

Project Willowbrook:

Cultivating a Healthy Community through Arts and Culture

Cultural Asset Mapping Report

Report prepared by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission with findings from LA Commons and Rosten Woo

A project of the Los Angeles County Arts Commission Civic Art Program

Funding provided by the National Endowment for the Arts



NEA Our Town Grant Program

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- Improve their quality of life.
- Encourage greater creative activity.
- Foster stronger community identity and a sense of place.
- Revitalize economic development.

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National Endowment for the Arts visits Willowbrook with staff from Los Angeles County Arts Commission and LA Commons
Photo: Los Angeles County Arts Commission

Cover Photos (L-R)
Charles Dickson in his studio; The love of gardening is shared among many Willowbrook residents; Silver Threads Quilter
Photos: Alyse Emdur

Los Angeles County Arts Commission

The Los Angeles County Arts Commission fosters excellence, diversity, vitality, understanding and accessibility of the arts in Los Angeles County. The Arts Commission provides leadership in cultural services for the County, encompassing 88 municipalities, including funding and job opportunities, professional development and general resources for the community, artists, educators, arts organizations and municipalities. In December 2004, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted the County's first Civic Art policy, which allocates one percent of County capital projects to civic art. The policy allows for integrated permanent public art enhancements, temporary art commissions, restoration of historic artworks and the creation of cultural spaces or activities. The Los Angeles County Arts Commission is responsible for the administration of the Civic Art policy. lacountyarts.org

LA Commons

LA Commons, a project of Community Partners, works in neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles, facilitating artistic processes, open to all, that result in highly visible public art projects that tell dynamic local stories. LA Commons builds community by validating the importance of community narratives, enhancing the sense of belonging felt by a broad range of stakeholders and encouraging stronger ties between the people and places of Los Angeles. LA Commons educates, empowers and enriches neighborhoods, while promoting greater understanding, engagement and connectedness for residents and visitors to Los Angeles. Established in 2002, LA Commons is a 501(c)(3) organization and is a project of the non-profit incubator, Community Partners. lacommons.org

Rosten Woo

Rosten Woo is a designer, writer and educator living in Los Angeles. He is co-founder and former executive director of the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP), a New York-based, non-profit organization dedicated to using art and design to foster civic participation. His work has been exhibited at the Cooper-Hewitt Design Triennial, the Venice Architecture Biennale, Netherlands Architectural Institute, Storefront for Art and Architecture, Lower East Side Tenement Museum and various piers, public housing developments, tugboats, shopping malls and parks in New York City. He has written on design, politics and music for such publications as the Village Voice, Rolling Stone, City Limits and Metropolis Magazine. His first book, Street Value, was published by Princeton Architectural Press in 2010. wehavenoart.net

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SECTION 1.....

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Willowbrook, an unincorporated community of 35,000 in Los Angeles County south of downtown, northwest of Compton and just south of Watts, is in the midst of an urban transformation spurred by Los Angeles County's \$600 million plus dollar investment in redevelopment. In 2011, the **Los Angeles County Arts Commission (LACAC)**, in partnership with **LA Commons**, received funding through the National Endowment for the Arts Our Town initiative for Project Willowbrook: *Cultivating a Healthy Community through Arts and Culture*, a yearlong cultural asset study and public engagement process.

Through Project Willowbrook, LACAC posits the role arts and culture can play in a significant revitalization of Willowbrook. LACAC, LA Commons and Rosten Woo (the project team), sought to identify the distinct character of the community and contextualize it for use in civic planning and future arts projects. The project team quickly learned however that the social, political and economic dynamics that influence community identity and livability are key to articulating the creative character of Willowbrook through its cultural assets.

In the pursuit of cultural assets, the project team explored the tensions and barriers experienced by the community. Willowbrook is currently one of the most under-resourced communities in Los Angeles County whose challenges include

- A large but underserved youth population,
- Cultural division amidst changing demographics from a predominantly African-American to majority Latino population,
- An unemployment rate of 16% as compared to the California state average of 9%,
- Blight and a concern for safety and
- Statistics that show unhealthy outcomes such as the highest rate of deaths due to heart disease in Los Angeles County.

After its first round of interviews, LACAC with LA Commons identified the need for a lead artist who would acknowledge, as well as look beyond, the challenges in order to reveal Willowbrook's creative pulse. Artist Rosten Woo was commissioned to draw out under-expressed dynamics, energy and meaning through arts-based engagement strategies such as public interventions, planning tools and arts events. His work made Willowbrook's creativity visible in all its dimensions and offers Los Angeles County an array of visioning tools that convey Willowbrook's distinct identity.

To bring visibility to the process and support local talent, five artists residing in the project area were identified to implement public engagement and a series of temporary murals along the 600-foot long construction fence at the Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK)

Medical Campus. These activities animated the cultural asset mapping process, making it an engagement-based exercise whose outcomes went well beyond this report.

The project team also discovered informal art production and activities occurring in churches, libraries, social service organizations, private homes and underground music scenes. Over the course of the project, the terms "community" and "cultural" assets became interchangeable as culture was found imbedded in everyday places.

In response to the cultural asset mapping process, the project team has outlined **four potential options for future cultural programming**. The options address four realms of impact (health and wellness, youth development, civic participation and social connectedness and economic development), capitalize on potential areas for artistic growth and build upon existing cultural and non-cultural assets identified in this study.

- A "**Community as Classroom**" program pairing teens and artists to conduct site-based investigations that yield a variety of creative community service projects.
- **Leveraging artists and local culture in public engagement** as Los Angeles County's inter-departmental collaborative designs for a healthy community.
- The formation of the **Willowbrook Hub**, a public space for community gathering where resident artists can program events, exhibitions, interventions and workshops.
- Establishing **Dance Willowbrook**, a sequential dance education program for youth and adults located in an area park and culminating in a performance and community dance party.

A notable outcome of Project Willowbrook is LACAC's invitation to the planning table of the County's Chief Executive Office and Departments of Fire, Parks and Recreation, Public Health, Public Works, Regional Planning and the Community Development Commission. Project Willowbrook's cross sector partners see LACAC's perspective on civic issues as much broader than arts with a capital "A." This project reinforced the belief of everyone who worked on it that the arts play a catalytic role in strengthening the social and physical environment and that access to the arts and the opportunities for self-expression, social cohesion and beauty that they bring, are a crucial dimension of a healthy community.

With commitment from the community and County, revitalization in Willowbrook is afoot and a bright future is ahead. Project Willowbrook has laid the foundation for holistic civic development. The Los Angeles County Arts Commission hopes that this approach to understanding Willowbrook's challenges and highlighting its assets will inspire similar regional and national projects that strive to take a comprehensive approach to urban planning and cultural development.

SECTION 2.....

INTRODUCTION



... in the community of course, you have to have housing, food, shelter, education, you can't live without them. But to uplift the community there's a cultural aspect that is definitely needed.

- Project Willowbrook Survey Respondent



West African Dance, Willowbrook JAM Session at the MLK Medical Campus
Photo: Los Angeles County Arts Commission

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Project Willowbrook: *Cultivating a Healthy Community through Arts and Culture* is a creative exploration of Willowbrook, an unincorporated community in Los Angeles County. Although now a place with many of the challenges associated with low-income urban environments, it will be the beneficiary of over \$600 million dollars in investment over the next 20 years by various County agencies, the Metropolitan Transit Authority (Metro) and other public institutions. Through the County's public percent for art ordinance, \$1 million in arts and cultural dollars will be invested in the new MLK Medical Campus alone.

To support the transformation of the area, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission (LACAC) aimed to develop creative visioning tools to inform the development plans, which had an overall focus on health and wellness and included as a centerpiece the new MLK Medical Campus. LACAC sought to understand where the arts could address needs within the area and to leverage the extraordinary planned investments.

The cultural asset mapping process aligned with the following project goals:

- Map the cultural assets in the community including the presence of artists and tradition bearers, organizations, events, artworks, places and formal and informal artistic activity.
- Engage the local creative community in all aspects of the project.
- Identify stakeholders with the potential for supporting cultural development in the area over the long term.
- Recommend strategies to leverage the cultural assets and build sustainable activities at the intersection of arts and community health.

Both project team members, LA Commons and Rosten Woo, explored Willowbrook with these goals in mind though their approaches were distinctly different. LA Commons took a more formal research and outreach-based approach laying the groundwork for the cultural asset mapping process. Their findings are conveyed throughout this report particularly in Section Four: Cultural Asset Mapping. In order to express the continuum of the investigation, LACAC capped several of the report's sections with "Artist Angle: Willowbrook is...es...," which distinguish Woo's process and offer a new lens with which to identify creativity in Willowbrook.

Project Willowbrook is made possible through the generous support of the National Endowment for the Arts Our Town initiative that encourages collaboration from the public and private sectors to strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city or region around arts and cultural activities.

METHODOLOGY

LACAC with LA Commons initiated Phase 1 of the project looking at Willowbrook "from 5,000 feet" through research and on the ground through interviews and meetings. Phase 1 involved the following:

1. Targeted community engagement including
 - a. 22 stakeholder interviews
 - b. Two focus groups
 - c. Targeted survey distribution
 - d. Two artist salon/technical assistance workshops
 - e. An input event with MLK Medical Campus staff
 - f. A community input meeting
2. Review of seminal data and reports.

See the Appendix for related samples and details.

The research, outreach, interview and survey process revealed that while the arts were alive in social service settings, LACAC and LA Commons were not accessing the creativity flourishing below the radar in Willowbrook. Enter Phase 2: ***How to go deeper and characterize the creative pulse of Willowbrook?***

Nine months into the project, LACAC hired lead artist Rosten Woo to serve as a cultural observer, curator and creative interpreter for the project. Artists have a keen ability to connect with people and relay their story in novel and compelling ways, so the inclusion of Woo, with his background in community organizing, urban planning and public engagement, strengthened the project outcomes. After months of on the ground observation, encounters and interviews as well as reviewing the cultural asset data collected to date, Rosten initiated *Willowbrook is...es...* a project within a project intended to entice locals to share their stories through a billboard and telephone system, an interactive survey and, ultimately, a home, garden and vehicle tour that culminated in a community festival. More details regarding these strategies are peppered throughout the report indicated by the pages subtitled, "Artist Angle: Willowbrook is..es..." Learn more at lacountyarts.org/willowbrook

The Arts and Culture Indicators Project (ACIP) of the Urban Institute defines art, culture and creativity in communities as “a continuum of activities – amateur and professional, formal and informal – happening in arts-specific (i.e. theaters, galleries and museums) and non-arts specific places (i.e. community centers, church halls, parks, schools, libraries, restaurants and nights clubs).”¹ The project definition for cultural assets is

People, places and programs that support, or have the potential to support, the participation of community members in art, culture and creativity.

Cultural asset categories relevant for Willowbrook include: tradition bearers, artists, creatives, cultural venues, County facilities (libraries, parks, health and senior centers), churches, schools, artworks and various community events.

Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson, who has done extensive research on the role of arts and culture in community building and developed a cultural vitality framework with the ACIP team that she led while at the Urban Institute, consulted with LACAC and LA Commons on project development and her work is referenced throughout the report. This interaction laid the foundation for the project approach to cultural asset mapping and informed the project research and outreach-based Phase 1.

From the beginning, LACAC and LA Commons included community stakeholders who represented major local institutions and community associations in addition to those specifically involved in arts and culture. The inquiry with this initial group expanded LACAC and LA Commons’ understanding of the community, clarified what they defined as cultural assets and pointed to where the most fertile ground for further outreach might be. Initially, the request to identify Willowbrook’s cultural assets was met with a quizzical expression. With the help of Dr. Jackson, the interview questions were refined to include more queries designed to pinpoint the local places, people, things or activities that resonate for individuals, i.e. “When you leave Willowbrook, what do you miss the most?”

The interviewees shared their perspectives on locally relevant cultural assets as well as social dynamics. Furthermore, the interviews revealed additional layers of the community yet to be reached guiding LA Commons in the next level of outreach.

One challenge that surfaced early on, related to the makeup of Willowbrook, was the racial composition of the leadership who were part of that initial stakeholder group interviewed versus that of the larger community. African-Americans continue to

dominate leadership positions despite the majority Latino population. As a result, the people LACAC and LA Commons interviewed, from longstanding artists with a connection to the community to the heads of Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science, the MLK Medical Campus and the Watts-Willowbrook Boys and Girls Club, were overwhelmingly African-American and middle-aged. So, following the first round of interviews, LA Commons targeted local people who were young and Latino.

To reach the target group of young Latinos, LA Commons established partnerships with organizations connected to this population. Churches and schools often fulfill the role that a social service agency might play for Latinos in Willowbrook. Thus, Bunche Middle School, Watts Century Latino Organization, Watts-Willowbrook Boys and Girls Club, Locke High School and St. Lawrence of Brindisi Catholic Church became partners in this process. LA Commons also administered surveys at locations that came up as important in the interviews to capture input from people who may not be affiliated with any group. LA Commons gained additional perspectives from the local artists working on the mural. See the Appendix for details on the engagement in this phase.

¹ Jackson, Maria Rosario and Joaquin Herranz, Jr. Culture Counts in Communities: A Framework for Measurement. The Urban Institute, 2002.



Community Map from Artist Workshop
Photo: Los Angeles County Arts Commission

Artist Angle: Willowbrook is...es...

The Los Angeles County Arts Commission (LACAC) commissioned Rosten Woo to develop a public engagement strategy that would yield a creative visioning tool, with the goal of producing a source document for short and long term capital and community projects in the neighborhood. A creative visioning tool is innovative in its format and content and should reflect current conditions, gleaned through the cultural asset mapping process. It should express future possibilities that support Willowbrook's vitality. LACAC encouraged Rosten to develop the format for the visioning tool in response to his public engagement, welcoming experimentation and honoring process. A concurrent project, managed by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works with funding from the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), for a streetscape improvement plan in the central corridor of Willowbrook was identified as an immediate recipient of material developed through the artist's process giving Woo parameters to hone his work.

Phase 1 cultural asset mapping by LA Commons and field research informed Woo's initial observations that

- Communication in Willowbrook is done, for the most part, without the use of the Internet and on-line media.
- Attendance in civic engagement through formal channels such as public meetings is low, particularly among Latino residents.
- Having just completed extensive public participation in the MLK Hospital Master Plan, the community is fatigued by planning initiatives and wants to see actual improvement projects happen.

Rosten Woo used the following action strategies for his research toward developing a Willowbrook specific cultural asset study:

- Meetings with planners and community groups.
- Pedestrian-scale billboard to solicit specific input via voicemail and text message system and to signify inquiry.
- Walking the neighborhood, knocking on doors and meeting some 100 people in their homes and institutions.
- Willowbrook Workbook, with 125 responses, to collect and visualize the community's input for the streetscape improvement plan and future urban design efforts.
- Willowbrook is...es... Home, Garden and Vehicle Tour featuring many of the off-the-radar creative practices from an elaborate backyard train set and award-winning cactus gardens to a rare tortoise collection and a fountain made of rubble from the 105 freeway.
- Celebrate Willowbrook festival and open house showcasing the people and traditions that make the community vibrant.
- A 125 page book, Willowbrook is...es..., relaying the narratives and creative endeavors of Willowbrook community members.



Rosten Woo makes connections in Willowbrook
Photos: Alyse Emdur

SECTION 3.....

