

footnotes

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A Report on the State of Walking in L.A.

Footnotes is a new annual report on the state of walking in Los Angeles, produced by Los Angeles Walks. This publication is more than just current data and stats: We've tapped contributors from all over the city to write about issues related to walking, including urban design, zoning, safety, development, policy, and health. Our hope is that by giving a complete picture of what walking looks like in L.A. right now, we can celebrate the achievements and address the challenges in our quest to make the city more safe, accessible, equitable, and fun for all pedestrians.

Los angeles walks

STORIES FROM THE STREETS WALKING TO SCHOOL IN SOUTH L.A.

by Randal Henry and Manal Aboelata-Henry

It's 7:20 on a brisk, sunny Monday morning in Crenshaw Manor. Brothers Taj and Sadiq check the velcro on their Hush Puppies and take one last look to make sure lunch pails and homework folders are tucked into their backpacks. Check. Off they go to the nearest Metro station, about a 12-minute walk. Many people walk in the neighborhood, so most days, Taj and Sadiq say hello to other walkers along the way.

If the car traffic on Coliseum Street isn't too heavy and the lights at Crenshaw and Rodeo are just right, they'll stroll up the platform just in time for the 7:40 train. They might even have an extra moment to find a penny someone's left behind at the TAP machine. Some days they get stuck waiting for a lull in the steady stream of cars at an unmarked crosswalk at Coliseum or the light at Crenshaw won't turn until they've seen the eastbound train bolt through the intersection. In that case, they wait for the 7:52 train. But, either way, the seven-minute train ride will get them to school well in time for their 8:05 bell.

Taj and Sadiq have always loved all methods of transportation, and the train ride to school is a dream come true. When they were babies, their parents used to push their double stroller down the abandoned railway that would eventually become the route of the Expo Line train. Two years ago, they watched the tracks as they were being laid. From their car seats, they watched the daily train tests, wondering when it would be open for them. The sign advertised: "Metro Expo Line coming in 2012." They rode the train the very first day it was open. Today the train is part of their daily commute, and they have taken it, rain or shine, for the last two years. The ride is an opportunity to read, watch all the cars pile up at the stoplights, or chat with an acquaintance. That's right: They're familiar faces on the 7:40 train, recognized by train operators, passengers, and Metro personnel.

"Now arriving: Expo Park-USC Station. Exit here for the California Science Center, the Natural History Museum, The California African American Museum and USC" blares the pre-recorded message. Taj closes his book. Sadiq rises to exit. The boys make sure their parents are with them and head out the train in a throng of passengers. Most are headed toward USC. A smaller handful wait as cars zoom across the extra-wide, bright yellow striped crosswalk separating two lanes of eastbound traffic whizzing toward Figueroa and the 110. The light changes, signaling it's time to cross. Taj and Sadiq crane their heads to the right for one

last look. No red light runners today. They cross toward the stand of stately trees with their exposed, smooth roots that front the Rose Garden and the architectural gem that is the California Science Center.

Often, Taj and Sadiq footrace or cartwheel their way up the wide sidewalk while their parents amble behind. The trucks and cars are especially loud on this stretch—everyone must shout their "I spy..." clues. For a long while, the boys would utter many hushed questions wondering why people had to sleep outside, under blankets on benches. Last year, a man was camped out for several days on the lawn outside the Rose Garden and didn't bother to find a proper bathroom when he needed one, instead he used the area right next to his blanket—they couldn't help but whisper to each other. But it's been awhile since they've seen anyone sleeping on the benches flanking the entrance to the park, or eating from the garbage cans.

Heading east past the park, they stay toward the right, taking care as best they can to avoid bicyclists heading in the opposite direction, but once in a while they jump into the other 'lane' of sidewalk to pounce on the remnants of Olympic stars painted on the asphalt along Exposition.

At Figueroa, they turn the busy corner, their last stretch before arriving at the school gate. "Wow! It's clean!" Sadiq takes note. The plants have been trimmed and much of the litter has been picked up. Here, most parents are darting toward the drop-off point. One, in a particular rush, lets her son down and he jumps into the planter, dodging tall grasses before crossing a little blocked side shunt that's usually blocked by cones. Phew...the bell will ring soon.

Thanks to the efforts of the new principal, Taj and Sadiq now enter through a pedestrian gate that opens to face Figueroa instead of following the cars' path and entering along the driveway. A small consideration for the young walkers, this shaves 90 seconds and a hundred steps from their morning commute. Arrived, they open their arms to provide their parents with hugs and kisses, switching pairs to make sure everyone has gotten their proper goodbyes. "I love you mommy!" "I love you daddy!" "Have a great day."

With the kids off to school, we take each other's hands and stroll back to the train for the ride and walk home before another day's work begins. This is our time. We feel so fortunate to be together. It's so much better than driving the kids to school. We wonder: What are we going to do

for our morning walk when our kids graduate? It's a great question. This walk has become a morning ritual, a constitutional. Quality time. Will we be able to find a suitable junior high our kids can walk to? Will they even want us to walk with them? (We pretend that the answer to that second question will be "yes," right through college.)

The truth is, we are fortunate. While we were deliberate about choosing a walkable neighborhood to establish our household, we got lucky. Without a crystal ball, which we did not have when we moved into our home 12 years ago, we would've never guessed that our lovely, culturally diverse, well-maintained neighborhood would become the focal point for Metro's rail expansion, first at Crenshaw and Exposition, and eventually down Crenshaw towards LAX. It's easy to forget that just a few years ago we used to push our babies in their strollers along an abandoned rail line.



Randal Henry and Manal Aboelata-Henry are the founders of Crenshaw WALKS. You can find them at [facebook.com/groups/CrenshawWALKS](https://www.facebook.com/groups/CrenshawWALKS)

In Los Angeles County almost
**18% of trips are made
by walking.¹**

but **<1% of funding** goes to
walking and bicycling infrastructure²

1. 2009 National Household Travel Survey 2. Metro 2009 Long Range Transportation Plan



Los Angeles Walks founder Deborah Murphy interviewed in the *Los Angeles Times* in 2014 and in *Women's Day Magazine* in 2001 about pedestrian safety issues

A Letter from Our Executive Director

Los Angeles is really walking the talk. After 16 years of championing walking and the rights of pedestrians in Los Angeles, I am thrilled that many other pedestrian advocates and walkers have stepped forward into the light to lead the way to a more walkable Los Angeles.

We have an awesome and dedicated steering committee—Alexis Lantz, Jessica Meaney, Alissa Walker, Colleen Corcoran, Daveed Kapoor, Mark Vallianatos, My La, Tilza Castillo, and Randal Henry—whom you might have seen around the city dressed as superheroes, protecting the rights of pedestrians at dangerous intersections. Their enthusiasm has been contagious, and now walking activists in neighborhoods across L.A. are calling for more beautiful and engaging streets. Hundreds of Angelenos have walked with us at WalkLAvia events and on walks in Silver Lake, Eagle Rock, Koreatown, and other neighborhoods of Los Angeles. Supporters show up at public hearings to advocate for the rights of pedestrians. And every day, more people of all ages are out on the streets—running their errands, getting to school, walking their dogs, or just enjoying the beautiful Los Angeles environment.

We've also seen engagement from the City as departments like LADOT, the Department of City Planning, and the Bureau of Street Services recognize that streets are for people, not just for the movement of cars. Thanks to an excellent column by Steve Lopez in the *Los Angeles Times* (above), the Los Angeles City Council has responded to a wake-up call that sidewalk repair is as critical as fixing potholes through the Save our Streets funding proposal. The state legislature has introduced laws to address the increasing number of hit-and-run crashes. And in 2013, Mayor Eric Garcetti, who first appointed me as the chair of the City's Pedestrian Advisory Committee when he was a city councilman, announced the Great Streets Initiative to create safer, more vibrant streets for Los Angeles.

In the coming year, we have a number of challenges ahead to address the 5 E's of pedestrian safety: Engineering, Education, Enforcement, Encouragement, Evaluation and Equity. We must increase the funding for pedestrian improvements; educate more drivers on pedestrian safety; enforce our traffic laws to reduce crashes and make our streets safer for all; encourage more people to walk as a part of their daily lives, for their health as well as the health of their communities; evaluate the improvements and programs that we create to make sure that they are effective; and make sure that we equitably address issues across our city.

We need all of you to make sure that we can achieve these goals. Please donate to Los Angeles Walks now at losangeleswalks.org/donate and sign up for our newsletter at losangeleswalks.org/join-us to participate in our activities and calls to action.

— Deborah Murphy

OUR MISSION

Los Angeles Walks is a pedestrian advocacy group that makes walking safe, accessible, and fun for all Angelenos.

We are a volunteer-supported organization dedicated to promoting walking and pedestrian infrastructure in Los Angeles, educating Angelenos and local policymakers concerning the rights and needs of pedestrians of all abilities, and fostering the development of safe and vibrant environments for all pedestrians.

OUR VISION FOR LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles is a vibrant city in which people can and do walk regularly for transportation, exercise, or fun. Policymakers and residents appreciate walking as a valuable form of transportation, and Angelenos of all ages, ethnicities, incomes, and abilities are able to walk or move safely through their neighborhoods.

