nuestra tierra,
nuestro futuro:

A Sustainable Community Ownership and Land Stewardship Pilot in Unincorporated East Los Angeles
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California Department of Conservation
California Strategic Growth Council
A Cleaner Greener East LA
CooPera
Fideicomiso Comunitario Tierra Libre
Los Angeles Eco-Village
North East Trees
Thrive Santa Ana
T.R.U.S.T South LA

Nuestra Tierra, Nuestro Futuro: A Sustainable Community Ownership and Land Stewardship Pilot in Unincorporated East Los Angeles was funded in whole through a Transformative Climate Communities Grant awarded by the California Strategic Growth Council and administered by the California Department of Conservation.
Estamos iniciando la lucha
Queremos un fideicomiso
De tierras comunitarias
Patrimonio de las familias
Que con sus manos trabajan

We are initiating this struggle
We want a Trust
Of Community Lands
Heritage for our families
That with their own hands they work

- Transformative Climate Communities
  Collective Corrido writing session
  City Terrace Library
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This Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) Planning Grant project was created to address displacement and climate change (two major challenges for the unincorporated community of East Los Angeles) through community ownership and land stewardship, by establishing the framework for a community land trust (CLT), encouraging sustainable food systems, and facilitating a community vision. This report details the methods and outcomes of the community engagement component of the project, as well as next steps.

Residents were centered in the community engagement through use of interactive strategies such as convivios, storytelling workshops, songwriting workshops, and groundtruthing. The outcomes of the year-long project include identification of: 16 residents who want to participate in the CLT; community gardens as a community-prioritized food-related land use for East Los Angeles; and community priorities for open/recreational space, and for trees in the context of open/recreational space or food access. Additionally, a community agriculture curriculum was developed and piloted during the project year (see Attachment A).

Fideicomiso Comunitario Tierra Libre (FCTL), a CLT originally working in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of the City of Los Angeles, voted to expand its geographic focus to include unincorporated East Los Angeles. While there is still the question of access to a specific publicly-owned property, the FCTL decision provides the mechanics for the CLT to move forward in East Los Angeles. The partners and multiple County departments are organizing the foundation for a TCC Implementation Grant application with the Planning Grant recommendations at the core.

This report has a companion report which details a supplementary component of the project: Fideicomiso Comunitario Tierra Libre: Los Angeles County Business Plan, completed by the consultant team of Yasmin Tong Consulting (now CTY Housing), Sandra McNeill Consulting, and Burlington Associates. Additionally, an analysis of the impact of land use on the development of the uses identified in this project was prepared by the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, and is included as Attachment B in this report.
introduction

There is a long history of environmental racism, inequitable and incompatible land use policies, and disinvestment in unincorporated East Los Angeles (“East LA”). These issues coupled with the ongoing struggle for housing as a human right continue to threaten LA County residents with displacement from their homes, which in turn has a traumatic impact on the health, wellbeing, and stability of residents in the area.

The Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning (DRP), East LA Community Corporation (ELACC), Legacy LA, Eastside LEADS (Leadership for Equitable and Accountable Development Strategies), Yasmin Tong Consulting (now CTY Housing), Sandra McNeill Consulting, and Burlington Associates teamed up on a one-year research project to explore the feasibility of developing a Community Land Trust (CLT) on vacant public and/or privately-owned land as an integral strategy to address these issues. The project participants view community control of land and housing as a key strategy to a long-term process for community stability and a healthier East LA. This strategy is the primary strategy investigated in this project.

Community ownership of land can create housing security, and it can also create food security. Sustainable food systems are another strategy toward community stability and health explored by this project. There are multiple health benefits: access to fresh food and the culturally-rooted forms of growing, cooking and sharing food, and mitigation of negative environmental impacts. East LA is well below the County General Plan goal for local park access, so the exploration of strategies for community stability and health naturally extended to include access to open/green space and tree canopy coverage.

ELACC, Legacy LA, and Eastside LEADS explored these strategies through community engagement. The year of community outreach centered resident needs and priorities by utilizing interactive methods to facilitate community discussions, visioning, and participatory research. The project prepared the County of Los Angeles and its community partners to implement a CLT, while addressing pressing health issues in East LA, including gentrification, food insecurity, and environmental hazards.

The project benefits from the prior experience of the three organizations working together in East LA. Legacy LA and ELACC are founding coalition members of Eastside LEADS, and Legacy LA and Eastside LEADS have been working together to inform residents in East LA about plans for investment and development. At the heart of their collaboration is the belief that long-time residents must guide all development and investment for their communities.
The primary structure of the community engagement was a series of seven convivios and six workshops over the course of the project year, which were convened and facilitated by ELACC, Eastside LEADS, and Legacy LA. Convivios and workshops have different purposes in engagement (see below), but in both, facilitators foster spaces that balance collective action, critical consciousness, and emergent traditional practices.

**Convivios:** Community gatherings where the embodied knowledge and cultural resilience of participants facilitate conversations and relationship building. The convivio, or convivencia, as a method puts the intention of being present with and for one another at the center.

**Workshops:** Focused meetings where facilitators use a popular education methodology to guide participant learning by empowering people to think for themselves, share their life experiences, and create change. Popular education develops critical consciousness, which nurtures an in-depth understanding of the world and encourages collective action against systemic oppression in a struggle for human dignity and liberation.