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW



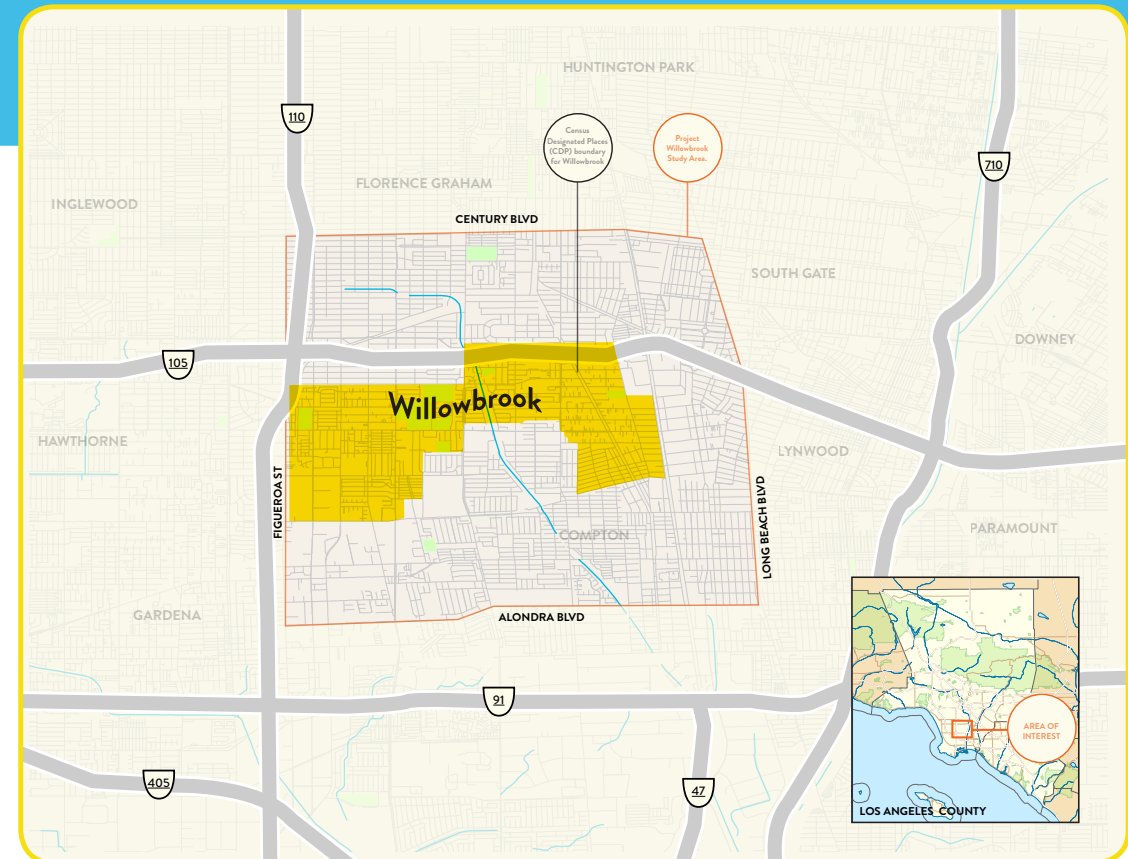
(I like) the locality (of Willowbrook)...the fact that it is virtually in the middle of all of the major areas in L.A. County. Not to mention close to the freeways. Growing up in this area, I have come to love the culture that is associated with it, not the negative, but the neighbors that I have grown up around. I love the smells of the different types of food being prepared and the sounds of the kids playing outside.

- Project Willowbrook Survey Respondent

STUDY AREA

People, as often as not, describe themselves as living in one of the surrounding communities rather than Willowbrook, particularly Compton and Watts. An essential question posed to interviewees was “what are the Willowbrook boundaries?” Based on their input as well as that from the County’s Department of Regional Planning, it is clear that boundaries are blurred and porous. People identified the northern boundary as ranging anywhere from 118th Street to Century Boulevard, the southern as ranging from Alondra Avenue to El Segundo, the western as ranging from Central Avenue to Figueroa and the eastern boundary as ranging from Wilmington to Long Beach Boulevard.

It is not unusual for unincorporated communities to have shifting social boundaries. For purposes of the Project Willowbrook study, LACAC and LA Commons settled on two boundaries as seen on the map to the right: the Census Designated Places (CDP) boundary for reporting key statistics about the area in yellow and the boundary drawn from the data provided by survey participants outlined in orange. See Appendix for further discussion of Census Designated Places.



ABOUT WILLOWBROOK

An outsider traveling through Willowbrook might wonder if the quote on the preceding page is describing another community. But, in fact, Willowbrook, despite major health and socio-economic challenges, has significant assets.

Transportation and Health Hub

The unincorporated area is conveniently located in central Los Angeles County near the junction of the 110 and 105 Freeways. It is only 12 miles from Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), 13 miles from downtown Los Angeles and 15 miles from the Port of Los Angeles. In fact, its close neighbor to the south, the City of Compton, was nicknamed the “Hub City” because of this location at the near geographical center of the County. Willowbrook is also the site of a major stop on the Metro System, the Willowbrook/Rosa Parks light rail station, where the Blue and Green Lines intersect. Slated for a major renovation and upgrade, this station is used by more than 36,000 passengers each weekday. In addition, many passengers utilize the nearby busway, making Willowbrook/Rosa Parks the highest volume light rail station in the system.

In addition to being a transportation hub, the area is also a health hub. It is home to one of Los Angeles County’s most important health centers, the MLK Medical Campus scheduled to reopen in 2014 as the new MLK Hospital and Multi-Service Ambulatory Care Center in partnership with the University of California. Other options for care are inconveniently located for the many residents in South Los Angeles who suffer from the highest levels of poverty and lowest levels of health insurance coverage in the County. As the MLK Medical Campus is rebuilt and the surrounding areas redevelop to reflect the County’s renewed commitment to health, wellness and a high standard of care, citizens of Willowbrook will have greater opportunities for a healthy lifestyle and the area will become a destination for achieving greater health.



Willowbrook/Rosa Parks Metro Station
Photo: LA Streets Blog



Rendering of MLK Hospital Expansion and Renovation
Image: Gensler

Quiet, Residential Center

Despite its role as a major transportation and health hub, the area is primarily a residential center as defined by 55% of survey respondents. It continues to have the sensibility of a quiet bedroom community. The people who live there relish time spent with family, friends and neighbors as one of the most enjoyable aspects of their lives. The specific language they used to describe Willowbrook included “nice community” and “quiet.” Expressions of what they like most about the area include “friendly people,” “calm,” “peaceful,” “people are really nice,” and “family/community oriented.” In answering the question, “when you leave Willowbrook, what do you miss the most?” respondents said: “family,” “friends,” and “neighbors;” “my home,” “neighborhood” and “the togetherness, almost everyone knows everybody.”

For example, the residents of Carver Manor exhibit particular pride of ownership for their housing tract and connection to each other and the community. Dating from 1946, the area was named after the famed scientist, George Washington Carver and designed by Paul Revere Williams, the renowned African-American architect who designed the Theme Building at LAX Airport, the Los Angeles County Hall of Administration and the Beverly Hills Hotel.

Parks and Libraries Favored Community Assets

Respondents frequently mentioned that local parks were one of their favorite places to gather. Willowbrook is home to five parks including the 104-acre Earvin “Magic” Johnson Recreation Center which was cited frequently as a favorite local place to visit. The park has two lakes regularly stocked with fish and many areas for gathering. Another park often mentioned in the surveys was the 28-acre Ted Watkins Memorial Park which is in nearby Watts but also run by Los Angeles County. Named after the founder of the Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC), this park is a very active venue and home to the Watts Farmers Market, the 46-year-old Watts Summer Festival, two civic artworks and the Promenade of Prominence Walk of Fame (POP), which celebrates local leaders like POP founder Edna Aliewine (now deceased) and Congresswoman Maxine Waters. Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation is undergoing a parks master planning process in Willowbrook that will expand the promotion of health in design and programming to support healthy behaviors and mitigate pollution and other harmful environmental effects.

Libraries also ranked high as community amenities, particularly for African-Americans. The A C Bilbrew Library as the Los Angeles County Public Library system’s single Black Resource Center, serves as a cultural hub. Bilbrew’s sister branch to the east, Willowbrook Library, holds a special distinction as the first in the system and a special place in the history of Los Angeles County. Active Friends of the Library groups provide ongoing volunteer support at the facilities, which serve as important community and cultural resources with ongoing programs for children and adults including storytelling performances and art workshops.



Willowbrook Residential Area
Photo: LA Commons



Former L.A. City Mayor Tom Bradley and Cab Calloway at
A C Bilbrew Library, 1980
Photo: County of Los Angeles Public Library



Earvin “Magic” Johnson Park
Photo: LA Commons

A STORIED PAST



In Willowbrook, there was originally a willow tree and a “brook” as part of the 3,559 acre Rancho La Tajauta, the land-granted home of Anastacio Avila, a leading figure in his time who held the position of Alcalde, or Mayor, of Los Angeles from 1819-21. Particular milestones in the history of the area include becoming the site of the first Los Angeles County Library as well as a stop on the Pacific Electric Railway line.

Of great significance was its role, along with sister community Watts to the north, as a destination for the thousands of African-Americans migrating from the South to work in the factories that were a major presence in the southern region of the County after World War II. The relocation of so many transformed the area from a sleepy, mostly Mexican farming village to a bedroom community for those working in the surrounding industry. Many of the new arrivals took advantage of the opportunity to achieve upward mobility, but others found themselves mired in poverty not much different than that they experienced “down South.”

The experience of high unemployment, poor education, inferior housing facilities and discrimination, particularly at the hands of police, led to a sense of hopelessness that, along with years of watchful neglect of officials, were at the root of the 1965 Watts Riots. This event was a catalyst for, among other things, the creation of Martin Luther King, Jr. Hospital in 1972 advocated for by locals and recommended by the McCone Commission Report.

The arts flowered too in the period following this civil disturbance with the Watts Towers as an inspiration for the dynamic cultural activity that emerged in the area after the civil unrest. Through an ongoing series of gallery exhibitions and performing arts programs, the Watts Towers Arts Center continues to draw a stellar roster of artists, many of whom have roots in the area from the fertile time in the 1960s and 1970s. Roughly around the same time as the Watts Towers was becoming a hub for artists, the Compton Communicative Arts Academy was founded. Like the Watts Towers Arts Center, it became one of the key institutions in Los Angeles’ Community Arts Movement, supporting the development of now major American artists like Betye Saar, Elliott Pinkney, Charles Dickson and John Outterbridge.

Unfortunately, the 1970s and 1980s also saw the closing of the factories that provided employment for people living in the area and a wave of violent crime that spawned an exodus of Africans-Americans to the Inland Empire, the Antelope Valley in north Los

Angeles County, and even out of state. At the same time, there was an influx of Latino immigrants, corresponding with the violence they too were experiencing in countries like El Salvador and Guatemala. This laid the foundation for the demographic shift that now has Latinos solidly in the majority.

The 1990s was a tumultuous decade for Los Angeles as a result of a string of major disasters including riots, earthquakes, floods and fires. The most vulnerable segments of the populace, living in poverty and struggling to subsist, suffered greatly during this time. Most relevant for those living in Willowbrook was the civil unrest of 1992, which contributed to continuing decline in the area.

More recently, in 2007, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors terminated inpatient services at MLK Hospital after several efforts to improve the delivery of care and the threat of license revocation by state and federal accrediting agencies. This downgrade of the hospital to an outpatient center dealt an especially stinging blow to the area given the hard work to get a hospital opened in South Los Angeles originally in 1972. The reaction at the time was a level of disbelief that this community with some of the most severe health challenges in Los Angeles County would now have to travel many miles to get services once provided in its own backyard.

Immediately following the tragic closing of the hospital, a groundswell of energy galvanized to reopen it. This movement gained power when Mark Ridley-Thomas was elected as Second District Supervisor and made reopening the hospital and developing the surrounding community of Willowbrook a high priority of his office.



Willowbrook Mercantile Store, 1909
Photo: County of Los Angeles Public Library



First County Library in the home of Belle Jenks in Willowbrook, 1913
Photo: County of Los Angeles Public Library



Burned residence from Watts Riots, Los Angeles, 1965
Photo: County of Los Angeles Public Library

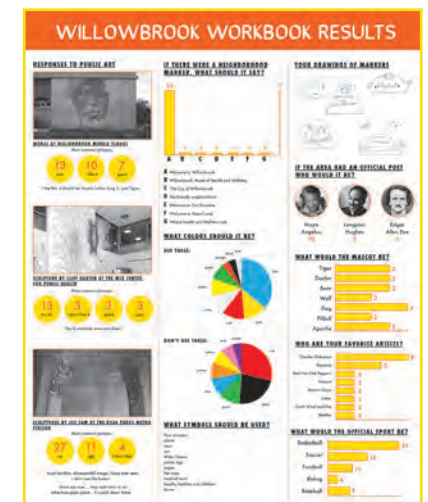
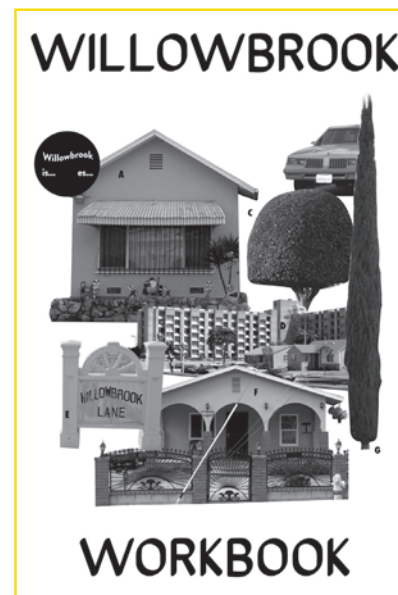
Artist Angle: Willowbrook is...es...

Like LA Commons, Rosten Woo sensed the quiet neighborhood quality as he walked, biked and drove the neighborhood during the initial months of his project looking for inspiration and a way in. In order to capture input from a broad demographic in an efficient and economical manner, Woo installed a colorful pedestrian-scale sign on a highly traveled street in Willowbrook that encouraged passersby to call in and respond to a voicemail and text messaging system. According to Woo, “this lightweight, direct polling and feedback gathering mechanism seemed to be a worthwhile attempt to gather input and engage residents in thinking about the relatively specific task of fashioning a public ‘identity’ for Willowbrook and its streetscape features.” Questions ranged from multiple choice, i.e. “Which do you like better?”, to qualitative “What’s best in Willowbrook?”

After its test deployment, the billboard was not working — at least not as a way to solicit input. The voicemail and text messaging system was too complex and the visibility of the billboard was questionable. It did, however, spark conversation between Woo and neighborhood groups about alternative approaches. In consultation with the Concerned Citizens of Willowbrook, Woo shifted gears and proposed a zine-like workbook for broad distribution as a tool for collecting community input particularly in relation to the Willowbrook Improvement Plan. The Willowbrook Workbook was a highly visual and interactive survey that reached a sampling of 125 Willowbrook residents. That data was reflected back to the community via Web, on publicly displayed poster boards in the local libraries and at community meetings and events. Like the billboard, it expands the conversation about the community’s identity, priorities and vision. **The Department of Public Works (DPW) found the feedback to be particularly useful as it will directly inform their developed design of the streetscape improvements including monument signage and banners.** In response to the source documents provided by Woo, the DPW project manager stated emphatically, “This is the best way to get this information from the community.”