OUR HISTORY

In 1998, urban designer Deborah Murphy founded Los Angeles Walks along with friends who were focused on fostering a more livable city. Over the years, thanks to a large and dedicated group of volunteers, Los Angeles Walks has consistently worked to raise awareness about pedestrian issues and bring attention to the role of walking in the City of Los Angeles. In the fall of 2011, under the fiscal umbrella of the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition, Los Angeles Walks began a sustained, grassroots efforts at an increased level to support walking in L.A. In 2013, Los Angeles Walks was granted fiscal sponsorship by Community Partners, joining 150 local projects moving the region forward.

Hey, I'm Walking Here!

AN UPDATE ON LOS ANGELES WALKS' ONGOING CAMPAIGNS

In 2013, Los Angeles Walks raised over \$13,000 for *Hey, I'm Walking Here!*, the first-ever pedestrian campaign for Los Angeles. Our campaign is working to improve pedestrian safety as well as celebrate walking as a conscious act that's happening all over the city. And by expanding upon our existing Los Angeles Walks work, including awareness, events, community meetings, and action, we are able to support long-term efforts to build a more walkable Los Angeles. You can read more about our campaign at losangeleswalks.org/campaigns

Enjoy Footnotes, and let us know what you think at hello@losangeleswalks.org



WalkLAvia at CicLAvia, October 2013

BROUGHT TO YOU BY...

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NUESTRA MISIÓN

Los Angeles Walks es un grupo de apoyo a los peatones que procura que caminar sea seguro, accesible y divertido para todos los angelinos.

Somos una organización de voluntarios dedicada a promover el apoyo para caminar así como la infraestructura peatonal en Los Angeles, a apoyar la educación de los angelinos y los responsables de la política local relacionados con los derechos y necesidades de los peatones de todas las capacidades, y a fomentar el desarrollo de entornos seguros y dinámicos para todos los peatones.

NUESTRA VISIÓN DE LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles es una ciudad dinámica en la que la gente puede y camina regularmente para transportarse, ejercitarse o divertirse. Para los políticos y residentes la caminata es una forma valiosa de transporte. Los angelinos de todas edades, etnias, ingresos y habilidades pueden caminar o moverse con seguridad en todos los vecindarios.

NUESTRA HISTORIA

En 1998, la diseñadora urbana Deborah Murphy fundó Los Angeles Walks junto con unos amigos enfocados a fomentar una ciudad más habitable. A través de los años, gracias a un gran y dedicado grupo de voluntarios, Los Angeles Walks ha trabajado constantemente para crear conciencia sobre temas de peatones y proporcionar atención a la función de la caminata en la ciudad de Los Angeles. En el otoño de 2011, bajo la fiscalía de la Coalición de Ciclistas de Los Angeles, Los Angeles Walks comenzó desplegar esfuerzos sostenidos, basándose en el mayor nivel de apoyo para la caminata en LA. En 2013, a Los Angeles Walks se le concedió el patrocinio fiscal por los socios de la comunidad (Community Partners), uniéndose a 150 proyectos que impulsan a la región.

¡Ay, estoy caminando!

UNA ACTUALIZACIÓN SOBRE NUESTRAS CAMPAÑAS

En 2013, Los Angeles Walks recaudó más de 13,000 dólares para *¡Ay, estoy caminando!*, la primer campaña para peatones en Los Angeles. Nuestra campaña es para mejorar la seguridad de los peatones y reconocer a la caminata como un acto de conciencia de lo que está pasando en toda la ciudad. Expandiendo nuestro trabajo en Los Angeles Walks, incluyendo hacer tomar conciencia, eventos, reuniones de la comunidad y acción, somos capaces de apoyar los esfuerzos para que Los Angeles sea una ciudad en la que se pueda caminar. losangeleswalks.org/espanol

Disfrute Footnotes y cuéntenos lo que piensa en: hello@losangeleswalks.org

1781

Los Pobladores, Los Angeles' founding families, walk to Los Angeles from Sonora, Mexico. After crossing 960 miles in seven months, eleven families (a total of 44 people) arrive at the San Gabriel Mission. After resting and refreshing supplies, families walk the final nine miles to El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora La Reina de Los Angeles de Porciúncula. Their 1781 walk is reenacted annually over Labor Day weekend to honor the formal founding of Los Angeles on September 4, 1781.

1851

Born a slave, Biddy Mason walks behind her master's wagon from Mississippi to San Bernardino, including a several-year stop in Utah. With the help of friends, Mason was able to petition for her freedom (as a slave she was unable to testify in the court case). Once free, she worked as a midwife. After ten years, she saved enough money to buy property at 4th and Spring. Among her many accomplishments, Mason was one of the first black women to own land in Los Angeles.

1873

In November, the *Los Angeles Herald* reports on a burgeoning pedestrian advocacy movement: "It is stated that the ladies, in great numbers, will invade the Council Chamber at the next meeting of the City Fathers with a numerous signed petition for crosswalks on the principal streets. A good idea."

1880s

As part of the Saturday evening courting ritual among the California families, young men and women promenaded around the Plaza, according to the book *Lotus Land*. "Saturday evenings, the infinitely more exciting paseo, where all the beautiful Mexican women of the city strolled about the Plaza in one direction, and the handsome young men strolled in the other. After two hours of this, everyone went into vespers, where, in flickering candlelight, notes might be exchanged, marriages made."

“L.A. IS CHANGING IN SOME PROFOUND AND DRAMATIC WAYS”

Q+A with Christopher Hawthorne

Los Angeles Walks steering committee member Alissa Walker talks to the Los Angeles Times architecture critic.

Alissa Walker: First, thank you for such a great conversation with Mayor Garcetti at Occidental College in February. With Villaraigosa we saw this empire-building when it came to transit, bike lanes and CicLAvia but we didn't get to hear him talk much about walking. Now we've got a mayor who walked five miles to City Hall on Walk to Work Day! How else is Garcetti's approach different, in your opinion?

Christopher Hawthorne: Villaraigosa, near the end of his time in office, really began paying attention to pedestrian safety and the crucial connections between walking and transit. But it took almost eight years for his administration to get to that point. Garcetti is unusually knowledgeable about and genuinely interested in these issues, as was clear in the Occidental conversation we had; and we're still very early in his term. The question with him will be execution—or maybe a combination of execution and nerve. How willing will he be to fund improvements to pedestrian access, and sidewalks when they conflict with some voters' (and media outlets') desires to keep car traffic moving as swiftly and efficiently as possible? And how willing is he to defend controversial or even unpopular changes to street design?

What would you like to see happen with Garcetti's new Great Streets Initiative?

I'd like to see it ultimately produce a set of ambitious and thoughtful blueprints that can be applied—with adjustments, of course, for different neighborhoods, and topography—across the city as a whole, and not just along certain corridors. There have been some tremendously encouraging changes in L.A. in terms of how we use and think about the streets, but many have been either temporary (CicLAvia) or limited in scale (Sunset Triangle Plaza). We need a way of making these improvements both permanent and much more common, so they shape the experience of moving through L.A. in a more meaningful way.

Speaking of great streets (or Great Streets) I remember something you said about York Boulevard a few years ago where you pointed out what made it such a good street: The width of the road, the height of the buildings, the mix of uses, the lack of strip malls. You really taught me how to “read” an L.A. street and changed the way I thought about streets as important public spaces in Los Angeles. So thank you for that. York, to me, has really naturally become one of the city's great streets.

It's something I noticed when I lived in Eagle Rock—that York seemed much more amenable to bike and pedestrian improvements than Colorado Boulevard simply because of its modest and manageable scale, because of the fact that it operates, to borrow an old Louis Kahn phrase about urban streets, like a “room of agreement.” It's narrow enough that you can call out to a friend on the other side and stop for a conversation or go have coffee together. Colorado, both because of its history as a major streetcar route and because of the way it was changed to accommodate cars in the post-war era, is so wide and poorly scaled as a pedestrian space that its energy just leaks away. If you saw a friend on the other side there'd be six or eight lanes of traffic between you, and you'd have to shout or wave your arms to get your friend's attention, and even that might not work. It's more like a room of disagreement.

These ideas should help guide our investment in new street design. It's not that a street like Colorado can't be made to feel more comfortable for pedestrians, but that an investment in a boulevard like York, which already has the scale of a walkable urban street, can pay surprisingly quick dividends.

Continuing on that street theme, last year you finished an excellent series looking at L.A. boulevards. What was the most important takeaway from that project?

That its basic thesis, by the time the final piece appeared, seemed like conventional wisdom. When I first pitched the series to my editors in the beginning of 2012, I had a real sense that there was a renaissance happening along the boulevards, that they were beginning to emerge from the substantial shadow of the freeways as places where the full range of urban life, not just driving, has a chance to play out. My editors, some of whom were skeptical in the most productive way, challenged me to defend and buttress that idea with reporting. And I'm glad they did, because it made all the essays better. But as I write this now, in 2014, the notion seems pretty self-evident, doesn't it?

It absolutely does!