Engagement was planned with the understanding that art and culture are inseparable and symbiotic resources that live at the essence of community cultural vitality and transformation. Engagement was informed by the resources active in our community that provoke critical analysis, including Restorative and Transformative Justice, Cultural Convening Methods, Arriving/Connecting/Affirming/Agreeing, Groundtruthing, which provide models of facilitation of power and cooperation. Whether engaging in storytelling/storysharing, songwriting or visioning, these cultural resources become an imperative germination of mobility in an otherwise immobile situation.

Throughout the TCC grant period, ELACC leveraged relationships with local master artists and musicians to facilitate space, utilizing different cultural convening methods they have developed. Cultural Convening Methods are rituals and/or traditions rooted in the collective wisdom of communities of practice. These methods are utilized to establish and exercise cultural practices that have potential to animate an agreement, policy or organization to function as intended. They also support retention or embodiment of technical information.
ELACC also connected with and invited participation from a network of organizations involved in related work. Engaging in community dialogue and identifying the resources that exist (cultural, political, social, economic), are critical pieces of transformation. What do we collectively have in our community that can directly speak to what we need? What is the process for leveraging these collective resources to impact our lived realities and transform our lives, community, city, and world? These questions are imperative to arrive at community driven, culturally sustainable solutions. Community land trusts, cooperative owned business, grassroots organizations, artist collectives, housing cooperatives, environmental justice groups, tenant rights groups, and community gardens are all part of a larger ecosystem of cooperation that when weaved tightly together, provide a social fabric of symbiosis and wellness. Participating organizations included Beverly Vermont Community Land Trust, A Cleaner Greener East LA, CooPera, Fideicomiso Comunitario Tierra Libre, Los Angeles Center for Community Law and Action (LACCLA), Los Angeles Eco Village, North East Trees, Thrive Santa Ana, and T.R.U.S.T. South LA.

Supplemental community outreach was needed to inform residents of the project and invite them to the convivios and workshops. This was predominantly achieved through door-to-door outreach, but also included attendance at community events and connecting with local networks. Legacy LA and Eastside LEADS led this component of the outreach with a team of 10 canvassers, reaching out to the City Terrace, Whiteside, and Whittier Boulevard neighborhoods of East LA. These neighborhoods were selected because of a 2019 study conducted by DRP that identified a high concentration of hazardous sites near sensitive land uses in East LA. Negative environmental impacts have made residents in these neighborhoods extremely vulnerable and also hyper aware and critical of this injustice. By March 2019, the outreach team had engaged over 600 residents.

The convivios and workshops held during the project year are described in the following sections by topic (Community Introduction to the Project, CLT, Sustainable Food Systems, Groundtruthing, and Community Visioning), with additional information about meeting methodology and outcomes.
The first convivio of the project year was an introduction to the project, as well as an opportunity to enjoy food together made by CooPera, a worker owned cooperative in Boyle Heights, and a demonstration of collective songwriting as a community building process. In East LA, Collective Songwriting is one of several cultural convening methods being deployed by various musicians as an alternative way of having difficult conversations about complex structures. When Cultural Convening Methods are combined with methods like Collective Songwriting, it becomes a potent vehicle for dreaming and planning. Through Collective Songwriting, participants at this meeting were asked to map the cultural resources in their community and devise a proactive strategy for a desired future. The following is the manifestation of a collective wisdom and vision through their own words and ideas, written in corrido form.
The goals of this workshop were to introduce the concept of a CLT by facilitating space for community residents to engage with one another’s embodied knowledge about community stewardship of land, build relationships with residents, and create a cultural asset map of embodied knowledge. Videos and reading material served as effective resources in contextualizing how CLTs function in the United States. A gallery walk was used to present content on CLTs. Participants walked around the room to engage with the content and facilitators distributed the following questions for reflection:

*What social problems did you observe playing out?*
*What solutions are proposed?*
*What did you learn about community land trusts?*

Participants debriefed on the content and shared responses to the questions. Later, facilitators introduced additional content and visuals while being intentional to ensure that participants were engaged, understanding, and responding. Participants were consistently invited to ask questions and share comments about what they were learning. At the end of the workshop, participants engaged in a spectrum activity where they move around the room to communicate how they feel and what they learned about community land trusts.

Although the concept of a community land trust is not part of a quotidian experience in the United States, its tenets of collective community stewardship of land and long term/permanent affordability have migrated across time and space with immigrant communities. Through this embodied knowledge from experience with ejidos, communal lands, autonomous indigenous lands, participants were able to quickly connect to the concept of a CLT.
Community Land Trust

The goals for CLT-related outreach were to build a large base/community that could build common ground around the understanding of cooperation and community control of land, resonate with the need for community control of land and housing, advocate and facilitate broad awareness of the viability of a community land trust in East LA, and hear and uplift community knowledge around community control of land and housing.
Community Solutions for Land and Housing for Poor People
October 19, 2018

To affirm the existence, possibility and feasibility of a community land trust, we invited multiple guests to this convivio to support a vision through community dialogues. A panel of community organizations engaged in different strategies to address land and housing shared challenges and best practices of working either directly in community land trusts or in spaces of cooperation, which gave community members a better understanding of a larger network of people and organizations doing the work. The panel included LACCLA, Thrive Santa Ana, Beverly Vermont Community Land Trust and T.R.U.S.T. South LA. Panelists highlighted rent control, Community Land Trust/cooperative housing, and development without displacement. Community activists and organizations shared their work and reflections on how they contribute to building or addressing the need for housing. The group identified five pillars of just housing: (1) Accessible, (2) Permanent, (3) Community Controlled, (4) Affordable, and (6) Healthy and Sustainable. Legal aid organizations attended the event to provide access to services for participants facing displacement. Participants walked away from this workshop with direct resources and knowledge on how to get involved in creating just housing.