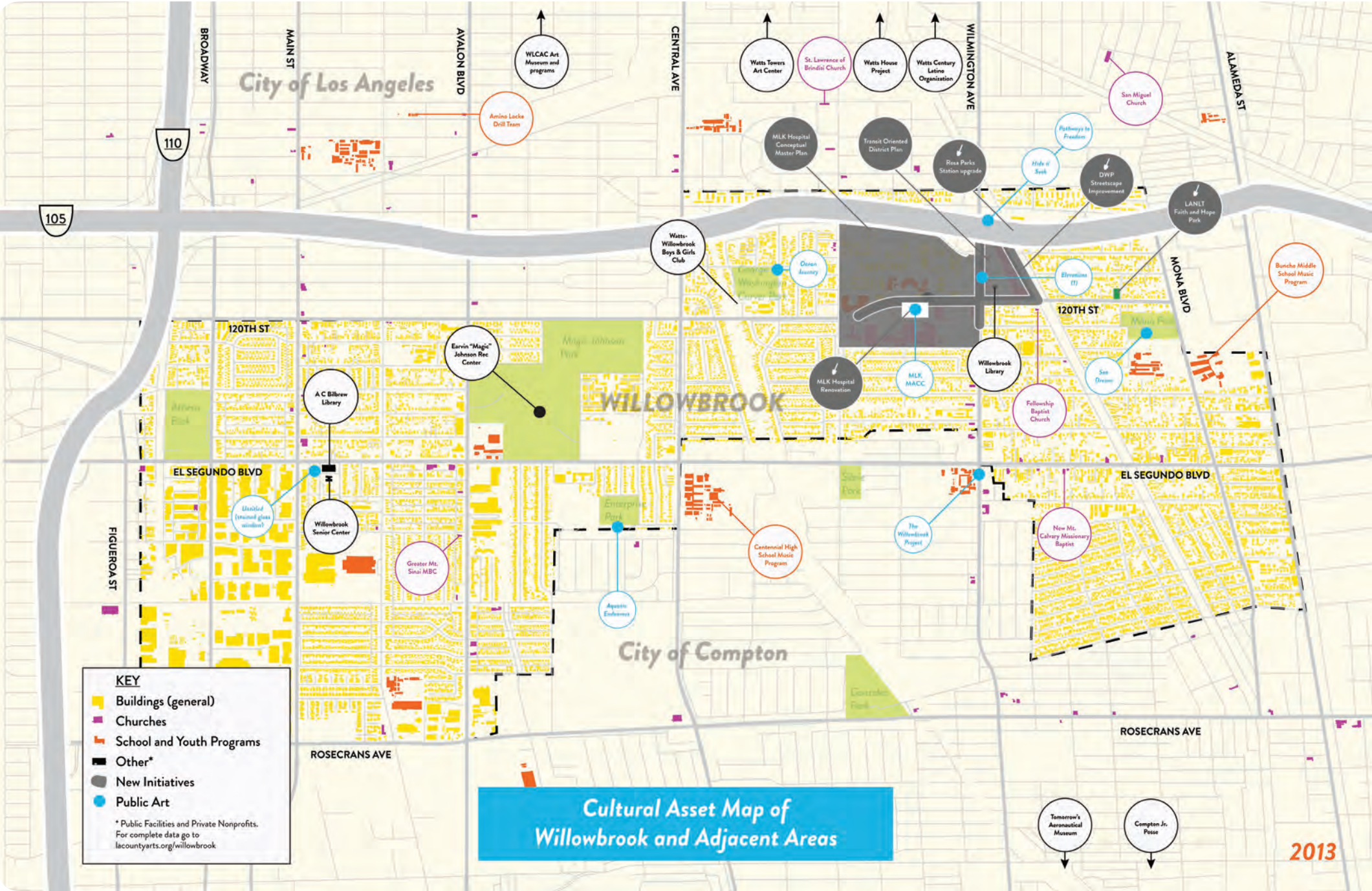
Billboard tests channels for community input
Photo: Los Angeles County Arts Commission



Sample pages from Willowbrook Workbook and data visualization of results designed by Rosten Woo

SECTION 4.....
CULTURAL ASSET MAPPING

CULTURAL ASSET MAP OF WILLOWBROOK AND ADJACENT AREAS | MAP BY ROSTEN WOO



CULTURAL ASSET MAPPING



Over the last 15 to 20 years, the value of cultural participation in building vital communities has been documented by researchers and practitioners in various fields from planning to community development. Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson, in her work at the Urban Institute in Washington DC, has written extensively in the field of urban planning about the role of culture in community vitality, with a focus on extending the definition of community assets to include cultural assets.¹ Mark Stern and Susan Sieffert at the Social Impact of the Arts Project at the University of Pennsylvania have done intensive research to detail the impact of the arts in Philadelphia. Their results affirm that communities where there are more opportunities for residents to engage with the arts, express themselves and pursue their creative interests, particularly in relationship with cultural institutions and each other, see better health and economic outcomes.²

Closer to home, building on its study that specifically acknowledged the role of artistic participation in promoting community and individual health, the Alliance for California Traditional Arts is working with The California Endowment's Building Healthy Communities (BHC) initiative to identify cultural assets in communities throughout the State of California.³ The two organizations are integrating cultural planning and programming into the BHC's work to promote health.

Like every community, Willowbrook has intrinsic cultural assets that, in addition to the new cultural investments in civic art on the MLK Medical Campus, have great potential for contributing to community health and vitality. As defined by Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson cultural vitality is "Evidence of creating, disseminating, validating, and supporting arts and culture as a dimension of everyday life in communities."¹ This definition incorporates an expansive understanding of the art and cultural pursuits worthy of inclusion in a cultural asset study — everything from family and community traditions to world-class performances.

For purposes of this study about cultural vitality, the project definition for cultural assets is **People, places and programs that support, or have the potential to support, the participation of community members in art, culture and creativity.** Cultural asset categories include: tradition bearers, artists, creatives, cultural venues, County facilities (libraries, parks, health and senior centers), churches, schools, artworks and community events.

In the process of mapping, LA Commons gleaned from the data those assets that appeared most relevant for respondents. For example, while Willowbrook has 78 schools

and hundreds of churches, priority was given to those defined as cultural assets by the people queried. Of course, there are several asset categories that don't lend themselves well to mapping like artists, tradition bearers and some community events. Assets in these categories are listed in the Appendix.

To visualize the cultural landscape of Willowbrook, LACAC and LA Commons utilized lead artist Rosten Woo's expertise in graphic design and cartography to create the Cultural Asset Map on the previous page. In conveying the spatial relationships that exist between data points, the map shows gaps in participation opportunities as well as existing facilities and programs that can be maximized. The asset categories are color-coded and representative assets are identified on the map. Those included were selected based on their resonance with community members that participated in this project.

Themes and examples of Willowbrook's cultural assets are illustrated on the Cultural Asset Map and annotated by category on the pages that follow.

The range of creative endeavors taking place in Willowbrook and surrounding neighborhoods include everything from the exhibitions and performing arts programs at the Watts Towers Arts Center to the Silver Threads Quilting Circle at Willowbrook Senior Center, from the religious festival processions out of St. Lawrence of Brindisi Catholic Church to the Cinco de Mayo Celebration at Watts Century Latino Organization, from the acclaimed Centennial High School Music Program to the Compton Junior Posse Youth Equestrian Program.

Culture Counts in Community, a publication of the Arts and Cultural Indicators Project (ACIP), outlines a framework for measuring cultural vitality centering on several dimensions. These include the presence of opportunities for engaging in creative pursuits at cultural centers and public venues such as parks, schools, nonprofit service providers and churches as well as the level of participation in those opportunities. LA Commons used Dr. Jackson's work as a guidepost for assessing Willowbrook's cultural assets.

The central task of Project Willowbrook in mapping the cultural assets of Willowbrook was to highlight, assess and promote cultural vitality in the area. According to ACIP, in places that measure high on the cultural vitality scale, a mix of organizations provides broad access to a continuum of arts and cultural participation opportunities such as

amateur art-making, collective/community art-making in preparation for festivals or other cultural community events, K–12 arts education, arts after-school programs, audience participation, purchase of artistic goods (materials for making art as well as final arts products) and discourse about arts and culture in the media.

At the center of the cultural ecosystem, “pillar” organizations function as hubs for artistic activity within the neighborhood, connecting with local artists, both amateur and professional; presenting their work through events and exhibitions; partnering with other organizations to present work and bridging to organizations outside the community and outside the field to generate interest and support. The goal is to ensure that artistic participation opportunities are widely available for everyone in the community to engage in creative pursuits.

Referring to the map, a local pillar organization does exist locally in the Watts Towers Arts Center (WTAC), which provides artists with a creative home and some support. However, this venue is located in Watts and struggles to transcend its legacy as a strong cultural base for African-Americans. Other than at WTAC, there are limited formal offerings within the extended map boundaries and no arts organizations within the CDP boundaries of Willowbrook. This lack explains why high numbers of survey respondents said that they go outside of the area for cultural experiences or practice their own artistic expression at home, in other private settings or in publicly funded venues. It is worth noting that roughly 65% of the assets depicted on the map have some affiliation with a public institution. Many of these institutions provide venues and support for participation by amateur artists which constitutes a very vital part of Willowbrook’s cultural ecosystem, i.e., the quilting circle at the Los Angeles County-run local senior center, the performances of local groups at the various events that happen around the neighborhood and K-12 arts education on school days.

It is important to consider the barriers to participation that exist in Willowbrook when looking at the Cultural Asset Map. According to several respondents, the Youth Development Cultural Asset Map with a Gang Territory Overlay on page 38 illustrates a specific challenge related to safety.

An issue that is hard to represent spatially, but is real nonetheless is the financial barrier to participation often present in high poverty areas. Cultural dissonance may also be an impediment to participation, as many people in the area speak limited English

(55% of residents speak Spanish at home as opposed to 42% in the County). Even if community members do speak English, they may not connect with the art being produced because it does not reflect their culture. Latino respondents made clear in surveys that they seek more arts experiences reflective of their cultural identity. Latinos do not have a cultural home in Willowbrook, outside of the Catholic churches. Watts Century Latino Organization, in Watts, is the only nearby organization that has a Latino constituency. It is not an arts organization, although it does offer art workshops from time to time and it organizes the annual Cinco de Mayo Festival. LA Commons found no other organizations in Willowbrook promoting the Latino cultural presence on a community-wide basis.

¹ Jackson, Maria Rosario, Florence Kabawasa-Green and Joaquin Herranz. Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretations and Indicators. Washington D.C. Urban Institute, 11 Dec. 2006.

² Culture Builds Community. Philadelphia: Stockton Rush Bartol Foundation, 1 April 2002.

³ Weaving Traditional Arts into the Fabric of Community Health. San Francisco: Alliance for California Traditional Arts, 11 Oct. 2011.



Community stakeholders meet with Project Willowbrook team to discuss Phase 1 findings
Photo: Los Angeles County Arts Commission

Artist Angle: Willowbrook is...es...

Building upon LA Commons' findings in Phase 1, Rosten Woo continued the project's site-based investigation of cultural assets with the goal of presenting Willowbrook through its creative people and little known gems. Pounding the pavement for nearly a year and experimenting with the public billboard and Willowbrook Workbook, Woo made connections with over 100 residents. Through his project, Woo aimed to acknowledge that the community's people, more than statistics and infrastructure, contribute to Willowbrook's distinct character. In response to his observations that community members took great pride in the quiet residential quality of Willowbrook and that creativity thrived in the private realm, Woo curated and produced a home, garden and vehicle tour. Woo documented over 50 homes, gardens, institutions and vehicles with a professional photographer, highlighting the extraordinary in unexpected settings and exquisite craft behind private fences. In the process, he spoke with residents and institutional leaders about their impressions of and aspirations for Willowbrook. During the Willowbrook home, garden and vehicle tour on March 16, 2013, residents were invited into their neighbors' backyards enjoying intimate encounters with an exotic tortoise collection, a sophisticated dog training course and a monumental sculpture all invisible from the street. In this way, the tour exemplified the ability of arts and cultural programming to strengthen pride, mutual understanding and cohesion among Willowbrook's diverse population but also to deepen awareness among outsiders of Willowbrook's defining characteristics. A full compilation of Woo's photo-documentation and voices of Willowbrook community members can be found in the [Willowbrook is... es...](#) book **which now serves as the primary creative visioning tool for future policy making and planning for the community.**



Top to Bottom:
Rosten Woo finds the soul
of Willowbrook in the people
and their homes;
Surprising collections
in residents backyards;
Willowbrook equestrian
culture is alive
Photos: Alyse Emdur

TRADITION BEARERS: SHARING HISTORY AND CROSSING BOUNDARIES

A tradition bearer holds the community’s knowledge — history, traditions, language, culture, skills — so that residents are able to represent their community with other groups and share their understanding and abilities with others within their group. Often these people are elders, have devoted a significant part of their lives to engaging with their community and have deep awareness. Tradition bearers identified by respondents include organizational/ cultural leaders like Arturo Ybarra at Watts Century Latino Organization, a spokesman and intermediary between the Latino and African-American communities in the area and leader of the Cinco de Mayo celebration aimed at bridging differences between the two groups; those who practice traditional crafts like the Silver Threads Quilting Circle at the Willowbrook Senior Center; and advocates like Cecil Ferguson, a revered black artist in Los Angeles, whose picture is on the wall of the Watts Towers Arts Center in recognition of his role as a promoter of black art in the mainstream art world.



Whatever is going on in your life, it’s coming through that quilt. Whatever you are working on, whatever brings you joy, whatever brings stress to you, it goes in and you’re putting it in a place and that’s what’s so critical.

-Debra of Silver Threads Quilters, Willowbrook is...es...participant

Silver Threads Quilters at Willowbrook Senior Center

“I know of no more vivacious and productive senior center in all of Los Angeles,” Mark Ridley-Thomas, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Second District. Willowbrook Senior Center has existed for over 30 years as a second home for a very dynamic group of seniors. It’s a place where they gather, lunch together, take dance classes and learn computer skills. Like all tradition bearers, these quilt-makers are willing to pass on knowledge through a biennial show of their work at the Senior Center and contribute to the community by donating quilts to those in need at the MLK Medical Campus.



Silver Threads Member
Photo: Alyse Emdur

ARTISTS: INFORMAL ART-MAKING

Cultural participation in Willowbrook appears to take place more frequently in private settings than places where formal art and cultural programs happen. It is part of gatherings in homes, banquet halls or in the many small churches that dot the community. When asked whether they make art, 66% of the respondents answered in the affirmative. They work in every artistic discipline. Musicians often play at family gatherings such as quinceañeras, weddings and house parties. Existing on the continuum between amateur and professional, these performers are found through word of mouth. For many young people, drawing and graffiti writing are the art form of choice, for which they use what they call “black books” to do graffiti work and then pass it along, until the book finds its way back to the owner filled with examples of artwork from around the community. Respondents also mentioned fashion design and sewing as another strong line of interest. Cooking traditional foods was something many respondents said was important in their lives.



There is lots of art happening, but it's non-traditional, it's urban culture outside of what traditional art centers are providing.