Think how much has changed just in two years, thanks to CicLAvia, the Expo Line, the endless, obscenely expensive 405-widening debacle, and groups like Los Angeles Walks—and in a broader sense, thanks to the national discussion about how car use is declining, especially among younger

Americans. The idea that along every L.A. street and sidewalk is public space waiting to be reanimated or rediscovered is a powerful one. But it's also one that seems more and more obvious to many people who live here. And the Great Streets Initiative suggests that these ideas are working themselves—albeit slowly—into the political mainstream in L.A.

What do you think about the People St program as far as bringing these ideas more mainstream and getting more of these projects in different neighborhoods?

I think it's a great way to acknowledge that neighborhood residents are often way ahead of policymakers when it comes to effective and practical ideas for making streets more walkable and bikeable. In Eagle Rock, for example, the walking route from my old house to the local elementary school was pretty treacherous even for older kids—it required walking along a part of Colorado where people regularly drive closer to freeway speed than boulevard speed, and where, in fact, there are car crashes all the time. Everybody in the neighborhood recognized this and talked about it, but nothing, while I lived there, was done.

This is not just a safety or convenience issue; it's a health issue and one related to economic development and ultimately to education, too. Creating a safer and more pleasant walk to that school would have helped the kids enrolled there. But it also would have drawn more families to the neighborhood with an interest in making the school better, activated the streets and sidewalks, and helped merchants. Now, thanks to the People St program—and in the case of Eagle Rock to groups like Take Back the Boulevard—there's a way for residents to turn those concerns into permanent design changes.

People St is happening, and also the Great Streets Initiative. What would you like to see in L.A. as far as some really pie-in-the-sky, attention-getting, but also valuable on a day-to-day-level improvements for walkers?

There's an interesting debate among the leaders and fans of CicLAvia about whether they ought to have an event on a free-way. So far I've really liked the consistency of CicLAvia and its focus on the streets we already have, as opposed to the more utopian (or at least politically fraught) project of shutting down a freeway for a day. But a CicLAvia that closed down the 10—or that combined boulevards and freeways, or let people walk from downtown, say, up the 110 and into Dodger Stadium—would definitely get tons of press coverage, just as Arroyo Fest did in 2003 [when the city opened part of the 110 freeway to cyclists]. Even better would be an effort to permanently close down an elevated freeway spur—like the tail end of the 2, as it runs through Elysian Valley and dumps out onto Glendale Blvd—and turn it into a park, so that we could have a version of CicLAvia every day.

I think closing a freeway spur would be the most symbolic move, even more symbolic than a one-day street closure. And think of the press we'd get for that!

You've mentioned CicLAvia a lot. What about your own connection to walking, biking and taking transit in L.A.? Did you have an epiphany that helped you realize you needed to focus on streets as much as buildings?

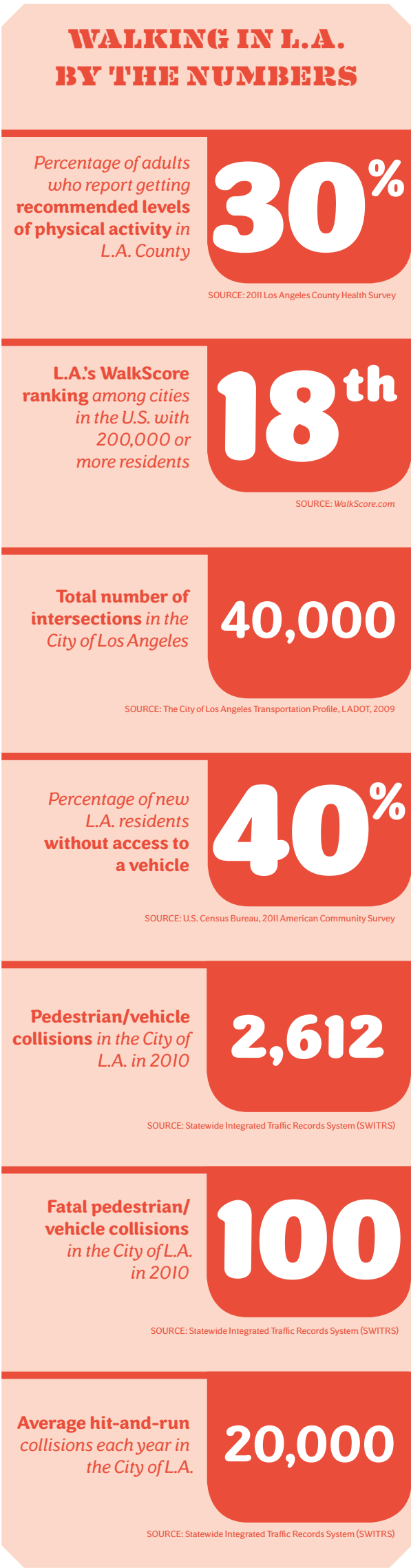
I think CicLAvia, the first time you try it, is an epiphany for almost everybody—it feels like L.A. at its friendliest, most connected, most diverse and most optimistic. For me, working on the boulevards series really made clear not only how different L.A.'s future might be but also how similar, in certain ways, it could turn out to be to L.A.'s pre-war past. After all, all of the things we're working so hard to develop now—a comprehensive mass-transit system, better models for multifamily residential architecture, sidewalks crowded with pedestrians—are also things we once had and gave up (or lost sight of). So high-speed rail and apps that tell you when the next bus is coming are important—but so is looking again at the streetcar network or Irving Gill's apartment projects or the bungalow courts in Pasadena.

I love the idea of looking back to look forward, and I definitely think that's L.A.'s greatest strength. That's why my favorite thing to show people are the public staircases, which exist as these relics of that era—proof that we once all walked, up really big hills!, to get places in L.A. Any final thoughts?

Only that Los Angeles ought to be one of the great walking and biking cities in the world. If you think about it in terms of climate, topography, vegetation, and how our network of boulevards lays down this kind of supergrid atop the basin, we have some major advantages in terms of urban walkability. Of course, we have a daunting legacy of car culture to deal with, and the battery of policy assumptions that come with it in terms of how we design our streets. But we sometimes overlook the remarkable potential of this city along these lines.



Walkers by **Brian Rea**, an illustrator based in L.A.— brianrea.com



1885 Charles Lummis arrives in Los Angeles after walking 3,507 miles from Ohio. Lummis was an L.A. booster, publisher, Indian-rights advocate, preservationist, writer, museum founder, womanizer, and all-around colorful rogue. In his book *Tramp Across the Continent*, Lummis chronicles his walking adventures as a “...diary of a man who got outside the fences of civilization and was glad of it. It is the simple story of joy on legs.”

1888 Six-Day Walking Matches are held in Hazard's Pavilion. These were popular events across the country as part of the endurance sport of “pedestrianism,” where competitors would walk around a track for six days at a time (taking Sunday off, of course). Competitive walking returns to Los Angeles during the 1932 and 1984 Summer Olympics—as speed walking.

1895 The *Los Angeles Times* publishes a style story entitled “Fads in Walking Sticks,” along with the proper walking fashion of the day.

1896 Enterprising college students Louis Beers and Ural Hughes leave Los Angeles with signs that read “Beers & Hughes—We are walking and working our way to and through Berkeley University. What can we do for you.”

1904 A survey finds that Los Angeles has the highest per capita mortality rate for deaths attributable to street railway accidents of any major U.S. city.



Photos of street vendors and pedestrians by Rudy Espinoza



Street Vendors Can Help Make Great Streets

by Rudy Espinoza

Street vending is illegal in Los Angeles. This surprising fact is something that 40 L.A. organizations hope to change this year, thanks to a motion currently making its way through City Council.

Legalizing street vending will create thousands of jobs and bring healthier food into low-income food deserts through a proposed incentive program. It's about time that we embrace the thousands of vendors who are operating in the informal economy, many of them women who are chronically unemployed and in desperate need of income to support their families. They are not criminals; they are entrepreneurs.

But street vendors offer us more than just their food, they offer an example of how creativity and a people-centered approach to entrepreneurship can make L.A.'s streets safer and more pedestrian-friendly. Street vendors contribute to great streets.

This has been heard time and time again in town halls that the Los Angeles Street Vendor Campaign hosted last year across the city to inform our advocacy efforts. Speaking with over 600 people, we learned that street vendors are ambassadors of the sidewalk. Vendors are trusted members of communities, innovators in how to use the public right-of-way to attract pedestrians, and purveyors of culture that makes neighborhoods truly special. It's not uncommon to see a flower vendor beautifying the street with her colorful bouquets, a taco vendor modifying a cart with wheels to increase his mobility in a neighborhood, or an ice cream vendor ringing her bell to call to customers as they walk by. To me, these things add value, and even help to slow down some of our streets so pedestrians can appreciate the small businesses that line our commercial corridors. They remind us every day that the sidewalks belong to us.

In this respect, some businesses have begun to see the value of vendors, too. Recently, a business owner who signed on

to support the Street Vendor Campaign explained that after experiencing a violent robbery at her business in South L.A., she realized that it might have been avoided if there were more pedestrians on her block. In her opinion, a street vendor could attract more pedestrians, while offering a vigilant presence around her establishment. The great urbanist Jane Jacobs described it well as "eyes on the street," which can only help to make our communities safer.