Community Gathering: Culture and Land
November 19, 2018

ELACC and Vaneza Calderon (musician) facilitated a convivio aimed at listening to community resident learnings and takeaways from previous workshops and convivios. A recap of the previous workshops and convivios was provided for new participants. Vaneza introduced the history and practice of the corrido. A corrido is a traditional song and poetry that tells a story. The corrido is popular in Mexican and Latinx communities because it is often used to describe oppression, history, daily struggles of poor people, and current events. At the end of the workshops participants wrote and sang a corrido based on what they had learned and envisioned for a community land trust.
Un jueves 15 de noviembre
On Thursday, November 15th
Una tarde muy fresca
A crisp evening
Estaban todos reunidos
All we reunited
Por una causa muy buena
For a very good cause

La unidad fue nuestra meta
Unity was our goal
Yolanda, Blanca y Clarissa
Yolanda, Blanca and Clarissa
Desde el Este de Los Angeles
From East Los Angeles
Llegaron con mucha fuerza
Arrived with much power

Informarse de sus derechos
Informing themselves of their rights
Y ayudar a crear conciencia
And support consciousness building
Que el problema de las viviendas
That to the housing crisis
Si puede tener respuesta
There is a response

Luchando todos unidos
United in the struggle
Evitando los desalojos
Avoiding evictions
Que la tierra es de nosotros
Because the land is ours
Pa’ defender nuestros recursos
And we must defend our resources

Estamos iniciando la lucha
We are initiating this fight
Queremos un fideicomiso
We want a Trust
De tierras comunitarias
Of Community Land
Patrimonio de las familias
Heritage for our families
Que con sus manos trabajan
That with their own hands they work

Ya Basta! Gritamos muy fuerte
Enough! we scream
A los ricos que nos desplazan
To the rich who displace us
Merecemos viviendas dignas
We deserve dignified housing
Y tener nuestra comunidad muy sana
And a healthy community
Site Visit to the EcoVillage/Beverly Vermont Community Land Trust  
December 18, 2018

Following up on the October 19th conversation around possibility and feasibility, TCC participants were invited to visit the Los Angeles EcoVillage, a cooperative owned housing complex located on the Beverly Vermont Community Land Trust (BVCLT). Members of the cooperative gave a presentation on their relationship with the BVCLT and the origins and operating structure of the cooperative.

Storytelling: Imagining Alternatives to Land and Housing in East LA  
December 19, 2018

ELACC, Ofelia Esparza, Rosanna Esparza, and Alec R Esparza facilitated a storytelling workshop for community residents participating in previous workshops and convivios. Ofelia Esparza is a National Heritage Fellow with the National Endowment for the Arts, known as an altar maker responsible for one of the first large public altars in the U.S. (in 1979). The Esparza family work is rooted in spiritual beliefs in their family’s traditions that link back to their hometown in Mexico. They use traditional practices that hold and center people (alive or past), places, and memories through ancestral ways. They use photos, traditional foods, flowers, and handmade and found adornments to honor and maintain connection to their heritage, spirituality, and values.

During this workshop, the Esparzas facilitated a brainstorm about community and how participants practice cooperation. Participants then created drawings using watercolors and markers to tell the story of what values make a home and what vision they have of community. The purpose was to stimulate and practice sharing our stories of origin and belonging to community using art.
Sustainable Food Systems

Huele a tierra, campos, flores
Mariposas bailan amores
Madre tierra, Manantiales
Caminos creamos, Siempre cuidamos
El futuro de nuestros raices
El futuro de nuestros raices

-Grupo Derecho A La Tierra
Imagining Alternatives to Land and Housing in East LA Part 2
January 22, 2018

The first sustainable food systems workshop continued the storytelling workshop format initiated during the CLT outreach, with the goal of expanding the conversation of a CLT to include community gardens. ELACC staff, Ofelia Esparza, Rosanna Esparza, and Alec R Esparza facilitated a storytelling workshop for participants of previous workshops and convivios. Participants shared personal narratives and built a community of index cards. Both activities incorporated collaboration, creative talents, imagination, inclusion, nonverbal communication, and problem-solving skills. Participants practiced skills for a future community land trust, such as accountability, caring for one another, mindfulness, respect for others; and the environment (resources), responsible leadership, and community trust.

Community Garden Workshop
April 6, 2019

Community residents from East LA were invited to the home of award winning Chicano artist, teacher and master gardener, Jose Ramirez, to tour his food forest. The garden is an ecological and agricultural example of how residents can grow healthy food, trees, and steward land. It provides an example of an alternative land use that benefits the wellbeing of the community. Participants toured the food forest and talked about natural and native fruits, vegetables, and medicinal herbs. Residents also shared with each other what food they grow in their own homes and community gardens. A diverse and intergenerational group of residents attended, which provided rich conversation and space to share knowledge about practices to growing food at home.
Community Garden Convivio
May 4, 2019

The community residents who participated in the first community garden workshop returned to Jose Ramirez’s home in City Terrace for this convivio. Residents were divided into two groups. One group discussed what stewardship and maintenance of land meant to them. This included irrigation systems with the sustainable process of grey water irrigation. The second group talked about their knowledge of maintaining land and gardening. This group also made space for participant questions, such as ‘What are some techniques for growing food in my backyard?’ Participants shared their experiences with permaculture, irrigation, and native plants with medicinal properties. Participants expressed an interest in learning more about the natural cycle of plants and natural filtration systems.