-Project Willowbrook Survey Respondent

Skacore Music

One of the most energetic trends in the area, particularly among young Latinos, is Skacore. Skacore is rooted in the original Jamaican Ska which combines Caribbean rhythms with the beats of jazz and rhythm and blues. It was popular in the underground music scene in 1990s with Orange County serving as a hotspot. It has reemerged among young Latinos in Los Angeles as the foundation for a dynamic music scene drawing young people into “clean,” often underground parties to make music, dance and have fun. As Esteban Flores, a 20-year-old promoter says, he has only a few rules at his parties: no booze, no drugs, no DJs. Bands with names like La Progreska and Blanco y Negro are being formed at rapid fire pace to reinterpret the frenetic energy reminiscent of punk of the late 1980s and 1990s. Last July, thousands of Esteban’s followers converged at Watts Labor Community Action Committee for Skacore Invasion 2012, an outdoor event that included three stages, 40 bands, a skatepark and live art-making.



Skacore Invasion, WLCAC
Photo: YouTube Video Still



Sculpture by Bernardo Diaz in the backyard of his Willowbrook residence
Photo: Alyse Emdur



The human being has the ability to learn by seeing, hearing or doing...When you travel, you learn. Not if you travel with your eyes closed, no, you must go seeing.
-Willowbrook resident of 38 years, Bernardo Diaz describes his inspiration for building assemblage sculptures made of rubble from the 105 freeway construction, Willowbrook is...es...participant

ARTISTS: THE SPECIAL CASE OF THE WATTS TOWERS

Because of the proximity of the 52 year old Watts Towers Arts Center to Willowbrook, residents have access to a cultural venue that attracts people from all over the world. **Artists who are local as well as those internationally renowned are drawn to this facility based on its rich history and vibrant programs.** Offerings include a rotating series of visual art exhibitions in the Noah Purifoy gallery and the annual Day of the Drum/Jazz Festival attracting thousands to experience major performers. For young people, Cal Arts faculty and students provide animation training through that university's Sony-funded partnership program and, highly regarded bassist Nedra Wheeler serves as one of several mentor/teachers in their piano training program. The artists of Watts Village Theater Company also provide programming as a partner organization, most recently in last summer's art camp. Artists who have been connected to the facility since its early days continue their relationship informally or formally as artists in residence; these include veterans Charles Dickson and Judson Powell.

BAILA Con Duende

“BAILA Con Duende” was a 2012 exhibition at Watts Towers Arts Center that featured the works of 73 living Black Artists in Los Angeles (BAILA) at all levels of their careers, from legendary, established, mid-career and emerging, to those just starting out. This was the first exhibition opportunity for the BAILA movement, which seeks to advance the careers of black artists working in Los Angeles. Participants included world-renowned MacArthur genius award-winner Mark Bradford, established artists like Kehinde Wiley, Betye Saar and John Outterbridge and emerging artists like Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle, and an 11-year-old animator named Isaiah Ferguson. All were drawn based on the pull of the “Towers.” Curated by Lili Bernard, an artist who was in the show herself, “Baila Con Duende” generated a lot of excitement locally and throughout Los Angeles.



...during the 1960s-1990s the Watts Art Center effectively served the young emerging artists in the community. But during the late 1990s a large Latino population moved to Watts, but never really had a home in the Watts Arts Center.

-Project Willowbrook Survey Respondent



Watts Towers by Simon Rodia
Photo: Rosie Lee Hooks

OTHER CULTURAL VENUES: TIGHT BUDGETS, LIMITED PROGRAMMING



There is a lack of places for the community to support their cultural interests. Not many gathering places to facilitate the expression of art.

-Project Willowbrook Survey Respondent

In addition to Watts Towers Arts Center, a short list of cultural and service organizations offer arts and cultural programming to the community. Compton Dance Theater Foundation offers dance classes and Watts-Willowbrook Boys and Girls Club incorporates the Music Conservatory in partnership with The Scholarship Audition Performance Preparatory Academy. Watts Labor Community Action Committee offers a glassblowing program, exhibitions at their Cecil Ferguson Gallery and music at their Bones and Blues venue.

Nonetheless, one third of survey respondents noted that they rarely attend cultural events in Willowbrook and instead go out of the area to Cerritos, downtown Los Angeles, Huntington Park and other communities. **Cultural programming at the Willowbrook area venues was mentioned infrequently when survey respondents wrote what they like or would miss about their community.** LA Commons found offerings from local cultural venues offered on an inconsistent basis, depending on available funding. In a community with such a high employment rate, potential audiences have limited resources to contribute to programming and organizations have limited capacity to fundraise to cover costs.

Watts-Willowbrook Conservatory at Boys and Girls Club

The Watts-Willowbrook Conservatory at the Watts-Willowbrook Boys and Girls Club is transforming the lives of young people in the area through high quality music education provided by top-notch professional teaching musicians. The youngest of the students is six and there is no requirement to know how to play an instrument. Instruction goes through middle school. The program is free, including instruments, except for the \$20 it costs to join the Boys and Girls Club. Conservatory Founder, Director and renown jazz musician Billy Mitchell says, “This is about more than attitude towards classical music — it’s about teaching life skills, discipline and motivating students to want more in their lives.”



Young musicians in the Watts-Willowbrook Conservatory
Photo: Alyse Emdur

CHURCHES: ARTISTIC PARTICIPATION FOR THE FAITHFUL



We see arts the most in church settings.

-Project Willowbrook Survey Respondent

In and around Willowbrook, there are hundreds of churches representing various denominations generally segregated along ethnic lines. Music, and less often, dance and theater, are woven into the religious activities of these institutions and serve as opportunities for artistic participation. Often the focus of the churches is on carrying out their religious mission as opposed to involvement in community affairs, but several do host public events open to the broader community. San Miguel Catholic Church's Spring Carnival features appearances by professional and amateur performers. Macedonia Baptist's recent dance program honored Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. Trinity Chapel of Compton held an annual Harvest Festival. Some church leaders, like Pastor Glass of Fellowship Baptist Church, are involved in community affairs. A few churches actively cultivate relationships that cross the ethnic divide like Bethel Baptist which has hosted Latino ministers and Spanish classes for its African-American congregation. One of the oldest and most active churches in the area, St. Lawrence of Brindisi, has a dynamic series of artistic activities related to the celebration of the holy calendar. In February 2011, it celebrated Black history month every Sunday with special performances during the main services. **For Latinos, churches are a main connector to the larger community outside of their homes and potentially provide a bridge for this group to be more civically involved.** One participant in a community meeting cited, as an example the role of African-American churches in fostering leadership among African-Americans.

St. Lawrence of Brindisi

St. Lawrence of Brindisi Parish is one the handful of churches in the Willowbrook area with a high level of community involvement. One of their signature events is the Carnival. Hosted twice a year in March and November, it typically runs for three days. Drawing numbers upwards of 1,000 people, the carnival serves the dual purpose of fundraiser for the church and an important opportunity for the community to gather. The Carnival offers performances by amateurs and professionals, carnival rides for the kids, and a wide range of booths, some serving food, others run by local area businesses and others offering information about community services such as health clinics and local exercise programs.



The music ministry is about trying to support the worship services and also to give the youth an opportunity to learn some music skills, showing young people how to express themselves, have confidence in themselves.

-Michael Torrence, Music Director at Fellowship Baptist Church who also wrote and sang with Marvin Gaye, Willowbrook is...es...participant



Fellowship Baptist Church Youth Choir
Photo: Alyse Emdur

COMMUNITY EVENTS: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE COMMUNITY TO COME TOGETHER

There are several community events notable for their longevity or recognition by the community. In December 2012, the Watts-Willowbrook Christmas Parade went down Central Avenue for the 47th time. Started by the now deceased Edna Aliewine, a beloved tradition bearer, the parade showcases local talent and some from outside the area. While momentum has ebbed and budgets have tightened since the passing of Edna Aliewine in 2011, this longstanding community celebration is poised for new energy and investment. By expanding community participation in performances and float creation, **the parade has the potential to honor the vast influences that represent the changing cultural landscape of Watts and Willowbrook.**



Watts-Willowbrook Christmas Day Parade
Photos: Archives of Paula Aliewine



“My mother felt like when she was a child she went to Hollywood and she was looking around and wondered why there aren’t people here my color and so she said she was going to implement something in our community just like they have in Hollywood and the Rose Parade. She wanted to have that in this community right here so that’s why she started the Watts-Willowbrook Christmas Parade.

-Paula Aliewine, Willowbrook is...es...participant

With the partnership of Heal the Bay, the Willowbrook community has gained a renewed interest in the revitalization of one of its under-recognized assets, the Compton Creek. The creek runs 8.5 miles from just east of South Main Street between 107th and 108th Streets, moving from predominantly concrete to earth bottom, and ends just south of Del Amo Boulevard. For more than five years, Heal the Bay has been producing environmental education programs in Willowbrook and surrounding areas that connect community members to the watershed and empower them to understand, advocate for and improve the built environment. Recurring events like “Big Sunday at the Compton Creek” encourage community members to join local organizations and clubs in cleaning-up and building awareness of this hidden natural resource that holds potential as a destination.

Cinco de Mayo Celebration

The Cinco de Mayo celebration put on by Watts Century Latino Organization (WCLO) in collaboration with Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC) started as a way to bring the Latino and African-American residents of the area together. Twenty-two years ago, Arturo Ybarra, head of WCLO, approached the late Ted Watkins, then head of WLCAC, to partner and co-sponsor the event. The annual multicultural event happens at the Watts Towers Arts Center, bringing people of different backgrounds together to celebrate the Mexican Army’s unlikely victory over French forces at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. Performers reflect the spirit of the event and include mariachis, African drummers, Korean dancers and Aztec dancers.



Aztec Dancers at Cinco de Mayo Celebration
Photo: Watts Century Latino Organization

Artist Angle: Willowbrook is...es...

“I feel that if you’re going to be in a neighborhood, if you are going to try to rebuild a neighborhood, you need to know your people.”
- Joheather MacSwain, Willowbrook resident

On March 16, 2013, Woo galvanized the community of Willowbrook by producing a day-long showcase called **Celebrate Willowbrook** at the MLK Center for Public Health in the heart of Willowbrook’s commercial corridor. The free festival included a photo exhibit of the homes, gardens and vehicles by Woo and his photographer Alyse Emdur, food made by local chefs Raywilde Smokehouse and Grill and Lourdes Lozano and performances by the award-winning Centennial High School Marching Band and Drill Team, the Fellowship Baptist Youth Choir and Las Reynas de Jaliscos. In addition, LA Commons led three bus tours of select homes, gardens and local establishments curated by Woo. **Participants were surprised and delighted by Woo’s outsider reflection of the community and by the little known crafts, specialties and talents of their neighbors often happening on private property.** This event sparked the community’s interest in future Willowbrook home and garden tours and generated a strong sense of pride among attendees. **It was also an affirmation for those County representatives from various departments such as Parks and Recreation and Public Works, who saw an arts event bring disparate community members together on common ground.**

“An event like this is beautiful and important because it brings the community together. [Willowbrook] used to be predominantly black, but now there are different races from all over the world that have come into this area and I think it’s beautiful.”
-Bobby Reinhart, Willowbrook Resident



Celebrate Willowbrook photo exhibit
Photo: Los Angeles County Arts Commission



On the home and garden tour during Celebrate Willowbrook
Photo: Los Angeles County Arts Commission



Centennial High School Marching Band marches from the Rosa Parks Metro Station to MLK Center for Public Health
Photo: Los Angeles County Arts Commission

SCHOOLS: MAKING PROGRESS

LA Commons documented 77 schools in the extended project area that ranged from elementary to college, as represented by Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science (Drew). The elementary and secondary schools, including charters, are in the Compton (CUSD) or Los Angeles Unified School Districts (LAUSD). The schools within Willowbrook proper are predominantly CUSD schools. In 2005, CUSD revised and recommitted to a formal arts education policy, and developed a written strategic plan for implementation with the help of the Los Angeles County Arts Commission's *Arts for All* initiative. This plan was created to guide efforts for building quality sequential arts education that would be integral to the education offered to all students in all grades. While the district did take initial steps to move their plan forward, financial challenges over the past several years have dramatically slowed progress. However, the district has worked hard to establish several strong secondary (middle and high school) arts programs in music and visual art: Bunche Middle School, for example, proudly showcases work at the district-wide Winter Music Program, an annual event open to the community that attracts hundreds of people. In 2013-2014, CUSD is also participating in *Arts for All's* Student Access Fund, a program that brings arts education back into districts with high Title I student populations. From 1990 to 2007, Drew University hosted the annual "Jazz at Drew" festival. University leadership is interested in bringing back this event as it had made Willowbrook a destination for jazz audiences while serving the local community.

Centennial High School Marching Band and Drill Team

The Centennial High School Marching Band and Drill Team is part of a legacy now carried on by former students Manny Castaneda and Raynisha Richardson. Castaneda directs the band and Richardson coaches the majorettes. The band's style is high energy "high step" which originates from the South by way of the original band director John Edwards, who was from South Texas. While the band has earned national acclaim, placing second in the 2012 National Battle of the High School Marching Bands, Castaneda feels, "the value of it [youth participation] is seeing the students develop their organizational skills and become responsible."



Centennial High School Marching Band and Drill Team
Photo: Alyse Emdur

“ The band leaders are training our students not only in how to play as part of a group, but also concert style technique, which prepares them for college and a career in music.
- Renee Cobb, administrator, CUSD College and Career Support Services and Visual and Performing Arts

COUNTY FACILITIES: HIGHLY VALUED, INTERMITTENT PROGRAMS

Respondents specifically named Ted Watkins Park (actually in Watts), Earvin “Magic” Johnson Park and Mona Park as favorite places to visit in Willowbrook. Enterprise, George Washington Carver and Athens Parks are also in Willowbrook proper. These parks are sites for recreational classes, public art and festivals in addition to rest, relaxation and quality time spent with family and friends. Earvin “Magic” Johnson Park was referred to as “tranquil, calm, reminiscent of the countryside and an escape from the urban environment.” The parks have ongoing after school programs and summer camps for youth as well as exercise classes for adults. Tight budgets limit the extent of available programs, particularly those taught by outside instructors. Carver Park has fee-based adult ballroom and African dance taught by professionals. In 2013, to expand vision and access, the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation initiated a major new effort. For the first time, they conducted a Parks Master Plan process for Willowbrook and worked with the community to identify vacant and unused land for potential parks, community garden and greenway developments, with the ultimate goal of increasing activated open space.

Libraries also were favorite places in Willowbrook with some specifically mentioning the programming in these facilities. Both Willowbrook and A C Bilbrew program activities for the community, including storytelling for children and arts classes for teens and adults. These programs are not regularly scheduled but offered only as time and budget allow. Los Angeles County health facilities, including the MLK Medical Campus have spaces for public gathering and engagement, including the MLK Hospital Great Lawn and community rooms. There is also an outdoor space at the MLK Center for Public Health that can be used for community events in addition to the fitness garden on the west side of the building. The Willowbrook Senior Center, adjacent to the A C Bilbrew Library and Black Resource Center, offers older residents a wide range of artistic opportunities including dancing, art-making, quilting and sewing.