This story is only one of many that describe how vendors are working with small businesses in an attempt to attract pedestrians and make streets safer. In some cases businesses and street vendors are even partnering by selling complementary goods or sharing spaces to keep retail establishments active beyond traditional business hours.

Currently, the Los Angeles Street Vendor Campaign is monitoring the development of a cross-departmental report that will suggest how the City Council can develop a permit system for street vendors. In order for the initiative to be successful, it'll be important for all of us to get involved and recognize the role street vendors play in making our streets more vibrant, more economically viable, and more pedestrian-friendly.

Jobs. Healthy food. Safe streets. There are so many great reasons to legalize street vending in Los Angeles. But here's another surprising fact: Of the ten largest cities in the U.S., Los Angeles is the only city without a street vending permit system. It's time for us to catch up. I'm confident that we'll not only see gains in employment and food accessibility, but we'll also see the emergence of a new energy that will draw people out into the streets to enjoy Los Angeles.

Rudy Espinoza is a supporter of the Los Angeles Street Vendor Campaign. Learn more at lastreetvendorsforla.org and LURNetwork.org

Less than **5%** of the City of Los Angeles is zoned for **MIXED-USE**

Here, residences and businesses are located in the same building, creating a walkable environment where people live close to their daily needs.

SOURCE: Los Angeles Department of City Planning, What's Happening in Planning 2013

99.7% of developed land in the City of Los Angeles is subject to minimum parking requirements.

These force owners of new or remodeled buildings to include car parking spaces—a massive subsidy for driving that also makes rents less affordable and streets less walkable. The only exception: the 660 acres of the new Cornfields Arroyo Seco specific plan.

STORIES FROM THE STREETS ROLL WITH ME: A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON PEDESTRIAN TRAVEL IN L.A.

by Andy Janicki

Like many of you, I prefer getting places without driving whenever possible. There's a convenience store, a family taco stand, and a coffee shop a few blocks from my house. I live across the street from a park where I take my dog, and if I need a bus, there are two stops close by. All I need to do to get there is head down the middle of the street.

Why, you may ask, would a guy in a wheelchair brave busy Blake Street, going head-to-head with semis who seem to be on their way to Fast and Furious 18? The tacos are good, but c'mon, I'm risking my life for that al pastor!

My nice convenient neighborhood is, in many ways, a microcosm of the problems associated with pedestrian travel for people with disabilities in L.A. There's a good chance that you've actually seen people in wheelchairs or scooters on the road before. Trust me, these are not people trying to start some kind of impromptu disability rally or Critical Mass: Wheelchair Edition. They are simply pedestrians who do not have the physical ability to maneuver through the labyrinth of cracks, holes, and other obstacles that litter city sidewalks.

Although incredible progress has been made in the realm of public access since the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law in 1990, there is no regulatory body roaming around ensuring that standards are being upheld. That being said, sidewalks that were completely accessible via wheelchair when the concrete was poured in the 90s may today look like a demolition crew just took a lunch break.

Many sidewalks contain sections at outrageous angles that have made me question just how close I am to the San Andreas Fault. Cracks and holes are more prevalent than cigarette butts and occasionally there are entire chunks of

concrete missing or pulverized. Signposts are sometimes placed in the middle of the sidewalk, making it impassable for wheelchair users. Most repairs to these damages are quick-fix bandaids that don't last long. "I know! Just throw down some asphalt!" I've encountered plenty of areas such as these that force me to head back to the corner and take the street to get around.

When I get a wild hair to head out and take on the mighty beast that is the L.A. sidewalks, it's even more frustrating when I can't even reach them. There are still corners at plenty of intersections that don't even have curb cuts. When a corner actually has one, it's a small miracle when the slope complies with federal standards. I've struggled up plenty of steep ramps like this throughout the city and simply avoided those that I knew would tip me over if I so much as attempted it.

These are just a handful of the reasons why people in wheelchairs take to the streets in Los Angeles. And this is a huge population. Data from Metro shows that there are over 85,000 wheelchair boardings on buses alone each month, far more than in New York City's entire public transportation network (which, I should add, has seven times the overall ridership). While these are boardings, not separate individuals, the point is clear: the number of wheelchair users in L.A. is huge and they get out in the community.

But these aren't the only pedestrians who rely on quality sidewalks. Grandma sure as hell isn't going to get too far with her walker in conditions like these. Moms who didn't think they'd need a Jeep-brand all-terrain shock-absorbing stroller with three inch wide knobby tires to get their babies around are out of luck, too. Oh, and let's not also forget folks

who are blind. Imagine the frustration of relying on a white cane for sight when every other section of concrete feels similar to the yellow safety bumps found on new curb cuts.

I should mention also that I use a pretty compact manual wheelchair. Anyone who needs a powerchair or scooter to get around really has it rough because their devices are larger, further complicating navigation through the rubble. These devices are also way heavier, so if someone gets caught up on something they may be stuck there until the rescue team arrives. One advantage that these folks have over me, however, is more speed on the road!

Ultimately, all of these factors go beyond difficulties and limitations for pedestrian travel in a wheelchair. This is an overall public safety concern for everyone walking down the sidewalk who isn't carefully analyzing their next step. And it's an issue that needs serious consideration.

So what's the solution? The second largest concern from voters during the mayoral campaign last year was the condition of roads in the city—but what about the sidewalks? Clearly we favor the automobile in Los Angeles. But as more of us find our footing and wander about to enjoy this fair city and its beautiful climate, we should demand a more comprehensive approach to the design of our transportation network. That is, one that takes into consideration all users.

And for anyone out there who has yet to see the light, I offer this invitation: I can't walk a mile in your shoes, but any time you want to take a spin in my wheelchair you can—just bring a helmet.

Andy Janicki is an ADA Compliance Analyst with Los Angeles Metro's Civil Rights Department

1905 A campaign led by John Randolph Haynes advocates for the installation of fenders on railway cars to prevent pedestrian deaths. The fenders functioned as a basket, scooping people out of harm's way. When the City Council declined to review this fender ordinance, the campaigners circulated petitions in downtown and set up tables with large street signs that read "Stop Needless Slaughter." By 1909, all interurban cars are equipped with life-saving fenders.

1906 Architects and brothers Greene and Greene design a pedestrian bridge that connects the Oaklawn neighborhood to the busy Pasadena street Fair Oaks Avenue. The Oaklawn Bridge remains the only bridge Greene and Greene designed.

1910 One month before his 72nd birthday, Edward Payson Weston begins his walk from Los Angeles to New York, starting in Santa Monica on February 1. Weston arrives in New York on May 2, 1910 and speaks on the steps of City Hall, cheered on by a crowd of 20,000. According to a 1910 souvenir program, "the plucky pedestrian" chose to start his cross-country walk in Los Angeles "because of the many pleasant memories he cherishes of its enterprising and public-spirited-citizens."

1911 The Strollers, a walking club for young women, walks from Los Angeles to Santa Barbara. The families of The Strollers were initially hesitant to let their young ladies "tramp" about the Southern California countryside but acquiesced once they noted "after an all day's tramp they seemed to feel refreshed and invigorated," according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

1923 F.M. Smith submits a plan to the Los Angeles Traffic Commission for underground pedestrian tunnels at street intersections in the city's congested downtown, as a means of eliminating accidents and speeding up street railway, vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

1924 A pedestrian tunnel is built under Sunset Boulevard so that the children of Micheltorena Street School can cross the street safely. "The tunnel has been built and is used by the children both for school attendance and bringing a milk from the neighborhood grocery," reports the *Los Angeles Times*. The city builds about 221 pedestrian tunnels but eventually seals up most of them due to vandalism. In 2013, one pedestrian tunnel in Cypress Park is reopened as an art space.

RE-ZONING LOS ANGELES

Can we legalize a walkable city?

by Mark Vallianatos

Do you ever wonder why different neighborhoods and streets in Los Angeles look the way they do—and why some places seem to be more walkable than others? The history of how our land was developed includes economic demand, neighborhood preferences, and transportation infrastructure. But the most direct way that we collectively influence what our communities look like—and how walkable they can be—is through government regulation of land use, especially by planning and zoning.

Zoning is a regulatory system that most local governments employ to control how land is used. As the name suggests, it divides places into different zones. Depending on what zone a piece of land is located in, there are rules that restrict what types of activities can be carried out on the lot, as well as the location, size, and shape of buildings allowed on the property. And the physical structure of these communities influences how people live and how they move about their neighborhoods.

The City of Los Angeles is facing one of the biggest changes to the way it looks and functions—it is fundamentally updating its zoning code for the first time since 1946. The 1946 code helped shape a postwar city of single-family subdivisions with a growing reliance on cars. Revised zoning rules can hopefully strengthen the ways that a 21st century Los Angeles is transforming and help residents build a city where walking is a convenient and safe way to travel. Zoning is potentially our most powerful tool to create a more walkable Los Angeles.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ZONING IN L.A.: Los Angeles at the beginning of the 20th century was just beginning its explosive growth. Residential areas were rubbing up against both farms and burgeoning industrial areas. People complained about the smells and sights of slaughterhouses, saloons, laundries, brickyards, and a host of other perceived negative land uses. The L.A. City Council created special districts to exclude certain economic activities from parts of the city. In 1909, L.A. consolidated many of these protected districts into an ordinance dividing the city into industrial areas and exclusively residential districts. This ordinance is considered to be the nation’s first general, citywide zoning law.