An additional discussion was facilitated to identify community gardens in East LA. Participants identified the following:

- White Memorial
- Casa del Mexicano
- Zapotec garden
- Rose Hill Park El Sereno
- Wellness Center
- Twelve Street and Union Pacific
- Mott Street Community Garden
- Milagro Highland Park

The convivio ended with a potluck and exchange of resources, knowledge, plants, and seeds.

Convivio Healthy Land + Healthy Food + Healthy People
May 16

CooPera Boyle Heights (CooPera) facilitated a healthy food workshop in East LA. CooPera, a worker-owned cooperative, shared their cooperative model and methods, as well as their plan to bring healthy food to the Boyle Heights and East LA neighborhoods. CooPera demonstrated how to prepare nutritious recipes and facilitated a dialogue on how participants access and cook healthy food.
“Without new visions, we don’t know what to build, only what to knock down. We not only end up confused, rudderless, and cynical, but we forget that making a revolution is not a series of clever maneuvers and tactics, but a process that can and must transform us”

- Robin DG Kelley,
Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination
Los Angeles County Public Works analyzed the tree canopy in East LA as part of the East Los Angeles Community Parks and Recreation Plan, and found that the tree canopy in residential areas is below the American Forest recommended tree canopy coverage by 8% in high density residential areas, and 22% in low density residential areas. This knowledge informed the inclusion of a tree planting plan in the project as a mitigation to air quality issues in East LA, as well as climate change.

Legacy LA and Eastside LEADS created a survey to gauge resident interest in trees and participation in a future tree planting. Contemporary tree funding often requires a resident or business owner to take responsibility for watering a tree for the first 2–3 years after the tree is planted. Accordingly, the survey was also administered as a means of supporting a conversation with residents to field interest in stewarding a tree near their home. Surveying focused on the residents in the neighborhoods surrounding the nine priority lots identified through the groundtruthing (described in the next section). In addition to the questions below, residents were also asked to identify their gender, age range, and language preference.

1. How important is having trees in your community?
2. Do you think that there are enough trees in your community?
3. If your answer was NO, why do you think there are not enough trees?
4. Would you like to plant trees in your community?
5. Where would you like to plant trees?
6. Comments

Outreach strategies and next steps were informed by: the County Healthy Design Work Group Tree Committee, and A Cleaner, Greener East LA (an organization currently involved in a tree planting effort funded by Supervisor Hilda Solis). A team of seven community residents canvassed and surveyed the community in closest proximity to each of the nine lots in two days and collected a total of 119 surveys. During the surveying, residents were also invited to two community workshops about visioning for the nine lots, including tree planting opportunities. These workshops took place on Tuesday, June 4, 2019 and Saturday, June 22, 2019.
Tree Planting Survey Findings
Of the 119 residents surveyed:

- 86.6% Monolingual Spanish and 13.4% Monolingual English
- 51.3% identified as female, and 43.4 identified as male
- 94% believed that having trees in their communities is very important
- 53% believed that there was not enough trees in their community
- 93.1% wanted to participate in tree planting efforts

Residents were asked, “Where would you like to plant trees?” and given the options: my house, my sidewalk, park, or other. Residents were allowed to select more than one option. 55.6% of survey respondents preferred trees planted in their sidewalks/parkways, and 41% of respondents preferred trees planted in parks.

The most common benefits that residents attributed to trees were environment/cleaning the air, providing shade, and creating a more walkable community. A total of 93 residents expressed a willingness to participate in tree planting. However, not one resident was interested in the stewardship of a tree. One potential reason for this outcome is an issue in language or vernacular. For example, “stewardship” is directly translated into Spanish as “administration,” which has a very official and governmental connotation. The primary reason for the lack of resident disinterest in stewarding a tree is most likely an issue of community needs and resources. Stewarding a tree is a 2 to 3 year commitment.

One of the deep traditions that is thriving in East LA is the connection to land. Because this connection has maintained its position in the culture, people from different generations have much to contribute to a conversation about the intersections of land, green space, fresh food sources and healthy air quality. Considering this and a commitment by the partner organizations to be community lead, conversations often led to different outcomes that more reflect the lived realities of community people. Such was the case with the tree planting outreach. Participants expressed a strong commitment and desire to access land where they could grow food. Tree stewardship outside of this context was not a priority for people’s time. Residents also expressed a need for open/green/recreational space and fresh food sources that was carried over into the groundtruthing.
Groundtruthing