MLK Center for Public Health
Photo: LA Commons

A C Bilbrew Library

A C Bilbrew Library is the County Library System's Black Resource Center, a repository of information on the African-American experience. In this role, it has attracted African-Americans of stature to the neighborhood since the late 1970s. Prominent visitors including Cab Calloway, Yolanda King and famed local activist Sweet Alice Harris have come to the library as part of the Living Legends Celebration, last presented in 2007. The facility is one of Willowbrook's architectural gems, designed by African-American artist and architect Vincent Proby specifically for the African-American Living Legends series. In recent years, other programs have included prominent African-Americans, including Hill Harper, who gave a talk and signed books in 2011. A C Bilbrew is also home to a collection of original hand-carved masks. To commemorate the 1984 Olympics held in Los Angeles, Emile Elliott Jordan, a Willowbrook resident, donated 25 of his hand-carved masks and sculptures to the library. Jordan's work is inspired by historic African tribal motifs. Jordan is an Air Force veteran and a retired construction worker and was an avid skier, ice skater and fencer (incidentally none of these activities were common for African-American men at the time). He became interested in art after seeing a wooden plaque of a skier at a ski lodge. After taking art classes with Charles Dickson in the 1970s at the Watts Towers Art Center Jordan said, "this was the beginning of the art world for me." In the fall of 2013, Jordan received recognition of his artwork and for his contribution to the community in a first ever public presentation about his art practice.



A C Bilbrew Library
Photo: LA Commons



One of 25 artworks by Emile Jordan marking the A C Bilbrew Library book stacks
Photo: Los Angeles County Arts Commission

SECTION 5.....
LEVERAGING CULTURE TO PROMOTE HEALTH

LEVERAGING CULTURE TO PROMOTE HEATH

In the 2011, the architecture and urban planning firm Gensler was commissioned to conduct a comprehensive master plan for the MLK Medical Campus and the surrounding community. Their final report became a source document for LA Commons. The report defined healthy community as one that offers equitable access to education, housing and jobs; the ability to live without fear of violence; freedom from environmental hazards; convenient access to parks and recreation; the availability of fresh food; and access to high quality nearby health care. While the County's investments in the infrastructure will improve the physical landscape, attention should be paid to the social environment if quality of life in Willowbrook is to improve as well. The Los Angeles County Arts Commission and LA Commons posit that meaningful opportunities for participation in civic, cultural, social and recreational activities are also integral to a healthy community.

Willowbrook's existing cultural assets and creative energy, brought to the surface in this project, can play an active role in cultivating a healthier, more livable community. In exploring opportunities to expand public engagement in the arts, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and LA Commons took a holistic perspective, identifying four key realms in which greater cultural participation could have a meaningful impact.

- Health and Wellness
- Youth Development
- Civic Participation and Social Connectedness
- Economic Development



MLK Willowbrook JAM Session with Bollywood Dancers
Photo: Los Angeles County Arts Commission

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The challenging circumstances that face people living in Willowbrook have an impact on the health outcomes of the community. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health periodically publishes a report that looks at the key indicators by Service Planning Area (SPA). Willowbrook is part of SPA 6, one of eight geographic regions in Los Angeles County used by public agencies and officials and other service providers for data gathering and service planning purposes. Other communities in SPA 6 include Inglewood, View Park, Compton, Crenshaw, Florence, Hyde Park, Lynwood, Paramount and Watts. The large size of Los Angeles County (4,300 square miles), makes these planning areas necessary to provide more relevant services targeted to the specific needs of the residents in these different areas.

In SPA 6, the prevalence of gangs results in the highest number of deaths within a SPA. People die from homicides in SPA 6 at the rate of 64.7 per 100,000 population. As a comparison, the next highest homicide rate in SPA 8 (South Bay communities) is 28.1 per 100,000. SPA 6 also scores poorly on many other health measures with the highest rates of both adult and childhood obesity, diabetes and deaths due to heart disease of all SPAs. **These health statistics are coupled with high numbers of people without health insurance.** The environmental context of Willowbrook, a critical health factor, does not promote health either, because of the limited access to healthy food and the perception that the area is too unattractive and unsafe to engage in outdoor exercise.

In psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's book *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* and several of his other publications, he reports on his study of "what makes an experience genuinely satisfying."¹ 'Flow' is the state of consciousness where one experiences "deep enjoyment, creativity and a total involvement with life." His argument is that the more one can find themselves in this state, the happier one will be and that active participation in creative pursuits is a sure path to "flow." Thus, while participation in a community-based arts and cultural program may not address disease in the specific sense, artistic involvement can be a powerful way to counteract the stress that can negatively impact health as it promotes joy and well-being. Not surprisingly, one study respondent agreed saying, "... in the community, of course, you have to have housing, food, shelter, education, you can't

live without them. But to uplift the community there's a cultural aspect that is definitely needed." Others had very relevant quotes on this topic as well:

"I do think there is an intersection between art and community health and wellness. Art is one of those things that makes you feel positive, inspired and optimistic and when you feel that way then you become more interested in what you can do to preserve that feeling both in the short term and the long term."

"... we don't have much of that healthy activity here. This is the classic 'food desert' kind of community."

The arts can provide avenues to address this problematic state of affairs by engaging people in movement.

Pointing to the potential of the new medical campus as a venue for promoting health and wellness for the entire community, a respondent shared, "One thing you do see here is that employees of Drew University and the MLK Medical

Campus spend a lot of time at noon hour exercising. There are these walking groups that exist, they're not that big but if you look outside or drive around at noon, you'll see small groups of employees walking around the block. No walking paths. We're talking sidewalks. But at least there are sidewalks because there are some communities that don't have sidewalks." Capitalizing on existing energy, the arts can be a vehicle to address the community's health issues by inspiring movement, a greater sense of safety in the public built environment and even the sensation of "flow."



Art is one of those things that makes you feel positive, inspired and optimistic and when you feel that way then you become more interested in what you can do to preserve that feeling both in the short-term and the long-term.

— Project Willowbrook Survey Respondent

¹ Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

One of the most striking characteristics of Willowbrook is the young population. 59% of residents are under 34 and the median age is 25 compared to the County median of 34.8 years. The percentage of residents 0-18 is among the County's highest at 32.8% versus 24.1% countywide. **Many of those engaged in the study felt it was important to address the needs of youth to promote their success, provide them with a path other than involvement in gangs and cultivate their potential as activists for community change.**

Studies have shown that young people who participate in the arts achieve better educational and life outcomes. Specifically, artistic participation provides the means to gain strength, resiliency and a positive self-image as noted in a report on the arts and the promotion of healthy young people called "The Power of Art," commissioned by The California Endowment.¹ This work echoes that of Shirley Brice Heath, Stanford professor, who is a strong proponent of youth participation in the arts and recognizes that their engagement in the arts is a means not only to self-development but also to gainful employment and economic self-sufficiency.² Although our survey respondents recognized the value of the arts in general, they specifically said they wanted more programming for youth with an emphasis on after school activities at school and in other places like parks, "activities to engage kids so they won't get involved in gangs." Someone also mentioned "finding ways to connect local artists with youth" and the youth themselves talked about having a place, a safe place one would assume, "where teenagers can relax and talk." Another youth put it like this: "a safe space for youth to do street art, right now there's no safe space to do this. Something like the Pico Union Graff Lab, call it the Watts Graff Lab." People also mentioned an interest in family programming such as "mommy and me classes" and "family art nights at school."

Formal opportunities for youth involvement in the arts, beyond school hours, are uneven at best. Although all the parks do have after school programs, there is minimal involvement of artists in these activities. Libraries do bring in artists from time to time but they do not host formal programs after school. The places that do have programs, like the Watts-Willowbrook Boys and Girls Club, have very limited space and funding to offer more. We also heard anecdotally that safely getting to the programs is a big issue due to the territorial nature of local gangs. This factor came up frequently in the responses as a potential obstacle to participation. To better represent this barrier to

access, LA Commons worked with Rosten Woo to overlay gang territory in Willowbrook with schools and youth programs as seen on the Youth Development Cultural Asset Map with a Gang Territory Overlay.

¹ Anderson, Susan, Nancy Walch and Kate Becker. The Power of Art: The Arts as an Effective Intervention Strategy for At-Risk Youth. Los Angeles: California Endowment, 3 Oct. 2006.

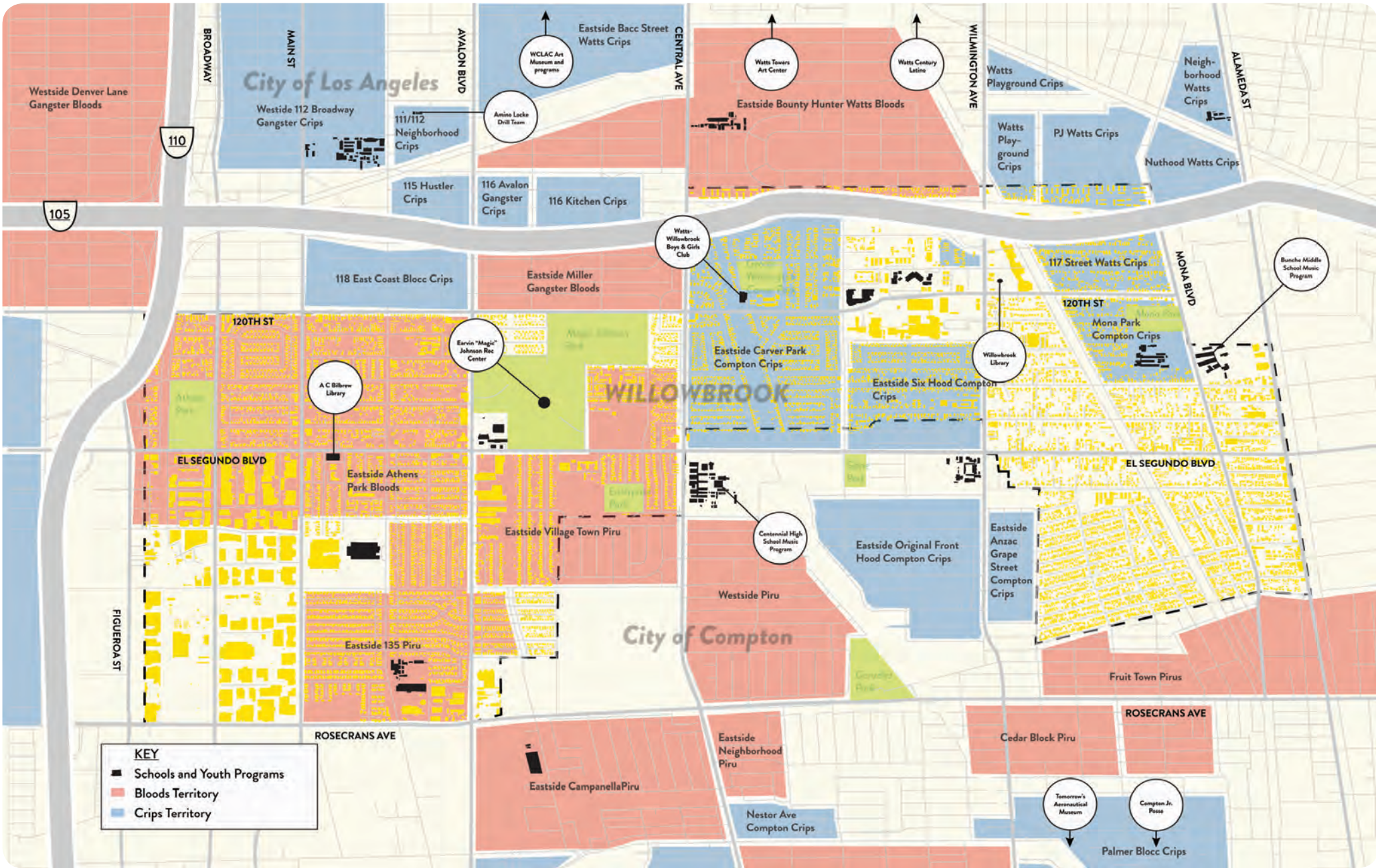
² Heath, Shirley Brice and Elisabeth Soep. "Youth Development and the Arts in Nonschool Hours." *Grantmakers in the Arts*, Spring 1998: 9-32.

[we need] a safe space for youth to do street art, right now there's no safe space to do this. Something like the Pico Union Graff Lab, call it the Watts Graff Lab.
-Project Willowbrook Survey Respondent



Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas painting MLK Mural
Photo: Office of Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CULTURAL ASSET MAP WITH A GANG TERRITORY OVERLAY | MAP BY ROSTEN WOO



“African-Americans in Watts are dealing with the reality that they’re living in a time that’s very different than the one that defined them.”
-Project Willowbrook Survey Respondent

Willowbrook is a community of old-timers and newcomers, often breaking down along racial lines, African-American and Latino respectively. The Latino population has experienced steady growth as in many other areas in the County, the state and the nation largely due to immigration. 55% of children in Los Angeles County have parents who are immigrants. Following this larger trend, the numbers of Latinos in Willowbrook are up 10% since the 2000 census to 64%. As the population of Latinos continues to rise, **Willowbrook exists as a bifurcated community between those from the earlier generation of mostly African-American, now older, people with access to middle class jobs and pensions, and a new wave of young Latinos coming into the area based on its affordability.** Many African-Americans continue in their roles as community leaders while Latinos tend to find community within family and church. Respondents mentioned that there is racial tension between the two groups. One person said “the demographics have changed, I guess it was 80% African-American, I’d say 20 years ago or maybe less, and things have rapidly changed, it’s a challenge because language is a barrier sometimes.”



Young musicians at Watts-Willowbrook Boys and Girls Club
Photo: Watts-Willowbrook Boys and Girls Club



You have very little fighting when people are singing, dancing, in painting classes. -Project Willowbrook Survey Respondent

There is a clear link between resident engagement and well performing communities. For the Willowbrook community to be a “healthy” place, the challenges related to involving young Latinos alongside African-American leaders must be overcome. Cultivating new Latino leaders should be a priority but the institutional framework for this to happen is missing. According to Arturo Ybarra, Executive Director of Watts Century Latino Organization, the Latino community would benefit from an institutional counterpart to the African-American churches, which have played a critical role in training people for leadership roles.

The African-Americans who lead local civic groups expressed a strong interest in achieving greater involvement of this segment of the population. The arts can be an effective tool to engage folks who may not be involved currently.

As written in *Civic Dialogue Arts and Culture: Findings from Animating Democracy*, “The arts and humanities can broaden citizens’ voices and participation, offering a welcoming entry point to those who have not felt access to the civic realm before.” The Americans for the Arts Animating Democracy Initiative inspires, informs, promotes and connects arts and culture as potent contributors to community, civic and social change.¹ Harvard scholar, Robert Putnam, writes on the value of “social capital,” or the benefits that derive from the cooperation between individuals and groups including a lessening of social isolation.² In his work, he has focused extensively on the effectiveness of the arts as a tool for building social capital. In Willowbrook, it appears that significant segments of the population are connecting to others, either via church, community groups or even gangs, but that cross cultural connections are not happening. For example, LA Commons received a lot of feedback that the formal artistic programming that happens, both visual art and performing arts, is focused on African-Americans and not Latinos. One respondent put it this way, “the community has a need to understand itself and that means everyone in it, to have an understanding of each other. You have very little fighting when people are singing, dancing, in painting classes.”

