

CASE STUDY

LA GREAT STREETS: CRENSHAW STREET BEATS

Project Summary

Community groups support and manage open street events. The Los Angeles Great Streets initiative empowers community groups to reimagine local street design and activate their neighborhoods.

Vision & Concerns

Community groups in South Los Angeles organized Street Beats, a pop-up street design and music event to engage the local community in pedestrian and traffic safety planning activities along Crenshaw Blvd. The event was a response to the Los Angeles Great Streets Challenge Grants, a citywide initiative to improve access, mobility, safety and economic activity through community empowerment. Although the purpose was to teach people about “complete streets” design principles, community members also wanted to emphasize fun and beat-making for people of all ages.

The Street Beats team designed their grant-winning to highlight the potential for long-term street improvements at the intersection of Crenshaw Blvd. and Florence Ave. through a ground-up, hyper-local, community-led process.

The Crenshaw/Florence intersection is a thriving pedestrian and transit activity center throughout the day. Unfortunately, over the span of an 11-year study, more than 100 collisions occurred in this location, including 30 hit-and-runs and two fatalities. As a result the intersection is ranked one of the 25 most dangerous in LA County.

Planning the Event

The program began with a series of workshops to solicit input from residents about what kind of event to plan. All of the meetings were held at the Crenshaw/Florence intersection. Organizers - all residents of South Los Angeles themselves - reached out to neighbors via neighborhood block club meetings, churches and going door-to-door. Many of the workshop attendees learned about the event beforehand, but others joined as they were passing by.

Based on the information gathered at these workshops, the concept of a pop-up street design/music event was formed.



Advertisement for the Street Beats event used for fundraising.
[Source: www.ioby.org]

Crowdsourced Funding

The project was funded through a \$10,000 Great Streets Challenge Grant. Communities awarded these grants are given the opportunity to raise their own funds and be matched dollar-for-dollar by the city. Through crowdsourcing, social media, and community outreach, the Street Beats team raised an additional \$10,000, which also made them eligible for a \$20,000 match from the city. The organizers achieved a highly successful event through community-based funding sources and volunteering.

The Street Beats Event

The event, held on Saturday, February 20, 2016, attracted roughly 500 participants. The organizers worked with the Los Angeles Department of Transportation to temporarily reconfigure the intersection with a pedestrian scramble, bulb outs, and highly visible crosswalks painted to look like piano keys.

In addition, DJs were stationed at every corner of the intersection with wireless speakers and musical instruments, inviting people of all ages to participate by making beats or music.

During the event, organizers distributed surveys to collect information about what locals wanted to see done with the intersection permanently.

WHY IT WORKED

HYPER-LOCAL EMPHASIS

The Street Beats team wanted to create a unique and fun event organized by and for the community around Hyde Park. They involved residents in the event planning process itself and were creative in the location of their meetings. By hosting workshops on the street, they encouraged participation from a much broader group of residents.

QUICK FACTS

What: Pop-up demonstration of street design with music theme.

Geography: Intersection of Crenshaw Blvd. and Florence Ave., Hyde Park Neighborhood in South Los Angeles, CA.

Goal: Create an event where people could make music together, engage with each other, experiment with street design, and discuss long-term changes they would like to see in their community.

Leaders: Office of Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Community Health Councils, T.R.U.S.T. South LA, [Ride on! Bike Co-op](http://bit.ly/2acglyi) (<http://bit.ly/2acglyi>), Studio MMD

Hey @StreetBeatsLA, remember that time we transformed Crenshaw/Florence into a musical instrument? #LAGreatStreets

📍 [LA Mayor's Office](#), [LADOT](#) and [LA Cultural Affairs](#)



[Source: LA Mayor's Office Twitter]