In the early 1920s, Los Angeles adopted a more comprehensive zoning code dividing the city into five zones: single-family residential, multi-family residential, businesses, light industry, and heavy industry. With more and more residents driving, automobile interests and public officials began studying traffic. To reduce reliance on street parking, which was creating traffic congestion, in 1930 Los Angeles began requiring new businesses and multi-family housing projects to include on-site parking. In 1946, these minimum parking requirements were expanded to include single-family houses.

HOW ZONING IN L.A. WORKS: In contemporary Los Angeles, zoning is integrated into the City’s broader urban planning framework. Los Angeles has had a General Plan since 1974 that is meant to provide the overall vision and policy guidance for the urban form and future development of the city. Neighborhood plans give additional guidance and contain zoning maps of every property. L.A.’s two 1909 zones and five 1921 zones have expanded to more than 45 zones today, including 29 different residential zoning designations.

In the City of Los Angeles,
there are **4600 miles**
of sidewalks in disrepair

which would cost
\$1.5 billion to repair

SOURCE: Los Angeles Bureau of Street Services

There are **2,500**
trip and fall lawsuits
in the City of L.A. each year

SOURCE: Los Angeles Bureau of Street Services

1925 Los Angeles enacts its first jaywalking ordinance, allowing the Los Angeles Police Department to fine jaywalkers. The ordinance against jaywalking is part of a more comprehensive traffic code orchestrated by Miller McClintock, the first person in the country to earn his Ph.D in traffic studies. McClintock is brought to Los Angeles by Paul Hoffman, president of the Traffic Commission. In a 1924 talk at the Biltmore Hotel, McClintock says, "Automobile drivers have, or should have, certain rights which pedestrians should be bound to respect."

1932 The Music Box film is released, starring the comedy duo of Laurel and Hardy and a Silver Lake staircase. In the film, the comedians maneuver a heavy piano up the 131-step stairway, which is later named the Music Box Steps. There are over 300 public stairways in Los Angeles, many of which were built to connect neighborhoods with the Red Car trolleys.

The zoning code is the legal “key” to these maps and properties. It contains rules for what uses and activities may be conducted in each zone when a new building is constructed (and often when an existing building is converted to a new use). For example, in many multi-family residential zones, it is illegal to locate a coffee shop on the ground floor of an apartment building, even if the residents and people living nearby might enjoy being able to walk there to get a cup of coffee in the morning. Height zones and floor-area ratios control the size of buildings; while setbacks (the required distance a building is “set back” from the street) influence where on a lot a buildings may be located. The combination of size and setback requirements influence the architecture and density of different parts of Los Angeles.

Property owners can seek variances which allow them to become exempt from certain zoning standards. This is a time-consuming and expensive process, but many larger buildings could not legally be built without receiving multiple variances. The politics of zoning has been heated in recent decades. Opponents of new development often use the zoning approval process or environmental review process to seek, stop or alter proposed buildings.

LEGALIZING A WALKABLE CITY: Think of a place in Los Angeles that you like to walk. Many of the places in L.A. that attract pedestrians are older commercial areas. These districts tend to share a few common features. They have buildings that come right up to the sidewalk rather than being surrounded by parking. They are located close to residences or even have apartments above shops. And, unfortunately, because of zoning rules, they are very difficult to legally build today.

Zoning contributes to making Los Angeles a challenging place to walk. The main way that it harms walking is by separating different land uses, increasing distances and making it more difficult to walk to the amenities we need on a daily basis. In his book *Walkable City*, Jeff Speck describes a “General Theory of Walkability” that holds that people will walk more if it is useful,

safe, comfortable, and interesting—four things that can be improved by better zoning.

The revision of L.A.’s zoning code and ongoing updates of community plans create opportunities to remove obstacles to walking and thereby make Los Angeles a more healthy, sustainable, and socially connected city. Here are three ways to rezone a more walkable L.A.:

Increasing mixed-use zoning. Currently less than five percent of the city is zoned to allow residential and commercial activities to coexist on one property. Allowing more types of uses in many of the city’s zoning categories, or consolidating separate zones into a smaller number of mixed use zones, would help boost walking. Many studies indicate that the presence of a variety of amenities close to where people live is one of the strongest predictors of rates of walking.

Eliminating or reducing mandatory parking requirements. Mandatory minimum parking requirements encourage driving, make rents less affordable, make our surroundings uglier and more dangerous, and increase the temperature of Los Angeles in an era of climate change. These requirements should be eliminated in as many parts of the City as possible, following the lead of the new Cornfields Arroyo Seco Specific Plan.

Shaping pedestrian-friendly buildings and streets. Zoning rules can require that buildings interface with sidewalks and streets in a manner that improves the quality of the walking experience. Zoning can bring shops up to lot line next to the sidewalk, encourage retail and windows at ground level, and move curb cuts or parking spaces next to alleys rather than main streets.

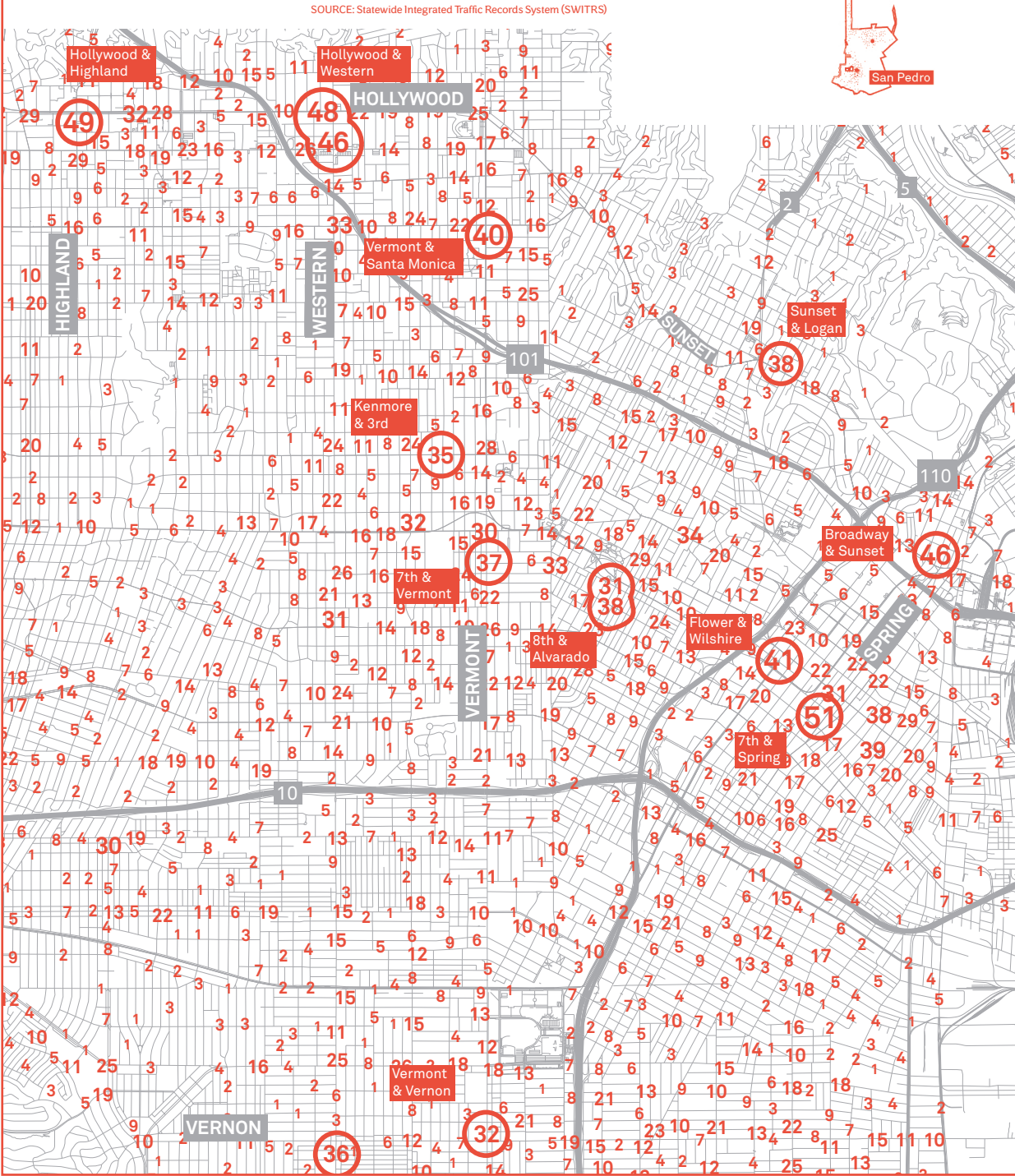
Mark Vallianatos is a Los Angeles Walks steering committee member and policy director at Occidental College’s Urban and Environmental Policy Institute. You can read more about the updates to L.A.’s zoning code, and find out how you can get involved, at recode.la

Mapping L.A.’s Pedestrian Collisions

The City of Los Angeles recorded over **19,000** pedestrian-vehicle collisions between 2003 and 2009. That’s an average of **2,700 per year.**

These maps show the frequency of these collisions at each intersection. At right, you see the citywide map, with clusters of high collisions in downtown, around LAX, and in the San Fernando Valley.