¹ Korza, Pam, Barbara Schaffer Bacon and Andrea Assaf. *Civic Dialogue, Arts & Culture: Findings from Animating Democracy*. Washington D.C.: Americans for the Arts, 2005.

² Putnam, Robert. *Better Together: The Arts and Social Capital*. Cambridge, MA.: John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University 2000.



Compton Jr. Posse
Photo: Alyse Emdur

“ You don’t really feel racism or things like that because everyone has a commonality with the earth and the animals which teaches you that everything living is a being and deserves respect and I think that’s why everyone in this community gets along.”
Mayisha Akbar, founder of the Compton Junior Posse whose mission is to teach youth life skills through equestrian sports and animal husbandry.
Willowbrook is...es...participant



I would say just being exposed to something other than what you see on an everyday basis — which is really important for our students because, I mean, in all honesty whether it be through standardized testing or just the curriculum we’re using, our students don’t always have the background information that sometimes is just taken for granted in other places. So we have to make sure that we provide those other experiences so that they have something else to draw on.
And I think that a major way to do that is through the arts.

-Project Willowbrook Survey Respondent

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A consistent finding across all respondents to Project Willowbrook’s Phase 1 assessment, was the affirmation that blight in Willowbrook is a real problem. The community expressed that blight, defined by unsightly vacant lots and littered streets, fuels a fear of crime. There is a perception that vacant lots, for instance, attract criminal activity therefore safety is a public concern that often deters community members from participating in public activities. This is borne out by data in the 2013 Key Indicators Report, published by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, which reported in SPA 6 the lowest levels of access to the physical environment for recreation or exercise because of a fear of crime. People did share specific suggestions for addressing the blight in the community including “more open space,” “more plants and trees,” “public art opportunities” and “a program to clean up the streets.”

County-led developments in and around the MLK Medical Campus including the Willowbrook Streetscape Improvement Project, the Parks Master Plan, the Transit Oriented District Master Plan and the Rosa Parks Metro Station Area Redesign will address some of these issues. Willowbrook’s central corridor along Wilmington Boulevard from the 105 freeway to the medical campus can be a focal point for developing a concentration of artistic participation opportunities including amateur art-making, festivals and community gatherings, arts after school and purchase of artistic goods.

Respondents emphasized the employment that these arts opportunities might bring, creating more prospects for everyone to earn a living, in particular, youth. Participation in the arts can provide a path to self-sufficiency for young people, giving them knowledge and skills to pursue further educational opportunities and long term employment. Given the proximity of the Watts Towers and its community of artists, making the connection between established professional artists and young people, including emerging artists, is definitely a gap worth addressing.



We’ve had two — we called them insurrections, riots — I’ve lived through both. And economic development has never been able to redevelop. The closure of MLK Hospital left a big void.

-Project Willowbrook Survey Respondent



I think this community really is coming along, and the hospital at Willowbrook is really bringing people together. Stakeholders are really developing.

-Project Willowbrook Survey Respondent



Vacant lot on Willowbrook Avenue and 118th Street
Photo: LA Commons

SECTION 6.....

FUTURE PROGRAMMING OPTIONS

FUTURE PROGRAMMING OPTIONS

In Willowbrook, informal artmaking dominates artistic and cultural participation in the neighborhood. In schools there are bands, choral groups and drill teams, in churches there are choirs, musicians and dancers. And in homes and other private spaces, people are applying exquisite craft to a range of mediums by sculpting, collecting, writing, dancing, singing, sewing and cooking. The time is ripe in Willowbrook to expand and support these activities through partnerships between Los Angeles County and community-based organizations. The project team generated ideas for future programming options that not only increase cultural vitality in the area but also address the key realms of impact:

- Health and Wellness
- Youth Development
- Civic Participation and Social Connectedness
- Economic Development

Among the many potential options, four programming options using arts and cultural programs could foster livability outcomes in Willowbrook:

1. Community as Classroom
2. Leveraging Artists and Local Culture in Public Engagement
3. The Willowbrook Hub
4. Dance Willowbrook

With each option, there is a program overview, discussion of the goals and the requirements for implementation.



Cofounded by Tuskegee Airmen, Tomorrow's Aeronautical Museum provides youth with aviation and life skills
Photo: Alyse Emdur

OPTION ONE: COMMUNITY AS CLASSROOM

The current and coming developments will transform the built environment of Willowbrook in ways that have yet to be fully imagined. However, there is still considerable room for community input and engagement in the process of creating a Willowbrook that reflects the hopes of residents and fulfills the possibilities for a higher quality of life. As young people represent so many in the area, it makes sense that they play a role in shaping their community's future. Solutions for a myriad of community issues can be found in strategies that engage artists and youth in problem-solving. Socially engaged art or social practice is a dynamic approach whereby connection with community, public participation and process are central to conceiving an artwork or creative gesture. Artists working in social practice are often less interested in traditional artwork creation, placing more value on experience and addressing a broader civic issue.

The Project Willowbrook cultural asset study provides the basis for a program that would partner social practice artists with young people ages 14 to 18 to implement initiatives that enliven the physical landscape of Willowbrook and address key civic issues in the area. Community as Classroom would engage Willowbrook youth in the next phase of Project Willowbrook, enlisting their creative energies and enabling them to function as investigators and innovators, remaking the public space in partnership with both arts and non-arts organizations in the area.

Goals for the program would be to give these young people the opportunity to understand their community better and to implement arts-based community projects based on this knowledge. These efforts will involve the people of Willowbrook from community leaders, established artists and business owners to students and County staff. In the process, the teens will be mentored by artists through structured programming but ultimately function as true collaborators in the design and implementation of the art projects. The teens would recognize their potential as creators and as valued participants in the civic life of their neighborhood.

In addition, local institutions hosting the these projects would gain support for their efforts to improve the area through visible art projects that animate unlikely places such community health care facilities, vacant lots and stores. These tangible projects would shift the community's perception of the area as an unsafe place by welcoming people to engage with the art and in so doing connect with their community. Project outcomes would not only increase quality of life in Willowbrook, but also inform the long-range planning underway through the County Departments of Public Health, Regional Planning and Parks and

Recreation. Art, creativity and community identity would be reflected in Willowbrook's tomorrow. The program could be replicated elsewhere in Willowbrook and other communities to harness the talents of youth and artists in civic development.



Mural Artist Carlos Spivey draws portraits for community members at the MLK Medical Campus Great Lawn
Photo: Los Angeles County Arts Commission



Youth participate in an artist guided photoshoot of their community
Photo: Los Angeles County Arts Commission

OPTION TWO: LEVERAGING ARTISTS AND LOCAL CULTURE IN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The County Department of Public Health is leading an inter-departmental initiative mandated by the Board of Supervisors to develop County-wide health-promoting policies and practices. In 2013, the cross-agency Healthy Design Workgroup (Chief Executive Office and the Departments of Fire, Parks and Recreation, Public Health, Public Works, Regional Planning, and the Community Development and Arts Commissions) identified Willowbrook as a testing ground for collaboration around healthy design that could then be applied to other County unincorporated areas. Because of the Project Willowbrook initiative, the Healthy Design Policy Workgroup invited the Arts Commission to the table as a leader in public engagement and as a knowledge base for Willowbrook. Based on the success of Rosten Woo's public engagement strategy in which he synergized the authentic creative pulse of Willowbrook, the Arts Commission can assist the Healthy Design Workgroup to streamline outreach, planning and civic development in Willowbrook.

The Healthy Design Workgroup, with the assistance of the Arts Commission, can leverage local and regional artists and organizations to investigate, propose and implement creative public engagement tailored to specific audiences in Willowbrook and the objectives of the Workgroup. This presents an opportunity for the Arts Commission to demonstrate the role of art not only as a noun, but as a verb: art as a vehicle for attracting audiences, activating people physically, increasing public safety, testing future planning ideas, empowering the public to evaluate their public spaces critically, drawing out and featuring the distinct character of a place and engendering mutual understanding.

For example, the Willowbrook Streetscape Improvement Project's community outreach can be deepened through collaboration with the Watt-based East Side Riders who engage youth in public service and health education by way of cycling. The East Side Riders could recruit their group to lead a bike tour of the streetscape improvement area that would culminate in a public meeting. Those riders could bring observations, insights and questions to the conversation based on a fun, on-the-ground communal experience.



East Side Riders Bike Club
Photo: Los Angeles Metro

OPTION THREE: THE WILLOWBROOK HUB

Vibrant public spaces that welcome a multitude of uses for creative expression fuel community vitality. Given the right patch of real estate and space for experimentation, professional and amateur artists, practicing in a range of disciplines can enliven public spaces. The benefits of cultural development are nationally recognized. Creative placemaking, which engages cross-sector collaboration to increase the presence of cultural activity in a community, can transform problematic areas into dynamic cultural centers that stimulate the local economy.

The MLK Center for Public Health was completed in 2011, yet LA Commons' research showed that the community held the facility at a distance. This is often the case with new community facilities, and it's possible that the security check point does not promote a welcoming environment. LA Commons and the Los Angeles County Arts Commission found that there is a delicate balance in Willowbrook between a police presence that engenders a sense of public safety versus a sense of fear. Despite these challenges, the MLK Center for Public Health remains a promising social space, given its location, facility design and its administration's interest in being a site for activities that involve residents and other stakeholders. Over the last year, the MLK Center for Public Health has welcomed a range of public events, including Celebrate Willowbrook, sending a message of accessibility and strengthening community ownership.

A Willowbrook Hub, a place for residents to engage with each other around a series of projects that transform the spaces around the MLK Center for Public Health and adjacent vacant lots into sites of community participation, would have the following goals:

- Transform the public spaces along Wilmington Avenue based on actions that involve local artists and cultural organizers in creating programs that engage the public and focus on creating a more healthy Willowbrook;
- Create a safe venue where the people of Willowbrook and the surrounding community can come and interact with each other furthering their sense of connectedness; and
- Pilot ideas that can serve as models for permanent developments along this important corridor in the area for which the Departments of Regional Planning and Parks and Recreation are doing master planning.

Specific programs might include a farmers market, in partnership with one of the Southern California Farmers Market organizers who would work with citizens and a local organizational sponsor such as the MLK Center for Public Health. According to the Project for Public Places, "Markets are more economically successful if they also work as social places for community...With the right plan, business mix and management, a public market can represent a real step forward for the renewal of downtowns and neighborhoods." ¹

Therefore, the market must be a shared space where the public wants to linger and interact. Artists and art-making play a role here. The farmers market could invite local craft vendors to sell their wares to further the economic prospects for individuals in the neighborhood. Artists could lead temporary art interventions in partnership with community members fostering community interaction with the incorporation of places to sit, mingle, even share a meal. Other engagement opportunities might include participatory arts workshops that tie into seasonal themes and performers who bring interest and energy to the scene.

Projects proposed would all be implemented first as a pilot to determine activities that generate support and attendance. Those that are successful can be implemented with the long term in mind, fostering ongoing community support that will ultimately influence the future use and transformation of vacant lots.

¹ Corolan, Mary Lou. "PPS' Approach to Markets." Project for Public Spaces 7 Mar. 2012. Web. <<http://www.pps.org/reference/markets-approach/>>.



The community gathers at the MLK Center for Public Health for Celebrate Willowbrook
Photo: Los Angeles County Arts Commission

OPTION FOUR: DANCE WILLOWBROOK

Dance Willowbrook would incorporate a comprehensive set of strategies to support communities and individuals in moving towards a path of better health through arts engagement as preventative care. As compared to the rest of Los Angeles County, Service Planning Area (known as SPA) 6 shows the highest obesity levels for both children and adults and the highest percent of adults at risk for major depression. In addition to the Willowbrook Hub option which promotes access to healthy, locally grown food and the creation of environments ripe for social interaction, Dance Willowbrook could motivate people to exercise with an emphasis on participating in activities that are joyful and instinctive like dance.

On the east side of Los Angeles County, in Supervisorial District 1, there is a program called the Los Angeles County Capers. This Department of Parks and Recreation program creates an opportunity for four to 17 year olds to participate in performance teams that develop routines based on a theme. At a cost of \$25 per child to participate and running from March until June every year, teams train at the parks and then gather for a showcase at a major County venue at the end of the session. This kind of program would expose Willowbrook youth to dance, while also promoting team building, confidence and dedication.

Since 2008, the Ford Amphitheatre, managed by the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, has programmed dynamic participatory music and dance workshops called JAM Sessions led by professional artists. In 2012, the program expanded into neighborhoods across L.A. County including Willowbrook. The eight JAMs ranging from Hip Hop and Bhangra to Hawaiian and West African dance, attracted hundreds of participants who left each event not only with new dance skills, but also a broader perspective of dance styles and cultural practices, a shared experience with fellow community members and meaningful and fun exercise.

Dance Willowbrook could focus on impacting the health and wellness of Willowbrook in the same way. Dance Willowbrook, as the next iteration of JAMs, could leverage local talent identified through Project Willowbrook's cultural asset mapping process to ensure that the creative energy of Willowbrook is reflected in programming. For instance, a dance instructor identified through Project Willowbrook might serve as one of the workshop instructors. Local parks would be ideal venues for Dance Willowbrook, because they are community assets, but offer limited arts programming.

For Dance Willowbrook, the JAM session format could be adapted as a sequential workshop series culminating in a performance and community dance party. The latter has precedent in

the area. In October 2011, more than 500 Compton elementary school students, staff and parents had a dance party. Organized by Compton Unified School District staff and held at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial in downtown Compton, the event was held in conjunction with First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" physical education challenge, which called on millions of schools throughout the country to dance.



Hip Hop Dance Willowbrook JAM Session at The MLK Medical Campus Great Lawn
Photo: Los Angeles County Arts Commission

VITAL PARTNERS



Concerned Citizens of Willowbrook
Community Development Commission, Los Angeles County
Department of Health Services, Los Angeles County
Department of Parks and Recreation, Los Angeles County
Department of Public Health, Los Angeles County
Department of Public Works, Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning, Los Angeles County
Gensler, Consultant, MLK Medical Campus Master Plan
Metabolic Studio
Metro Transportation Authority, Los Angeles
Public Library, Los Angeles County
Office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
St. Lawrence of Brindisi Catholic Church
Watts Labor Community Action Committee
Watts Century Latino Organization
Watts-Willowbrook Boys and Girls Club

ARTISTS

Lawrence Argent, Commissioned Artist, MLK Medical Campus
Guillermo Aviles Rodriguez, Artistic Director, Watts Village Theatre Company
Peque Brown, Mural Artist
Dan Corson, Commissioned Artist, Medical Campus
Amanda Ferrell-Hale, Mural Artist
Louise Griffin, Commissioned Artist, Augustus Hawkins Mental Health Center
Ronald Jackson, Mural Artist
Toni Love, Mural Artist
Dominique Moody, Commissioned Artist, MLK Medical Campus
Carlos Spivey, Mural Artist
Rosten Woo, Lead Artist, Project Willowbrook

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Heather Hoggan, Administrator

Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson, Project Development Advisor

Julie Ray, Report Design

SECTION 7
APPENDIX :

In Phase 1, LA Commons gathered data about the community to gain a deeper understanding of Willowbrook, its challenges and opportunities and the aspects of the area that might benefit most from building upon cultural assets. Secondary data sources included:

- U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2010 American Community Survey
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census
- Rosa Parks Metro Station Master Plan & Transit Oriented District, April 20, 2010 by RAW International
- MLK Medical Center Campus Master Plan: Analysis Findings Report, July 20, 2011 by Gensler
- Los Angeles Police Department Web site, Crime Mapping page
- Los Angeles Times Community Data Center
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Medical Center Campus Redevelopment Draft Environmental Impact Report (SCH#2010031040) by Sapphos Environmental, Inc.
- Google Maps

Census Designated Places (CDP), as described by the U.S. Census Bureau are “the statistical counterparts of incorporated places, delineated to provide data for settled concentrations of population that are identifiable by a name but are not legally incorporated with boundaries defined in cooperation with local officials.”