DRP provided ELACC and Eastside LEADS with a list of 266 publicly owned non-vacant properties, 70 publicly-owned vacant properties, and 720 vacant privately-owned properties. ELACC and Eastside LEADS completed a preliminary review of the list to find properties potentially viable for use as a CLT, greenspace or community garden. Yasmin Tong Consulting (now CTY Housing), Sandra McNeill Consulting, and Burlington Associates (together, the “consultants”) identified an essential site viability factor for a CLT: a site needs to be 20,000 square feet or larger in order to support the development of 50 or more housing units and be competitive for Low Income Housing Tax Credits. Though there were no individual sites on the list of properties equaling 20,000 square feet, some groups of adjacent properties, when combined, met this square footage. Various factors influenced another review of the list to find potential sites for greenspace and/or community gardens. These initial reviews narrowed down the list to 26 properties (listed next page).
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The next step was to verify that the properties were actually vacant, and assess them for specific uses with another set of criteria. ELACC and Eastside LEADS completed that step through groundtruthing. According to the 2010 Hidden Hazards study conducted by the Los Angeles Collaborative for Environmental Health and Justice (https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/242/docs/hidden-hazards-low-res-version.pdf) groundtruthing is “a method of collecting information about a neighborhood, geographic area, or specific area to verify whether hazards indicated in data really exist and whether additional hazards identified by residents on the ground that may not be captured by regulatory agencies.” ELACC and Eastside LEADS applied the same methodology of community-based participatory research via groundtruthing that was described in the Hidden Hazards study.

**Groundtruthing Workshop**
March 15, 2019

On March 15, 2019, the outreach team consisting of ELACC, Legacy LA, and Eastside LEADS members held a community meeting at Whittier Place Apartments in East LA where residents shared and learned about the history of displacement in the United States. Residents also shared first hand experiences and learned about the legacy of discriminatory and racist policies of redlining and racial covenants that devastated low-income communities of color in the 20th Century. The lasting effects of this systematic abandonment and confinement can be seen today in the environmental, economic, social, spiritual, and physical fallout the residents themselves have been left to heal.

This discussion was followed by an introduction to the concept of groundtruthing, how it has been used as a community-driven research tool, and how it would be used in this project to identify properties viable for CLT development and other community priorities. Several community residents that attended the workshop had been participants in planning and conducting groundtruthing in their neighborhoods previously.

During the March 15 meeting, the team informed residents about the three housing types they recommended for CLT development: new large construction projects, which are defined as 50 units or more for purposes of this study; small apartment acquisition and rehabilitation (under 25 units); and single-family acquisition and rehabilitation. Prioritizing only new large construction projects, we also introduced the consultants' recommendations and criteria for new affordable housing developments, including the 20,000 square feet criterion.
ELACC and Eastside LEADS, with support from the participants, developed criteria to assess the viability of the 24 lots for use as a CLT and other community priorities. ELACC and Eastside LEADS drafted a survey, and participants then reviewed the survey and provided feedback. Residents are experts on their communities. It was therefore not surprising that participants in the workshop made valuable changes to the draft survey. The final survey requested the following information:

1. Verification that the lot was empty
2. Notations of neighborhood characteristics, such as green spaces, smells, etc.
3. Identification of nearby hazardous sites from a total of 18 examples (established in the 2010 Hidden Hazards study conducted by the Los Angeles Collaborative for Environmental Health and Justice):
   - Auto body shop
   - Auto paint shop
   - Construction site
   - Dry cleaner
   - Factory
   - Fast food restaurant
   - Freeway
   - Gas station
   - Landfill
   - Laundromat
   - Liquor store
   - Marijuana shop
   - Mechanic
   - Metal plating
   - Printing
   - Recycling facility
   - Refinery
   - Warehouse
4. Identification of sensitive uses and amenities from a list of nine examples
5. Notations of any conversations the participant had with people in the area that could give us more information about the site and the area surrounding it.
Participants practiced filling out the survey through a role playing exercise in which residents were paired up and each took some time to assume the surveyor role and the resident being surveyed role.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

The team invited participants of the groundtruthing workshop to return the following week for two days of surveying the 26 identified lots based on the three criteria.

- March 19: Groundtruthing Day 1.
  - Held another brief training for participants prior to deploying survey groups.
- March 22: Groundtruthing Day 2.

On these days, five teams of two people each conducted the assessment. The majority of participants were monolingual Spanish speakers and therefore the survey was translated into Spanish. The teams were given a map of where the lots were located. The focus was on verifying that the lots were indeed empty or close to other empty lots to achieve the desired 20,000 square foot criterion. Participants were also asked to take pictures of the area.

**Groundtruthing Findings**

From the 26 lots surveyed, participants noted how incompatible land use was present near all sites. In 26 of the lots surveyed, more than half of the lots were within close proximity (1.5 city blocks) of 5 hazardous sites including auto body shops, mechanic shops, liquor stores, gas stations, and fast-food restaurants.

Three of the lots participants surveyed were not empty lots. The majority of the lots were surrounded by commercial and residential areas and were not within 1.5 city blocks to communal green space such as a park or community garden.
Included in the survey was a list of amenities including: Schools, Churches, Community Centers, Health Clinics, Health Services, Day Care, Senior Services, Grocery Stores, Restaurants with healthy food options and Public and/or Affordable Housing. Close proximity (1.5 city blocks) to these amenities were used to further determine viability. Based on the survey results, participants identified a total of nine lots as desirable for community priorities and CLT development. They identified three lots combined as viable for a CLT housing development, based on the priority for a site that would enable the development of 50 or more units. The three adjacent lots are located on La Verne and 3rd street, and together they total 40,000 square feet. The other six properties are too small for such a development since they do not meet the minimum square footage recommended by the consultants of 20,000 square feet. Residents prioritized four of the six smaller lots for a community garden or community recreational space. Three lots on 3rd street and one lot on New York Ave were identified as viable for community garden use because they are close to transit, public services, and in or close to residential neighborhoods. Though two of the properties listed below are listed as “In predevelopment” we see an opportunity to work with the County and the developer to explore a partnership where the land is stewarded by a community land trust. See list of properties found to be viable for a specific use through groundtruthing listed below.