The map below shows a closer view of central Los Angeles. The numbers at the intersections represent the average number of people hit by vehicles at that location each year.



Map by Rosten Woo, a designer, writer, and educator – wehavenoart.net



Comic by **Dylan C. Lathrop**, graphic designer and illustrator – unequal-design.com

5 Truths About the Economic Impact of Walking

Developer Yuval Bar-Zemer discusses five ways he's seeing pedestrian improvements contribute to a more financially viable L.A. As told to Los Angeles Walks steering committee member Daveed Kapoor

We know walking is good for our communities and good for our health. But how does designing for walking help businesses—and the city—improve their bottom lines? As founder of Linear City Development, Yuval Bar-Zemer has led the transformation of several neighborhoods by paying special attention to pedestrian life. Over lunch at Urban Radish, a new Arts District grocery store developed by Linear City, Bar-Zemer described five ways he's seen walking boost L.A.'s economy.

DENSITY IS CHANGING THE WAY ANGELENOS SPEND MONEY. From an urban planning perspective, we have to think of what level of density will create an environment in which we don't have to rely on the car for basic life functions. Can we get your job close enough to your home? Can we get your kid's school close enough? Can we get your three favorite restaurants? Can we get your grocery store? If you manage to do that, then the option of walking is no longer a "pioneering, visionary" type thing, but rather becomes the decision that actually makes the most sense. You get your exercise and you get where you need to go by foot. We built the Urban Radish grocery store around this idea. If you live nearby and you want to come and do your shopping here, it sounds reasonable that you will walk a couple of blocks, and you can do it three times a week and leave your car in your garage.

GOOD WALKABILITY PROVIDES AN ECONOMIC BOOST TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD. Once you manage to change people's priorities, and the preferred mode of transportation becomes cycling and walking, that means that the available radius for amenities shrinks dramatically. This dynamic enforces the local businesses that can rely on the support of the immediate neighbors to patronize their business, as opposed to a large mall development, requiring everyone to drive far away on a freeway and park in a big parking lot. You are localizing commerce. You benefit from tax revenues, localized sales tax, and then all the services. You can show the community that you are supporting local business by making walking a priority.

CAR-SHARING HELPS ALLEVIATE FINANCIAL BURDEN FOR RESIDENTS. Linear City installed the largest public electric vehicle-charging facility in the city, and placed two electric vehicles that operate as a community car-share program. Literally you can live in this neighborhood without the need to own a car. If you need one, you just go online and make a reservation and you have a car for the day. I think this is going to be part of the future: The flexibility of not owning a car but still using it to address your needs—doing some errands or visiting a friend—makes a lot of economic sense and will enhance the choice of walking. I believe that many people would be happy to get rid of their car or the \$400 to \$500 cost per month associated with owning a car as long as they have most of what they need in a walking distance and the availability of a car when they need it.

CUTTING BACK ON PARKING CAN SAVE EVERYONE MONEY. When developing a property, a developer has to figure out how much parking is needed as part of marketability: Does one need one space per unit or two? How does one allocate spaces between commercial and residential uses? Then there is the financial aspect, it can cost \$25,000 just to build a parking spot. If you create a project in an environment where the emphasis is on walking rather than driving, and you can solve the need for each person to have his own car, that would result in a lower parking count which make the project more cost-effective. If a developer decides to break the trend

and design a project where only one parking space is available to every three units by assuming that most residents will use walking or cycling and car-sharing, the developer will change the current planning paradigm. If successful, many will follow this model.

IF L.A. PRIORITIZED WALKING, WE'D ALL BE RICHER FOR IT. The City is not making money off the car industry. Nobody pays the City to drive on its streets. It would be interesting to see what the Public Works street division is spending on maintenance on a regular basis. How many bonds were raised over the last 50 years to build streets, freeways, highways, and so on, and really, who takes on the burden of this tax? Like the way most individual drivers don't understand the cost of owning a car, the City of Los Angeles does not understand the cost of prioritizing the car as the primary mode of transportation. The cost of infrastructure for pedestrians is one-tenth the cost of car infrastructure. The economic benefit is obvious. Policymakers should adopt a radical shift and bring cycling and walking to the top priority.

How to Make Walking Better in Your Neighborhood

311 IS A WALKER'S BEST FRIEND

While Los Angeles Walks continues to push for large-scale changes across the City, we need you to help make sure the City is aware of needed repairs and improvements in your neighborhood. The City of L.A. has launched 311—a one-stop customer service program where residents can let the City know what they need, and we want to make sure better walking infrastructure is a top issue.

To get started, you can dial "311" on your phone or go to lacity.org/myLA311. If you have a smartphone, you can download the MyLA311 app.

So, what walking improvements can you request with 311?

CURB RAMPS: If you see an intersection crossing that doesn't have a curb ramp, be sure to include not only the intersection but which corner specifically.

UNEVEN PAVEMENT: If there is a broken sidewalk or some other defect that could cause someone to trip, be sure to note the nearest address.

BLOCKED SIDEWALKS: If there is garbage or a plant that is making walking on the sidewalk difficult, you can report the offending address to 311.

CROSSWALK REPAIRS AND INSTALLATIONS: If crosswalk paint is faded (or was never painted), snap a photo to make your report more clear.

SIGNAL TIMING: Federal law require all traffic lights to have a pedestrian countdown that is white for at least three seconds, and then flashes red for at least one second for every four feet of street width. If the timing seems too quick, you can report it.

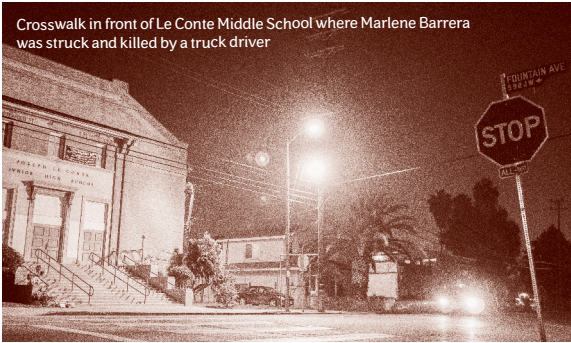
BROKEN STREETLIGHTS: If you notice a damaged or missing streetlight, you can easily request a repair.

To get your issue prioritized higher, identify these repairs as a "hazard." Once the city is made aware of a dangerous condition, there is a greater legal urgency to fix it if it can help them avoid lawsuits. So, by mentioning that it is a hazard, you can expedite your request. While the City might not act upon your requests immediately, it's important to show the demand for better walking conditions by making as many requests as we can. Thanks for your help!

Marc Caswell is a pedestrian advocate and transportation policy expert. Download 311 at lacity.org/myLA311

STORIES FROM THE STREETS REMEMBERING MY COUSIN MARLENE

by Andy Martinez



On Valentine's Day, when people normally spend time with their loved ones, I received the terrible news that my cousin Marlene Barrera was killed by a driver in a crosswalk at the intersection of Bronson and Fountain across from Le Conte Middle School. As my cousin and her nine-year-old daughter walked into the crosswalk, the driver of the big rig truck sped through a stop sign into the intersection. Her maternal instincts immediately came into play, and she pushed her daughter out of the way to protect her from the oncoming truck.

The dangerous intersection now serves as a memorial site where many of the parents' biggest fears came to reality. Right now, the daughter is experiencing intense trauma from witnessing the death of her mother. It has impacted her to the point where she can hardly speak. She directs the very few words she does manage to say to her grandmother: "When is Mom coming back?"

Emotionally, it has taken a toll on me, and I feel regret for not having seen her as much during the last few years. My extended family, including Marlene and I, lived together in the early 90s in MacArthur Park after they had recently immigrated to the U.S. Some of my earliest and fondest memories are playing with her when I was four years old.

The intersection currently lacks a traffic light or significant safety design. Parents had been pleading with the City of Los Angeles for years to get a crossing guard but the City claimed there weren't sufficient financial resources. Parents became discouraged after such a minimal response and disappointed that their families' safety wasn't considered a priority. Parents of Le Conte students I have spoken to after the tragedy now refuse to let their children walk by themselves to school because of the fatal collision.

Last year, as an active board member with Multicultural Communities for Mobility, an organization dedicated to educating and empowering low-income cyclists, pedestrian, and transit users, I spearheaded several pedestrian and bicycle safety workshops throughout L.A. County. Only five months ago, I planned a pedestrian safety workshop right here in Hollywood.

This is why I feel ever more determined to seek justice for low-income pedestrians. We have met with Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell's office and are working to both rectify the intersection and look at citywide legislation to improve safety for pedestrians.