For LA Commons’ purpose, using the map for the Willowbrook CDP seemed most logical as the data developed from the decennial census is readily available for the CDP and can be queried to analyze a variety of data sets. This creates a standardized analysis process useful in providing a statistical profile of the selected region, and enables researchers to make specific observations about that area. The CDP is also useful for mapping purposes, since many geo-spatial mapping programs, including Esri’s GIS, and Google maps utilize it.

CENSUS DATA

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

	Willowbrook CDP	L.A. County
Less than 9th grade	24.4%	13.9%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	15.0%	0.2%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	28.2%	21.3%
Some college, no degree	19.6%	18.8%
Associate's degree	5.2%	6.8%
Bachelor's degree	4.5%	19.0%
Graduate or professional degree	3.1%	9.9%

EMPLOYMENT

Population in labor force	59.1%	65.5%
Civilian labor force employed	49.7%	58.8%
Civilian labor force unemployed	16.2%	10.1%
Youth Unemployment Rate (aged 16-19)	38.8%	32.4%
Black/African-American Unemployment Rate	21.1%	15.1%
Hispanic/Latino Unemployment Rate	12.1%	10.8%

INCOME

Per capita income		
	\$13,814	\$27,954
Median household income	\$37,632	\$56,266
Individuals below poverty level	25%	16.3%

HOUSEHOLDS

Male	47.9%	49.3%
Female	52.1%	50.7%
Persons per household	3.77	2.99
Homeownership Rate	48.1%	47.8%
Percentage of population born outside U.S.	29.7%	35.6%
Speak only English at home	46.6%	43.2%
Speak language other than English at home	53.4%	56.8%
Speak mostly Spanish at home	52.6%	39.5%

Source: Census, 2010 American Community Survey

To gather data for Phase 1 of cultural asset mapping, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission (LACAC) and LA Commons partnered with local institutions with links to important constituencies in addition to connecting with people who did not have an organizational affiliation. Prior to the start of this process, LA Commons with LACAC developed the interview protocol and questions to ensure consistency as project team members for LA Commons and LACAC shared the responsibility for conducting interviews. Questions were grouped into four categories:

- Information about the interviewee
- Cultural and community assets
- The specific role of arts and cultural activities in addressing key social determinants of health (youth development, social inclusion, stress reduction and community identification)
- Recommended strategies for conducting additional community outreach

In examining the demographics of interviewees, LA Commons specifically targeted key groups from which to gather additional information: youth, Latinos, artists and potential leaders. In partnership with Watts-Willowbrook Boys and Girls Club and Watts Century Latino Organization, LA Commons conducted three focus groups with two involving high school youth from Locke High School and one involving young adults. Focus group questions sought information about how, why and where participants engage in creative activities. In addition, LA Commons conducted surveys in key gathering places around the neighborhood to capture input from the general population. The total number of people reached in Phase 1 was 168.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions

1. What is your role in the community?
2. What are the boundaries for Willowbrook?
3. Are these boundaries defined?
4. How do you define artistic and cultural practices in your community?
5. Based on this definition, what cultural practices are occurring in the area?
6. What are community assets?
 - Skill sets
 - Knowledge
 - Cultural practices
 - Cultural organizations – businesses and nonprofits
 - Buildings
 - Organizations – businesses and nonprofits
 - Individuals – artists and community participants
 - Services and programs
 - Sports
 - Events like weekend markets or recurring festivals

Social Determinants of Health

7. What are the social benefits of being involved with artistic and cultural practices in your community? (i.e. social support, building networks and feeling more connected to community)
8. Does being involved in artistic and cultural practices strengthen your identification with your community?
9. What role do artistic and cultural practices play in helping you and other members of your community effectively manage stress?
10. What role do artistic and cultural practices play in youth development?

Reaching Out to the Community

11. How should we outreach to the community?
12. How is the community organized? Is there fragmentation? Politically? Socially?
13. Is there a level of neighborhood pride? How is it exhibited?
14. If you were to draw a postcard of Willowbrook, what would be on it?
15. When you leave Willowbrook, what do you miss?

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWEES

Name	Title	Organization Affiliation
1. Guillermo Aviles-Rodriguez	Former Artistic Director	Watts Village Theater Company
2. Willie Middlebrook	Artist	WLCAC
3. Melissa Bereal	Division of Performing Arts Specialist	Compton Unified School District
4. Ernestine Wilson	Long-time Willowbrook resident	-
5. Edgar Arceneaux	Former Executive Director	Watts House Project
6. Elliot Pinkney	Artist	-
7. Carolyn Kobayashi	Asst Regional Administrator (South Region)	County of L.A. Public Library
8. Cynthia Oliver	CEO	MLK Medical Campus
9. John Outterbridge	Artist	-
10. Billy Mitchell	Music Conservatory Director	Watts-Willowbrook Boys and Girls Club
11. Les Jones	Former Executive Director	Watts-Willowbrook Boys and Girls Club
12. Dr. David M. Carlisle	President	Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science
13. Randy Hughes	Community Leader	-
14. Theo McLeod	Community Leader	-
15. Diane Walker	Captain	Compton Station, L.A. Sheriff Department
16. Sinetta Farley	Community Leader	-
17. Rahman Shabazz	Community Leader	-
18. Joe Gooden	Captain	Century Station, L.A. Sheriff Department
19. Chris O'Quinn	Captain	California Highway Patrol
20. Reverend Pope	Spiritual Leader	Bethel Missionary Baptist Church
21. Father Jesus Bela	Spiritual Leader	St. Lawrence of Brindisi
22. Abe Flores	Advocacy Field Manager	Arts for LA

SAMPLE COMMUNITY SURVEY

Administered by: _____

Survey Number: _____

Date of Survey: _____

F / M

Youth / Adult / Senior

Ethnicity:

Opinions about Willowbrook:

1. What brings you to Willowbrook?

_____ I live here

_____ I work here

_____ I shop here

_____ I attend school here

_____ Other (please elaborate):

2. What do you consider to be the boundaries of Willowbrook?
(When you look at a map, what are the major boundaries?)

3. What do people say about Willowbrook?

4. What do you like most about the Willowbrook area?

5. What do you like least about the Willowbrook area?

6. Do you feel safe visiting the Willowbrook area?

Never Rarely Sometimes Often

7. Do you consider the Willowbrook area a (Circle all that apply.)

a. Residential center?

b. Commercial center?

c. Health center?

d. Cultural center?

Civic Engagement in Willowbrook:

8. How often do you attend community events (such as cultural, religious, special holiday events, etc.)?

Never Rarely Sometimes Often

9. Do you belong to any community organizations, church groups, volunteer groups, or youth groups?

a. If so, which one? Where is it located?

b. What types of activities does your group do?

10. What kind of artistic and cultural activities take place in Willowbrook? (dance classes, painting, festivals, community fairs, library events, museums, art galleries, live music, etc.)

a. If the answer is none, then what types of artistic and cultural activities would you like to see in Willowbrook?

11. Where do you go to participate in artistic and cultural events in Willowbrook?

a. Do you ever go outside of Willowbrook to participate in artistic and cultural activities? If yes, where?

12. Do you make art or crafts (drawing, painting, animation, photography, sewing, car design, fashion design, knitting, write poetry, write fiction, etc.) or perform (play an instrument, dance, sing, comedy, etc.) yourself?

13. How do you relieve stress?

14. What are the community gathering places in Willowbrook? Where are they? (parks, churches, schools, shopping centers, etc.)

15. When you leave the Willowbrook area, what do you miss the most?

SURVEYS

Location	Number of People Surveyed
1. Kenneth Hahn Shopping Plaza	22
2. Willowbrook Community (Earvin “Magic” Johnson Park, A C Bilbrew Library, King Drew Medical Magnet High School, Rosa Parks Metro Station)	12
3. St. Lawrence of Brindisi Church	27
4. Compton Residents	7
5. Bunche Middle School	39

FOCUS GROUPS

Location	Number of Participants
1. Watts Century Latino Organization	11
2. John Locke High School	27

CULTURAL ASSET LIST FOR WILLOWBROOK AND ADJACENT AREA

ARTS & CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS

1. A C Bilbrew Library

150 E. El Segundo Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90061

2. Adam Quest Heritage Museum and Learning Center

329 W. Compton Blvd., Compton, CA 90220

3. Arts for LA

1149 S. Hill Suite H-100, Los Angeles, CA 90015

4. Bunche Middle School (Music Program)

12338 S. Mona Blvd., Compton, CA 90222

5. Cecil Ferguson Gallery

10950 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

6. Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science Jazz Festival – ON HIATUS INDEFINITELY

