they can shape the neighborhood they want.

Lastly, while we were very excited that the maximum *Go Human* grant award was increased, we wonder whether the practice of reimbursing grantees entirely after project completion might pose an undue burden upon groups or grassroots community organizations that lack resources upfront. What deserving projects might write off the opportunity for *Go Human* funds because they lack outright means to front expenses?