Andy Martinez is on the board of Multicultural Communities for Mobility, which you can find at multicultimobility.org

1950 Construction begins on Lakewood Center, Southern California's first open-air shopping mall. Car-centric malls and their sprawling parking lots begin to dominate the city's landscape. Yet L.A. architect Victor Gruen—the country's premiere mall designer—argued that "while the demands imposed by the car were of great importance in planning retail development, the needs of people remained paramount... No automobile—not even the elegant Cadillac—ever bought a thing."

1951 "The Pedestrian," a short story by L.A. resident Ray Bradbury, is published in the August 7, 1951 issue of *The Reporter*. In an interview, Bradbury reveals that the inspiration for the story came when he was walking on Wilshire Boulevard and was questioned by a policeman. The police officer told him to stop walking and go home. Bradbury supposedly said, "Yes, sir, I'll never walk again."

1960 Hollywood Walk of Fame is dedicated, a piece of Hollywood history best viewed by walking. The idea originated in 1953 when E. M. Stuart, of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, proposed the Walk as a means to "maintain the glory of a community whose name means glamour and excitement in the four corners of the world." According to a 2003 report, over 10 million tourists walk over this Hollywood history every year. Other communities followed this example with their own Walks of Fame —Echo Park's Avenue of the Athletes, San Pedro's Sportswalk and Exposition Park's Medical Walk of Fame.

1968 Students from East L.A. high schools collectively stage a walkout to protest the poor quality of their education. Angelenos have always walked in protest, from the women who walked to support suffrage to Disney cartoonists who went on strike in 1941.

1970 Gypsy Boots, a beloved eccentric advocate for healthy living, holds his annual birthday hike from Fern Dell to Mt. Hollywood to Griffith Park. When he isn't walking, hiking, or running, Boots is seen cheering on the Rams, Raiders, Dodgers, and Angels with his much-younger "Nature Girls." In 1986, the *Los Angeles Times* writes "Boots regards himself as a 'walking symbol of freedom . . . like one big American flag walking all over.'"

PEOPLE ST INVITES COMMUNITIES TO REIMAGINE STREETS ACROSS L.A.

by Valerie Watson



photo by Jim Simmons



photo by Jim Simmons



photo courtesy of LADOT

HAVE ANOTHER ISSUE ON YOUR STREET OR IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

Sometimes there are street design or operational issues that aren't quite the right fit for a People St project.

You can visit myladot.lacity.org, our new service request and tracking system, to report things like knocked-over stop signs, malfunctioning signals, or dangerous crossings in your neighborhood.

Bring plazas, parklets, and bicycle corrals to life in your neighborhood through this new citywide program

Are you interested in ways to make your neighborhood better for people walking, bicycling and taking transit? Is the street you spend time on challenged by narrow sidewalks, fast-moving vehicles, or a lack of nice places to linger, meet a friend, read a book, check your email, have a coffee, sit with your charming canine companion, or people watch?

We ultimately want to bring permanent physical changes to our streets that address mobility, quality of life and public space accessibility issues within our communities. Typically, we think about our local government and elected officials initiating big projects to create public space opportunities, like neighborhood parks with grass and trees, or streetscape plans and road diets with physical infrastructure. However, these types of projects can sometimes take years—even decades—to come to fruition. The funding required is nothing to sneeze at, involving hundreds of thousands, sometimes millions, of dollars. At the same time, neighbors don't always agree on improvements like sidewalk bump-outs or cycletracks for bike riders. Pouring concrete is permanent, and we all know people sometimes don't like change.

Does the labyrinth of project process, responsibility, and capital investment make your head spin? What if there was a way to repurpose little slices of the streets in your neighborhood for space that people can enjoy quickly, and for a fraction of the cost? How can you start bigger conversations on urban design in a non-threatening way and, at the same time, demonstrate the benefits of investing in infrastructure to make it better for people moving around by foot or bicycle? Do you want to see something happen?

LET'S TAKE A WALK DOWN PEOPLE ST!

Communities can now easily transform underused areas of L.A.'s largest public asset—our 7,500 miles of city streets—into active, vibrant, and accessible public space with People St, a program of the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT). Eligible community partners can apply for approval to install three innovative types of projects: plazas, parklets, and bicycle corrals.

These temporary project types have one thing in common: they are situated below the curb. Unlike repurposing a vacant lot into a park, or planting trees along a sidewalk—both examples of above-the-curb improvements—People St projects reallocate pieces of the roadbed, where you step down from the sidewalk, as their home:

- **PLAZAS** are installed in underused or redundant road space by blocking off a segment of street with heavy planters and colorized or textured surface treatments.

- **PARKLETS** and **BICYCLE CORRALS** are installed in on-street or metered parking spaces.

- **ALL THREE PEOPLE ST PROJECT TYPES** transform below-the-curb roadbed into spaces for people to enjoy.

A PROGRAM BASED IN PARTNERSHIPS

People St is all about facilitating partnerships between the community and the City of Los Angeles. Projects initiated by communities can be brought to life by working through People St and community partners are required to be active players in building neighborhood support for a project. They are responsible for identifying an appropriate site, conducting outreach, raising funds required for materials and furnishings, installing project elements, and providing and funding long-term management, maintenance, and operations of the project.

WAIT, TEMPORARY? WHY SPEND MONEY IF THESE ARE TEMPORARY?

The projects are permitted through a one-year agreement between approved community partners and LADOT, with the option to renew the agreement annually. We hope that community support will be so strong that residents will work with the city and local elected officials to make the temporary transformations permanent or seek future capital-intensive, corridor-level urban design improvements. You can think of People St projects as quick "step one" interventions for speeding up the more permanent projects that take lots of work to achieve.

By physically and contextually demonstrating the benefits of capturing street space for public space, these projects can, in turn, attract, expedite and foster future investment in infrastructure that better provides for walking, bicycling, and taking transit. Channeling the smarts of the business community is the ROI, or return on investment, for a community partner in installing a People St plaza, parklet or bicycle corral.

HOW DO THESE PROJECTS HAPPEN SO QUICKLY?

We've heard over and over that getting projects on the ground quickly is paramount to shifting the balance on our streets. To keep the "application-to-installation" cycle to under one year in duration, each People St project type offers a pre-approved "kit of parts" of design elements that contains packaged, required configurations from which to choose. The specifications provided in these documents simplify the process, removing the need for community partners to reinvent the wheel each time a project is considered.

With People St, LADOT aims to demystify city processes, rules, and requirements in order to make our government more responsive to residents and businesses. In turn, the city and its partners can work together to improve the quality of life in Los Angeles quickly and efficiently, starting with People St.

SOUNDS GREAT! HOW DO I START?

People St offers an application-based process for community partners to receive approval to install a plaza, parklet, or bicycle corral. Through the website, potential community partners can access an online-application portal and the materials required for the application process, including downloadable PDF application manuals and the Kit of Parts documents.

Each year, LADOT opens an application window, a time during which community partners can submit an initial project proposal. The next application window opens in October of 2014.

Using a set of established criteria to assess each proposal, LADOT selects a limited number of applications with which to move forward. Considerations for proposal selection include: organizational capacity, site location, site context, community support, and access needs for public spaces. Those selected then work closely with LADOT to complete the process of bringing a project to life.

SEE YOU ON PEOPLE ST!

We look forward to working with groups across the City of Los Angeles to reimagine our streets and bring projects to life!

Valerie Watson is the Assistant Pedestrian Coordinator for the City of Los Angeles. For more information on People St visit peoplest.lacity.org or e-mail peoplest@lacity.org

LOS ANGELES PEDESTRIAN BILL OF RIGHTS, 1987

My, how far L.A. walkers have come—or have we? This pedestrian bill of rights was filed by the City Council in 1987. 27 years later, we're still fighting for many of these basic pedestrian rights.

Los Angeles City Council file Number 87-2261, dated December 18th, 1987

MOVE that Council adopts the following statements as the "pedestrian Bill of Rights" for Los Angeles

The People of Los Angeles have the right to:

1. Safe roads and safe places to cross the street
2. Pedestrian-oriented building facades, trees, flower stands, trash cans, awnings, etc.
3. Safe and comfortable bus stops and public transit stations
4. Appealing use of landscaping and available open space
5. Full notification of all street widening that impinge on public open space and sidewalks
6. Access to streets and buildings for disabled people
7. Clean surroundings, requiring removal of graffiti and advertisements from public property
8. Have needs of pedestrians considered as heavily as the needs of drivers
9. Public works of Art

FURTHER MOVE that City departments use this pedestrian Bill of rights of Way to evaluate the needs in future decisions

Los Angeles City Council file Number 87-2261 S4, dated December 18th, 1987

1978

A pedestrian bridge over Flower Street opens in downtown, connecting what is now the Westin Bonaventure and Citigroup Center. Funded primarily by the Community Redevelopment Agency, this pedestrian bridge is the first in the CRA's system of "overcrossings linking superblocks in the downtown Bunker Hill urban renewal project." fifteen other pedestrian bridges are erected in the Bunker Hill renewal area.