1731 E. 120th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

7. Compton Dance Theater Foundation

700 N. Bullis Rd., Compton, CA 90221

8. The Helen B. Langarten Art Therapy Program at Thomas Riley Continuation High School

1524 E. 103rd St, Los Angeles, CA 90002

9. Real Rydaz Association (lowrider bicycle club)

980 Menlo Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90037

10. The Platform

1726 E. 107th St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

11. Tomorrow's Aeronautical Museum

961 W. Alondra Blvd., Compton, CA 90220

12. Watts Coffeehouse

1827 E. 103rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

13. Watts House Project

1726 E. 107th St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

14. Watts Labor Community Action Committee

10950 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

15. Watts Towers and Charles Mingus Youth Arts Center

1727 E., 107th St., Los Angeles CA 90002

16. Watts Village Theater Company

1827 E. 103rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

17. Watts-Willowbrook Boys and Girls Club

1339 E. 120th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

18. Wattstar Theatre and Education Center

10124 S. Broadway, Los Angeles CA 90003

19. Willowbrook Library

11838 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

1. Bradley/Milken Family Source Center

1773 E. Century Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90002

2. California Greenworks, Inc.

3438 West 43rd St., #8, Los Angeles, CA 90008

3. Community Coalition for Change

8101 S. Vermont Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90044

4. Community Health Councils

3731 Stocker St., Suite 201, Los Angeles, CA 90008

5. Concerned Citizens of Willowbrook at the Fellowship Baptist Church

11901 Willowbrook, Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

6. Friends and Neighbors Community Association

7. Heal the Bay

1444 9th St., Santa Monica, CA 90401

8. Imani Fe Affordable Housing Development

10424 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90002

9. LA Green Grounds

P.O. Box 165, Topanga, CA 90290

10. Los Angeles County Youth Center

12721 S. Willowbrook Ave., Compton, CA 90222

COMMUNITY GATHERING PLACES

1. A C Bilbrew Library

150 E. El Segundo Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90061

2. Adam Quest Heritage Museum and Learning Center

329 W. Compton Blvd., Compton, CA 90220

3. Alma Reaves Woods Watts Library

10205 Compton Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90002

4. Athens Park

12603 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, CA 90061

5. Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science

1731 E. 120th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

6. City of Refuge Church

14527 S. San Pedro St., Gardena, CA 90248

7. Denny's Restaurant

11700 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

8. Earnest Killum Jr. Community Building

1464 E. 109th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

9. Enterprise Park

13055 Clovis Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

10. George Washington Carver Park

1400 E. 118th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

11. Kenneth Hahn Plaza Shopping Center

11700 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

12. King Drew Medical Magnet High School

1601 E. 120th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

13. Earvin "Magic" Johnson Park Recreation Center

905 E. El Segundo Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90059

14. McDonald's Restaurant

11800 Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

15. MLK Medical Campus Auditorium

12021 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

16. MLK Medical Campus Great Lawn

12021 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles CA 90059

17. Mona Park

2291 E. 121st St., Compton, CA 90222

18. Plaza Mexico Shopping Center

3100 E. Imperial Highway, Lynwood, CA 90262

19. Ralph Bunche Middle School

12338 S. Mona Blvd., Compton CA 90222

20. Rosa Parks Metro Station

11611 Willowbrook Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

21. Ted Watkins Memorial Park

1335 E. 103rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

22. Watts Labor Community Action Committee

10950 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

1. 109th Street Recreation Center

1464 E. 109th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

2. A C Bilbrew Library

150 E. El Segundo Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90061

3. Alma Reaves Woods Watts Library

10205 Compton Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90002

4. Compton Dance Theater Foundation

700 N Bullis Rd., Compton, CA 90221

5. Earvin "Magic" Johnson Park Recreation Center

905 E. El Segundo Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90059

6. Enterprise Park

13055 Clovis Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

7. George Washington Carver Park

1400 E 118th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

8. Los Angeles County Youth Center

12721 S. Willowbrook, Compton, CA 90222

9. Mona Park

2291 E. 121st St., Compton, CA 90222

10. The Platform

1726 E. 107th St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

11. Ted Watkins Memorial Park

1335 E. 103rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

12. Watts Coffeehouse

1827 E. 103rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

13. Watts Labor Community Action Committee

10950 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

14. Watts Towers Arts Center

1727 E. 107th St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

15. Watts Village Theater Company

1827 E. 103rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

16. Watts Century Latino Organization

10360 Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90002

17. Watts-Willowbrook Boys & Girls Club

1339 E. 120th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

18. Willowbrook Library

11838 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

LOS ANGELES COUNTY FACILITIES

1. A C Bilbrew Library

150 E. El Segundo Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90061

2. Athens Park

12603 S. Broadway, Compton, CA 90222

3. Augustus Hawkins Mental Health Center

1720 E. 120th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

4. Century Sheriff Station

11703 Alameda St., Lynwood, CA 90262

5. Compton Sheriff Station

301 S. Willowbrook Ave., Compton, CA 90220

6. Earvin “Magic” Johnson Park Recreation Center

905 E. El Segundo Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90059

7. Enterprise Park

13055 Clovis Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

8. George Washington Carver Park

1400 E. 118th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

9. Los Angeles County Sheriff Department

11703 S. Alameda St., Lynwood, CA 90059

10. MLK Center for Public Health

11833 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

11. Martin Luther King, Jr. Medical Campus

12021 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

12. Mona Park

2291 E. 121st St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

13. Office of Supervisor Ridley-Thomas

700 Exposition Park Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90037

14. Rosa Parks Imperial/Wilmington Metro Station

11611 Willowbrook Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

15. Ted Watkins Memorial Park

1335 E. 103rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90061

16. Willowbrook Library

11838 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

17. Willowbrook Senior Center

12915 Jarvis Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90002

LIBRARIES

1. A C Bilbrew Library

150 E. El Segundo Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90061

2. Alma Reaves Woods Watts Library

10205 Compton Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90002

3. Compton Library

240 W. Compton Blvd., Compton, CA 90220

4. Willowbrook Library

11838 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

PARKS

1. 109th Street Recreation Center

1464 E. 109th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

2. Athens Park

12603 S. Broadway, Compton, CA 90222

3. Carnation Park

2999 Los Flores Blvd., Lynwood, CA 90262

4. Cesar Chavez Park

1812 N. Santa Fe Ave., Compton, CA 90221

5. Cressey-Gonzales Park

1101 W. Cressey St., Compton, CA 90222

6. Dr. Walter R. Tucker Park

723 Paulsen Cir., Compton, CA 90220

7. Earvin “Magic” Johnson Park Recreation Center

905 E. El Segundo Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90059

8. Enterprise Park

13055 Clovis Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

9. Fig + Oleander Park

401 W. Fig St., Compton, CA 90222

10. George Washington Carver Park

1400 E. 118th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

11. Grape Street Park

10726 Grape St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

12. Imperial Courts Recreation Center

2250 E. 114th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

13. Jordan Downs Recreation Center

9900 Grape St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

14. Mona Park

2291 E. 121st St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

15. Rose Park

11500 State St., Lynwood, CA 90262

16. Roy Campanella Park

14812 S. Stanford Ave., Compton, CA 90220

17. Sibrie Park

1298 W. 129th Pl., Compton, CA 90222

18. Ted Watkins Memorial Park

1335 E. 103rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90061

19. Tragniew Park

2121 W. Alondra Blvd., Compton, CA 90222

20. William Nickerson Recreation Center

11251 Compton Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

21. Wilson Park

123 N. Rose Ave., Compton, CA 90221

PUBLIC HEALTH FACILITIES

1. MLK Center for Public Health

11833 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

2. Martin Luther King Jr. Medical Campus

12021 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

PROMINENT CHURCHES

1. Bel-Vue Presbyterian Church

675 E. 118th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

2. Bethel Baptist Church

10905 Compton Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

3. Calvary Resurrection Baptist Church

12416 S. Wilmington Ave., Compton, CA 90222

4. Celestial Church of Christ

14201 S. San Pedro St., Los Angeles, CA 90061

5. City of Refuge

14527 S. San Pedro St., Gardena, CA 90248

6. Cornerstone Community Church

13426 Avalon Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90061

7. Faith Inspirational Missionary

357 E. Palmer St., Compton, CA 90221

8. Fellowship Baptist Church

11901 Willowbrook Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

9. Greater Mt. Sinai MBC

12317 S. Wilmington Ave., Compton, CA 90222

10. Macedonia Baptist Church

1755 E. 114th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

11. New Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist

402 E. El Segundo Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90061

12. Our Lady Of Victory Church

519 E. Palmer St., Compton, CA 90221

13. Sacred Heart Church

1720 N. Culver Ave., Compton, CA 90222

14. San Miguel Church

2216 E. 108th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

15. St. Lawrence of Brindisi Catholic Church

10122 Compton Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90002

16. St. Mark AME Church

12923 Avalon Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90061

17. Tabernacle Of Faith Baptist Church

11328 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

18. Trinity Chapel Of Compton

2813 N. Wilmington Ave., Compton, CA 90222

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

1. Cesar Chavez Continuation High

12501 N. Wilmington Ave., Compton, CA 90222

2. Compton Adult School

1104 E., 148th St., Compton, CA 90222

3. Edward G. Chester Adult Center

1104 W. 148th St., Compton, CA 90220

4. Ellington (Duke) Continuation High

1541 W. 110th St., Los Angeles, CA 90047

5. Harriet Tubman High School

12501 N. Wilmington Ave., Compton, CA 90220

6. Sojourner Truth Continuation

11015 Avalon Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90061

7. Thurgood Marshall

12501 N. Wilmington Ave., Compton, CA 90220

8. Tri Community Day

12721 S. Willowbrook Ave., Compton, CA 90222

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

9. 122nd Street Elementary School

405 E. 122nd St., Los Angeles, CA 90061

10. Amestoy Elementary

1048 W. 149th St., Gardena, CA 90247

11. Anderson Elementary School

2210 E. 130th St., Compton, CA 90222

12. Avalon Gardens Elementary School

13940 S. San Pedro St., Los Angeles, CA 90061

13. Barack Obama Charter School

1726 E. 117th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

14. Bursch Elementary

2505 W. 156th St., Compton, CA 90220

15. Chapman Elementary School

1947 Marine Ave., Gardena, CA 90249

16. Compton Avenue Elementary School

1515 E. 104th St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

17. Denker Avenue Elementary School

1620 W. 162nd St., Gardena, CA 90247

18. Dickison Elementary School

905 N. Aranbe St., Compton, CA 90220

19. Florence Griffith Joyner Elementary School

1963 E. 103rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

20. Grape Street Elementary School

1940 E. 111th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

21. Jefferson Elementary School

2508 E. 133rd St., Willowbrook, CA 90222

22. Laurel Street Elementary School

1321 W. Laurel St., Compton, CA 90220

23. Lincoln Elementary School

1667 E. 118th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

24. Lovelia P. Flournoy Elementary School

1630 E. 111th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

25. Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School

2270 E. 122nd St., Compton, CA 90222

26. Mayo Elementary School

915 N. Mayo Ave., Compton, CA 90221

27. McKinley Elementary School

14431 Stanford Ave., Compton, CA 90220

28. Montara Avenue Elementary School

10018 Montara Ave., South Gate, CA 90280

29. One Hundred Eighteenth Street Elementary School

144 E. 118th St., Los Angeles, CA 90061

30. One Hundred Fifty-Third Street Elementary School

1605 W. 153rd St., Gardena, CA 90247

31. One Hundred Ninth Street Elementary School

10915 S. McKinley Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

32. One Hundred Sixteenth Street Elementary School

11610 Stanford Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

33. One Hundred Thirty-Fifth Street Elementary School

801 W. 135th St., Gardena, CA 90247

34. One Hundred Twelfth Street Elementary School

1265 E. 112th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

35. One Hundred Twenty-Second Street Elementary School

405 E. 122nd St., Los Angeles, CA 90061

36. Ralph Bunche Elementary School

16223 S. Haskins Ln., Carson, CA 90746

37. Ritter Elementary School

11108 Watts Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

38. Ronald E. McNair Elementary School

1450 W. El Segundo Ave., Compton, CA 90222

39. Rosecrans Elementary School

1301 N. Acacia Ave., Compton, CA 90227

40. Tibby Elementary School

1400 W. Poplar St., Compton, CA 90220

41. Washington Elementary School

1421 N. Wilmington Ave., Compton, CA 90222

42. Weigand Avenue Elementary School

10401 Weigand Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90002

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

43. Alliance College-Ready Middle Academy No. 4

9719 S. Main St., Los Angeles, CA 90003

44. Alliance Jack H. Skirball Middle School

603 E. 115th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

45. Davis Middle School

621 W. Poplar St., Compton, CA 90220

46. Edwin Markham Middle School

1650 E. 104th St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

47. Enterprise Middle School

2600 W. Compton Blvd., Compton, CA 90220

48. International Studies Learning Center

2701 Sequoia Dr., South Gate, CA 90280

49. Lifeline Education Charter School

357 E. Palmer St., Compton, CA 90221

50. Ralph Bunche Middle School

12338 S. Mona Blvd., Compton, CA 90222

51. Robert E. Peary Middle School

1415 W. Gardena Blvd., Gardena, CA 90247

52. Samuel Gompers Middle School

234 E. 112th St., Los Angeles, CA 90061

53. Southeast Middle School

2560 Tweedy Blvd., South Gate, CA 90280

54. Thomas Riley High School

1524 E. 103rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

55. Willowbrook Middle School

2601 N. Wilmington Ave., Compton, CA 90222

HIGH SCHOOLS

56. #1 Animo Locke ACE Academy

325 E. 111th St., Los Angeles, CA 90061

57. Alliance College-Ready Academy High No. 11

10720 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

58. Amino South Los Angeles Charter High School

11130 S. Western Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90047

59. Animo Locke Technology High School

810 E. 111th Pl., Los Angeles, CA 90059

60. Animo Watts Charter High School

12628 Avalon Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90061

61. C. Morley Sellery Special Education Center

15805 S. Budlong Ave., Gardena, CA 90247

62. Centennial High School

2606 N. Central Ave., Compton, CA 90222

63. David Starr Jordan Senior High

2265 E. 103rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

64. George Washington Preparatory High

10860 S. Denker Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90047

65. Jordan New Technology High

2265 E. 103rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

66. King Drew Medical Magnet High School

1601 E. 120th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

67. Maxine Waters Employment Preparatory Center

10925 Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

68. Middle College High

11750 S. Western Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90047

69. New Designs Charter School

12714 S. Avalon Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90059

70. South East High

2720 Tweedy Blvd., South Gate, CA 90280

71. Verbum Dei High School

11100 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

UNIVERSITIES

72. Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science

1731 E. 120th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

SCHOOLS WITH ART PROGRAMS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- 1. Compton Avenue Elementary School**
1515 E. 104th St., Los Angeles, CA 90002
- 2. Florence Griffith Joyner Elementary School**
1963 E. 103rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90002
- 3. Laurel Street Elementary School**
1321 W. Laurel St., Compton, CA 90220
- 4. Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School**
2270 E. 122nd St., Compton, CA 90222
- 5. McKinley Elementary School**
14431 Stanford Ave., Compton, CA 90220
- 6. Montara Avenue Elementary School**
10018 Montara Ave., South Gate, CA 90280
- 7. One Hundred Twelfth Street Elementary School**
1265 E. 112th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059
- 8. Ritter Elementary School**
11108 Watts Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059
- 9. Weigand Avenue Elementary School**
10401 Weigand Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90002

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

- 10. Edwin Markham Middle School**
1650 E. 104th St., Los Angeles, CA 90002
- 11. International Studies Learning Center**
2701 Sequoia Dr., South Gate, CA 90280
- 12. Ralph Bunche Middle School**
12338 S. Mona Blvd., Compton, CA 90222
- 13. Samuel Gompers Middle School**
234 E. 112th St., Los Angeles, CA 90061

- 14. Southeast Middle School**

2560 Tweedy Blvd., South Gate, CA 90280

- 15. Willowbrook Middle School**

2601 N. Wilmington Ave., Compton, CA 90222

HIGH SCHOOLS

- 16. #1 Animo Locke ACE Academy**

325 E. 111th St., Los Angeles, CA 90061

- 17. Alliance College-Ready Academy High No. 11**

10720 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

- 18. Centennial High School**

2606 N. Central Ave., Compton, CA 90222

- 19. David Starr Jordan Senior High School**

2265 E. 103rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

- 20. King Drew Medical Magnet High School**

1601 E. 120th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

- 21. Maxine Waters Employment Prep Center**

10925 Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

- 22. South East High School**

2720 Tweedy Blvd., South Gate, CA 90280

PUBLIC ARTWORKS

- 1. Site Name: A C Bilbrew Library**

Artist: Vincent J. Proby

150 E. El Segundo Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90061

- 2. Site Name: A C Bilbrew Library**

Artist: Emile Elliott Jordan

150 E. El Segundo Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90061

- 3. Site Name: Enterprise Park**

Artist: Robin Strayhorn

13055 Clovis Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90059

4. Site Name: George Washington Carver Park

Artist: Matt and Paul Doolin

1400 E. 118th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

5. Site Name: King Drew Medical Magnet High School

Artist: Tina Allen

1601 E. 120th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

6. Site Name: MLK Center for Public Health

Artist Name: Cliff Garten

11833 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

7. Site Name: MLK Medical Campus

Artist: Lawrence Argent

12021 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

8. Site Name: MLK Medical Campus

Artist: Dan Corson

12021 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

9. Site Name: MLK Medical Campus

Artist: Dominique Moody

12021 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

10. Site Name: Mona Park

Artist: Dakota Warren

1601 E. 120th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

11. Site Name: Rosa Parks Metro Station

Artist: Joe Sam

11611 Willowbrook Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

12. Site Name: Rosa Park Metro Station

Artist: Robin Strayhorn and Michael Massenburg

11611 Willowbrook Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

13. Site Name: Willowbrook Middle School

Artist: Richard Wyatt

2601 N. Wilmington Ave., Compton, CA 90022

FESTIVALS AND HAPPENINGS

1. Bones and Blues Jazz Festival

Watts Labor Community Action Committee

10950 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

2. Cinco de Mayo Celebration

Watts Towers Arts Center

1727 E. 107th St., Los Angeles CA 90002

3. Community arts fair in the Spring

No specific location given

4. Community fairs

Various parks

5. Community festivals and live music

MLK Medical Campus

12021 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

6. Compton Gospel Festival

No specific location given

7. Cooking classes

Ted Watkins Memorial Park

1335 E. 103rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

8. Dance classes

Mona Park

2291 E. 121st St., Compton, CA 90222

9. Dance classes and computer lessons

Willowbrook Senior Center

12915 Jarvis Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90002

10. Weekly Farmers Market

Ted Watkins Memorial Park

1335 E. 103rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

11. Festival of Drums

Watts Towers Arts Center

1727 E. 107th St., Los Angeles CA 90002

12. Holiday church activities

St. Lawrence of Brindisi Catholic Church
10122 Compton Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90002

13. Holiday tree lighting

MLK Medical Campus
12021 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

14. Jazz Festival

Watts Towers Arts Center
1727 E. 107th St., Los Angeles CA 90002

15. Former Jazz at Drew

Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science
1731 E. 120th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

16. Job fairs

No specific location given

17. Juneteenth Celebration

Fellowship Baptist Church
11901 Willowbrook Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90059

18. Live music parties

Central Ave. and 110th St.

19. Former Living Legends Celebration

A C Bilbrew Library
150 E. El Segundo Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90061

20. Music programs at churches

Various church locations

21. Open Mic Night

Watts Coffeehouse
1827 E. 103rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90002

22. Picnics, casino nights, game shows

New Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church
402 E. El Segundo Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90061

23. Quilting program

MLK Medical Campus
12021 S. Wilmington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

24. Senior dinners

Watts Labor Community Action Committee
10950 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

25. Summer Harvest

Trinity Chapel of Compton
2813 N. Wilmington Ave. Compton, CA 90222

26. Summer youth programs

Various locations including local parks and the Watts-Willowbrook Boys and Girls Club

27. Underground Ska music scene

92nd and Minor Ave.

28. Walking groups

Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science
1731 E. 120th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

29. Watts Summer Festival

Watts-Willowbrook Boys & Girls Club
1339 E. 120th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

30. Watts-Willowbrook Christmas Parade

Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059

31. Winter Music Showcase

Compton Unified Schools

32. Youth basketball tournaments

Earnest Killum Jr. Community Building
1464 E. 109th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059

ARTISTS AND TRADITION BEARERS

ARTISTS

1. Delanio Barris
2. Charles Burnett
3. Raul Curiel
4. Charles Dickson
5. Charles Dickerson
6. Joan Steward Green
7. Wes Hall
8. Nery Lemus
9. Toni Love
10. Willie Middlebrook
11. Dominique Moody
12. John Outterbridge
13. Elliot Pinkney
14. Judson Powell
15. Betye Saar
16. Alice Swain
17. Ulysses Jenkins
18. Timothy Washington
19. Reginald Webster
20. Mona Lisa Whitaker
21. Richard Wyatt
22. Mario Ybarra

TRADITION BEARERS

1. Guillermo Aviles-Rodriguez
2. Father Jesus Bela
3. Sandy Canister
4. Betty Day
5. Sinetta Farley
6. Cecile Ferguson
7. Pastor Deloris Glass
8. Sweet Alice Harris
9. Rosie Lee Hooks
10. Randy Hughes
11. Theo McLeod
12. Will Sheffie
13. Ernestine Wilson
14. Arturo Ybarra



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