4552 Floral Dr. Los Angeles, CA 90022  In predevelopment
4556 Floral Dr. Los Angeles, CA 90022  In predevelopment
4612 E 3rd St. Los Angeles, CA 90022  Community Garden and/or Recreation*
4525 E 3rd St. Los Angeles, CA 90022  Community Garden and/or Recreation*
4527 E 3rd St. Los Angeles, CA 90022  Community Garden and/or Recreation*
4315 New York Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90022  Community Garden and/or Recreation*
4842 E 3rd St. Los Angeles, CA 90022  Ideal for CLT housing development
4850 E 3rd St. Los Angeles, CA 90022  Ideal for CLT housing development
311 S La Verne Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90022  Ideal for CLT housing development

*Community garden and/or Recreation includes lots identified by residents as viable for tree planting; see Community Visioning section for discussion on residents priority for trees within the context of growing food.
Local documentarian Sara Aguilar worked with participants from storytelling workshops and convivios to create a short documentary uplifting the conditions that catalyzed the idea for a Community Land Trust. This documentary articulates how a community creates space for residents to tell their story and vision for what a community land trust could do for East LA and beyond. It centers the voices of community residents who were involved in outreach specifically because they are directly impacted and are fully capable of leading these efforts. Additionally, people who were recruited to participate were also documented to share their ideas and solutions for social impacts of capitalism. The video can be found on ELACC’s youtube page, @elaccsocialmedia, titled NUESTRA TIERRA NUESTRA VOZ.
As discussed in the companion report, Fideicomiso Comunitario Tierra Libre: Los Angeles County Business Plan, CLT’s require setting up a legal framework and a governance structure, and both of those steps have historically taken a long time.

ELACC has seeded a CLT called Fideicomiso Comunitario Tierra Libre (FCTL) in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of the City of Los Angeles, which neighbors East LA. FCTL already has its legal framework and governance structure established, and was conveyed three vacant lot properties from the City for the purposes of starting a CLT. FCTL voted to expand its geographic focus to include East LA. Sixteen participants from our TCC workshops and convivios are now participating in FCTL. This is an important development that provides the TCC participants a platform for sustained engagement. It also takes the group one big step toward a CLT in East LA by eliminating the need to establish the legal framework and governance structure for a CLT.
summary of results

Community Land Trust

- Identified 16 residents for participation in a CLT in East LA
- Identified one site, comprising three County-owned lots, as viable for a CLT
  - 4842 – 4850 E 3rd St. Los Angeles CA 90022
  - 311 S La Verne Ave. Los Angeles CA 90022
- Completed a digital storytelling piece about the project
- Established the legal framework and governance structure for the CLT through the Fideicomiso Comunitario Tierra Libre vote to expand into East LA

Sustainable Food Systems and Community Visioning

- Identified community gardens as the community priority for food use, and open/green/recreational space as a community priority use generally
- Identified four lots as viable for community garden and/or recreational use, including tree planting:
  - 4612 E 3rd St. Los Angeles, CA 90022
  - 4525 E 3rd St. Los Angeles, CA 90022
  - 4527 E 3rd St. Los Angeles, CA 90022
  - 4315 E New York Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90022
- Developed a community agriculture curriculum (see Appendix X)
- Identified that tree plantings in the public right-of-way is a priority for residents, but that future participants are most interested in carrying on the conversation about trees within the context of a community garden
**next steps**

The companion report, *Fideicomiso Comunitario Tierra Libre: Los Angeles County Business Plan*, illustrates how the CLT could be a very real and sustainable practice to keep working people in their homes while they actively participate in their present and future. Residents of East LA entrenched in the struggle for renter’s rights, advocated by ELACC and Eastside LEADS, are participating in discussions about the constellation of issues relating to displacement and gentrification, and how the CLT model we are proposing is a viable solution. There is interest at the County for solutions to the housing crisis that provide housing security for residents-in-place. This project has fostered important conversations and identification of common goals between ELACC, Eastside LEADS, and Supervisor Hilda Solis. The next steps to direct this momentum are outlined below.

**Work with the County to explore the feasibility of using County-owned properties for CLT and community garden(s)**

**Access to County-owned Properties**
The first step is understanding whether there is a willingness from the County to enable access/use of the County-owned properties identified as viable for specific uses.

**Investigate Properties for Suitability**
If the properties are conveyed by the County for their community-prioritized uses, the lots identified as viable for a CLT, community garden and recreational use should be examined for potential contamination, including soil testing. As mentioned in this report, there is a history of industrial use and land use conflict between residential and industrial uses in East LA. Consideration of proximity to freeways and related air quality issues should also be a consideration in site design.

**Policy Recommendations**, *Fideicomiso Comunitario Tierra Libre: Los Angeles County Business Plan, and Nuestra Tierra, Nuestro Futuro: A Land Use Assessment for the TCC Planning Grant in East Los Angeles.*
Currently there is no policy or mechanism in place for the County to support working with community land trusts. This presents a barrier and makes it difficult to plan with certainty. The companion report and land use analysis (Attachment B) include policy recommendations for encouraging development of CLT’s, and recommendations for land use changes to further encourage these uses. The County should consider prioritizing these recommendations as action items.
ELACC, Eastside LEADS, ongoing commitment

ELACC has committed to being the development partner to the CLT, and further developing our own methodology for working with CLT’s. At any given time, ELACC has nine projects in the queue at different stages. The long term goal is to have the majority, if not all nine projects, be community land trust units. We see this strategy as necessary to have a greater impact in the current trend of displacement and gentrification.