1982

The band Missing Persons releases the song "Walking in L.A." with its unforgettable lyric "nobody walks in L.A." In a 2012 interview with *Studio 360*, the songwriter, Terry Bozzio, says that the song's refrain was inspired by New York comedian David Brenner, who would often make jokes about people not walking in L.A. on the *Tonight Show*.

1994

The Bus Riders Union is established to fight racial discrimination on public transportation. In 1996, the Bus Riders Union, along with Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates, wins a landmark civil rights lawsuit against the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, alleging that LACMTA is using federal funds for public transit in a discriminatory manner.

1996

In order to encourage development downtown, the City founds the non-profit Angels Walk LA to bring attention to Los Angeles' history, architecture and public art, and encourage the use of public transit. Angels Walk LA develop its first historic urban walking trails in the Bunker Hill and Historic Core Districts. Also in the 1990s, the Los Angeles Conservancy begins walking tours of Los Angeles.

1998

Morphosis Architects designs a pedestrian bridge to cross over the I01 freeway downtown. Featured in the *Never Built: Los Angeles* exhibit, the pedestrian bridge hoped to bridge "the civic fissure created in Los Angeles' downtown by the construction of the I01 Freeway some fifty years ago by filling it with an iconic civic space." 25 years later, Park I01 is proposed, to knit together the same area with a freeway cap park.

2000

Librarian Tom Owens passes away, considered to be a "Walking Encyclopedia," literally and figuratively. Before Metro's Red Line opened in 1993, Owens walked more than 10 miles from Hollywood to the Central Library.

Confessions of a Ped

by DJ Waldie

PLACE. The other day while walking to mass, I crossed the cement apron that leads out of the alley behind the houses on Clark Avenue. I’ve crossed the alley from the time I was a boy and through the 32 years I walked to work following my father’s death.

But this time, a sheet of water—probably leaking from a back-yard hose—spilled across the concrete.

For the first time, I noticed that inscribed in the concrete were names, but almost worn smooth. Children had written awkwardly, haphazardly in the wet concrete but with respect for each other. Their names didn’t overlap.

The loose water had brought out the faint letters.

I’m not inattentive. The qualities of the everyday interest me. Yet here were persistent marks of lives that had neighbored mine for years and which I had never seen, would never have seen except for the contingencies of that moment.

I stopped.

Messing with the wet concrete of a new sidewalk is a trope of suburban comedy—Dennis the Menace meets exasperated workman. In the innocence of that kind of comedy is the expectation that every mistake will be smoothed back.

The route that takes me across the alley and down Clark Avenue hardly ever varies (part of my mildly obsessive-compulsive personality). The route is the same, but the walk is always different, and not just because the conditions of light and air and ambient sound are various. In the midst of the many things that persist are as many things that I see for the first and last time.

Like the pattern this morning of the leaves on the birch tree that leans over the sidewalk. Like the shining tracks of snails gone in an hour. Like the bloomed-out roses behind the chain-link fence that will linger, with subtle differences, for another day or two.

The names of the children have been there for decades in the concrete in front of the alley. Their names will be there until some upheaval bulldozes away my neighborhood. I may never see the names again (although I know that they’re there now).

I used to think that we sought permanence in marks like the children’s names. I think now that what we get is provisional, despite our intentions. Enough stays the same on my walk to bolster my illusions about my place. Enough changes to question those illusions.

Walkers have a better appreciation of this wonder. Walkers see ordinary (even humble) vistas opening at a pace that lets contemplation occur unbidden. You can be woefully distracted by daydreams or sorrow while walking a suburban sidewalk, but then a birdcall, the rattle of the wind in the leafless trees, or the sight again of some pattern will momentarily lighten the darkness of self-absorption. And a sense of place is made.

TIME. Wallace Stevens (1879-1955) walked to work. He lived in Hartford, Connecticut where he was a corporate executive for the Hartford Accident & Indemnity Company. A fellow executive there recalled that Stevens was “respected, perhaps a little bit feared.”

Stevens never learned to drive. He walked from his white, two-story house at 118 Westerly Terrace to his office each workday, turning down offers of a lift from other men driving to work. It was a substantial walk of nearly two-and-a-half miles each way, most of it on a long, straight section of Asylum Street.

Stevens walked as he murmured to himself in rhythms and rhymes. Mornings, he would write down what he had composed before he turned to work at his office, writing down lines about a “Man with the Blue Guitar,” the “Disillusionment of Ten O’Clock,” “The Emperor of Ice-Cream,” and “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird.”

Stevens was a successful businessman, an unhappy husband, and a poet who won the Pulitzer Prize in the last year of his life. He thought that having an everyday sort of career was important to his art. Stevens also thought that walking was a source of his poems.

His walking was paced to make time for a foot of verse. Work and walking made Stevens a writer. They made me one, too.

FOLDED. The rain began about 7:15 this morning. The light in my bedroom changed suddenly from yellow to gray-green, and the aluminum awnings over the front windows began to ping with the first drops. As the rain settled in, the awnings rattled steadily, like someone shaking dice in a metal box.

When I got up, I got out my raincoat and umbrella.

It’s a folding umbrella, but not one of those umbrellas the size of a handkerchief and only good for a trip from the nearest parking place to the nearest door until it’s forgotten under the driver’s seat of the car. I have a hiker’s umbrella, big enough to walk under and sturdy enough to take out into a stiff wind.

The raincoat is a Burberry, bought when I went to England in 1984. It’s missing buttons and it’s as filthy as nearly 30 un-dry-cleaned years of rain and walking could make it. It seems to have lost some of its original waterproofing. When the rain sheers at an angle, the drops run down the front onto the wetter and wetter knees of my trousers.

The rain came down hard at 7:45 a.m., backed by wind that blew from the north and then from the west. Drops splatted on the umbrella as I walked, some of the rain blowing under.

The wind was behind me when I turned the corner of my block, and the umbrella shook at little. The cars on South Street hissed by. The sounds were loud enough for a noticeable Doppler effect, the pitch higher as cars approached and falling lower as the cars moved past. The sound made even a meek Prius seem aggressive.

Some of the morning’s rain was settling into the aquifers that feed the Central Basin. I’ll drink that water one day. Some of the rain was running away into Coyote Creek and the San Gabriel River.

The rain mostly blew out while I walked, leaving a question behind: to fold or not fold my umbrella? Walking with an open umbrella when it’s not really raining seems conspicuously foolish. But what if it’s nearly not raining? Only half-foolish?

Cars drove by without their windshield wipers running. Warned, I folded my umbrella.

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IMAGINATION. I look at sidewalks a lot. Miserable eyesight makes the far away a muddle better ignored. Miserable depth perception makes the up-close a zone of potential missteps. What I’m walking on occupies me.

Like much of the everyday, the sidewalk’s plainness conceals a history, not just of its being there at all but also a history of the decisions that determined its four-foot width and its transverse stress relief grooves that give a warning clickity-clack when skateboarders overtake me.

Setting aside outliers—the Hollywood Walk of Fame, say—even the most utilitarian of sidewalks is lifted from the simply mechanical by the application of someone’s hands. Every bit of the built landscape in my constricted field of view has been given shape by an aesthetic choice.

None of these ordinary things is beautiful. But each of them is marked. As I go on my way, monuments of the imagination are at my feet.



D.J. Waldie is the author of *Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir* and *Where We Are Now: Notes from Los Angeles* among other books. His essays on the politics and history of Los Angeles appear weekly at [KCET.org](https://www.kcet.org). Portions of these pieces, in a substantially different form, were originally posted to KCET.

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2006 To celebrate his tenth year in Los Angeles, Michael Schneider starts the Great LA Walk, an annual, one-day group walk that travels along a major L.A. boulevard, ending at the sea. In 2009, Dan Koepfel launches the Big Parade, an annual two-day walk from Angels Flight to the Hollywood sign that ascends or descends over 100 public stairways. Both events grow in size over the years, attracting hundreds of walkers.

2010 On October 10, 2010, Los Angeles closes 7.5 miles of downtown streets for the first CicLAvia, a new car-free festival inspired by the ciclovías of South America. Over 100,000 Angelenos participate in the first event, which is repeated several times per year.

2011 Sunset Triangle Plaza opens in the Silver Lake neighborhood of Los Angeles, the city’s first street-to-plaza conversion. In 2012, the first of four pedestrian-focused parklets are announced for Highland Park, El Sereno, and downtown. Later that year, L.A. names the two women who made these projects possible—Margot Ocañas and Valerie Watson—as the City’s first pedestrian coordinators.

2013 As his first executive order, newly elected Mayor Eric Garcetti announces the Great Streets Program, an initiative to revitalize streets in 15 neighborhoods across the city. The following year, on Walk to Work Day, Garcetti walks five miles from the Getty House to City Hall, posting photos to Instagram the entire way.

2014 Councilmember Jose Huizar introduces a resolution to proclaim March 5 as Complete Streets Day in Los Angeles to “celebrate the City’s early accomplishments in implementing complete street projects.” Los Angeles Walks receives a certificate of recognition and Los Angeles Walks founder Deborah Murphy gives a speech at the ceremony.