For these types of developments, a lender will underwrite the lead organization, ELACC, and its capacity and look to ELACC for financial guarantees. The CLT would be a partner as well as the owner of the land. The CLT would identify and acquire the land, if donated by the County, and then ground lease the land to a Limited Partnership (that will consist of ELACC and the CLT) and then the LP will develop the property as affordable housing. If the land is to be sold then ELACC would have to help the CLT purchase the land. The ownership will require that ELACC remain in the partnership until the CLT can take over ownership and operations. For deals that are funded by Low Income Housing Tax Credits, it would be after the initial 15 years. ELACC would contract through an MOU with the CLT to do the development, take on the financing or the project, ownership and management. We will share in the Developer Fees. We foresee that it will take a year to identify a potential development site, 1-3 years to secure financing, 2 years to build it out and put it into operations.

Beginning in 2020, Eastside LEADS will be phasing into ELACC’s core program work. Eastside LEADS will function primarily as policy advocacy and will specifically dedicate time to supporting the development of a comprehensive policy to support CLT’s for the City and County of LA.

Other project feasibility considerations

Community Garden
Develop an engagement plan resourcing local community garden participants as partners in the creation of new gardens. As a follow-up for this study, ELACC, Legacy LA and Eastside LEADS recommend a partnership with an environmental justice organization and an Indigenous nation be solidified early on in an implementation grant to re-center the conversation around traditional knowledge, relationships with nature and collective participation. In addition, the layer of access to growing food
needs to be a focal point in the conversation about trees.

**Community Garden and Recreation Use Maintenance**
Ideally these uses would be maintained long term by the Fideicomiso Comunitario Tierra Libre in partnership with the support of a local organization with community garden experience. The next step includes engaging in conversation with organizations such as From Lot to Spot, Communities for A Better Environment, or East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice about that potential.

**Transformative Climate Communities Implementation Grant application**

**Healthy Design Work Group Committee on Transformative Climate Communities Grant**
Applying for a TCC Implementation Grant is listed as one of the goals in OurCounty, Los Angeles County’s Sustainability Plan. The County is convening a multidepartment committee, identifying planned improvements and place-based strategies to address gaps for East LA. The Chief Sustainability Office is leading the effort on the County side, with participation from the Arts Commission, Chief Executive Office, Departments of Parks and Recreation, Public Health and Regional Planning, and Public Works.

**Community Engagement**
Critical to the implementation of this project will be the sustainability of the community base. A key engagement strategy in developing this project was establishing a critical mass of participants through cultural convening practices that uses cultural practices found in East LA to inform the process moving forward. The information collected during multiple workshops, groundtruthings, and convivios includes people’s voices, stories, lived experiences. Collectively these voices, stories, and experiences hold critical information on how people have been intentionally and systematically harmed. Perhaps more importantly, they hold imagination, hope, and vision for what a healthy community looks and feels like when leading with the intention of healing (rescuing) the land and the humanity. It is precisely here where a culturally sustainable climate resiliency strategy begins. Many of the residents we engaged hold ancestral knowledge on how to remediate contaminated soil, grow drought resistant organic food and medicine, landscaping and compost.

Support from Supervisor Hilda Solis to do a cultural asset map of East LA would provide us with a more holistic view of what resources exist and how to leverage them. Leveraging these resources comes in the form of cultural programming to hold process for sustained engagement. This creates the opportunity for continuous exploration, exercise and dissemination of the methodologies and practices of community in participatory democracy, stewardship of land, growing food and holistic healing.
Completed as part of the Transformative Climate Communities Planning Grant, *Nuestra Tierra, Nuestro Futuro: A Sustainable Community Ownership and Land Stewardship Pilot in Unincorporated East Los Angeles*

*By East Los Angeles Community Corporation*

During our outreach and education, we heard from community residents the importance of having access to healthy and non-polluted green space to cultivate and harvest food. There is a gap around community gardens and community control of land, where most folks had never thought of collectively owning or stewarding the land they garden on or grow food on. These folks are renters or participants at local community gardens. A minority group of homeowners offered resources and experience growing food in their own homes. This curriculum is a snapshot of the work we did with community residents engaged or interested in growing food and stewarding land. Folks had an urge to share traditional food practices, learn the basics of growing food, and find spaces to continue habits that increase wellbeing. We start with providing the contacts of individuals, collectives, and gardens. We then share the agendas and activities done during our workshop and convivio. This curriculum is a guide to initiate closing the gap between growing food and stewarding land.

**For further questions and guidance, you can reach**
Roberto Garcia-Ceballos at rgarcia@elacc.org.
Prior to community workshops, set up a relationship with local urban agriculture network:

1. Find local community agricultural sites.
2. Contact the organization or individuals coordinating the space.
3. Set up a meeting and ask them if they are interested in setting up a site visit.
4. Have a list of needs that you or your group has.

For our specific project we focused on a beginners curriculum which covers a tour of a community garden and facilitate a space/dialogue for community residents to exchange questions and knowledge regarding urban agriculture.
Community Gardens, Environmental Justice Groups and Food Workers in East LA

**Individuals and Collectives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collective/Individual</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regenerative Collective</strong></td>
<td>Theresa Chuc <a href="mailto:teresameichuc@gmail.com">teresameichuc@gmail.com</a> (818) 441-3028 Joe Dominguez <a href="mailto:jpazd91@gmail.com">jpazd91@gmail.com</a> (626)278-1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whiteside Collective</strong></td>
<td>Katia Kaplun <a href="mailto:datiakaplun@hotmail.com">datiakaplun@hotmail.com</a> (213) 926-0169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Felis Stella</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:speak@felisstella.com">speak@felisstella.com</a> (818) 261-1823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From Lot to Spot</strong></td>
<td>2003 E. 1st St Los Angeles, CA 90033 (323) 786-3587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daisy Echeverri, Yerberia Mayahuel</strong></td>
<td>Master Gardener <a href="mailto:yemayahuel@gmail.com">yemayahuel@gmail.com</a> (323) 896-6712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dalila Mendez</strong></td>
<td>Master Gardener (323) 867-1614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jose Ramirez</strong></td>
<td>Master Gardener <a href="mailto:joseram@aol.com">joseram@aol.com</a> (323) 377-4967 1136 Stone St Los Angeles, CA 90063</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Community Gardens**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Garden Name</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>White Memorial Community Garden</strong></td>
<td>Fernando (323) 480-7753 Bridge St. Los Angeles, CA 90033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zapotepec</strong></td>
<td>Rosanna Esparza Ahrens <a href="mailto:sanna@icould.com">sanna@icould.com</a> (323) 533-9657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Casa Del Mexicano Community Garden</strong></td>
<td>Cesar Castro <a href="mailto:ccastro@elacc.org">ccastro@elacc.org</a> 2900 Calle Pedro Infante Los Angeles, CA 90036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Belvedere Community Garden</strong></td>
<td>337 Mednik Ave East Los Angeles, CA 90022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eastmont Community Garden</strong></td>
<td>717 Hofner Ave East Los Angeles, CA 90022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>East LA Learning Garden</strong></td>
<td>1001 S. Mott St Los Angeles, CA 90023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session 1
Community Gardening Workshop

April 6, 2019 | 10am - 1pm (3 hours)
1136 Stone St., Los Angeles CA 90063

Description of the day:
Community residents from East LA were invited to the home of Jose Ramirez, in the City Terrace neighborhood of East LA, to tour their home’s food forest. The garden is an ecological and agricultural example of how residents can grow healthy food, trees and steward land. Participants toured the food forest and talked about natural and native fruits, vegetables, and medicinal herbs. Residents also shared with each other what food they grow in their own homes and community gardens. A diverse and intergenerational group of residents attended which provided rich conversation and space to share knowledge about practices to growing food at home.

Agenda:
Welcome and Introductions (15 min)
Setting Agreements (15 min)
Garden Tour (1 hr)
Lunch/Reflection (45 min)
Closing (15 min)
Welcome and Introductions

**Objective:**
Introduce everyone in the space and make sure everyone understands the agenda for the session.

**Materials:** Butcher Paper

**Time:** 15 min

**Handouts:** Agenda

**Exercise**

**Script:**
Welcome everyone my name is ___________. You are part of the TCC collaborative to explore community control and land stewardship in East LA. This is an Eastside LEADS, ELACC, Legacy LA, and Department of Regional Planning (LA County) effort to build community and education in the East LA area by creating a space for community residents and organizations to learn and share about urban agriculture.

All facilitators introduce themselves, where they come from, and why they are here. Keep each introduction under 3 minutes.

**Script:**
Now to begin, we are going to do a name game called the “Peoples’ Mic” so that we can start to get to know each other a little bit better and who we will be getting to know over the next 2 events. Let’s all stand up and form a circle where everyone can see each other.

**Script:**
Before people introduce themselves they will call out “Mic Check!” And everyone will repeat “Mic Check.” This will signify that everyone will have to repeat what he or she or they say. So we are going to go around and say our name and a sound we choose to make.

Facilitators should be aware that people have different abilities and standing might not be accessible. Make sure to accommodate or adapt activity where everyone can participate and be included.
Setting Agreements

**Objective:**
Have an understanding of the meaning of community agreements  
Collectively agree to use them  
Collectively make our agreements

**Materials:** Markers, Tape, and Easel Board, Butcher Paper  
**Time:** 15 min  
**Handouts:** Possibly Community Agreements

**Exercise**

*Script:*
*We are going to create some community agreements now. Why do we set community agreements?*

**Facilitator should take 1-2 responses.**

*Script:*
*These agreements will be standards/behaviors that culturally we all agree to uphold collectively, in ourselves and in each other, so that we can have productive time together.*

*Script:*
*What are some agreements we should have? Say them out and we will write them up.*

**Facilitator should record everyone’s ideas.**

*Script:*
*Does anyone need any clarifications? Can we all agree to these community agreements? Left fist in the air if you agree! If at any point in the training you would like to add more or modify the agreements please bring it to our attention.*
Garden Tour

**Objective:**
Local collective, organization, or gardener gives a tour of the garden. Participants will get to see how native fruits, vegetables, and medicinal herbs are grown.

**Materials:** Butcher Paper  
**Time:** 1 hr

**Exercise**

*When setting up tour you can present this grid that will help the organization, collective, or individual set up the tour.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions for Host</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How was the garden founded?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the purpose of the garden?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many types of vegetables, fruits, and herbs does the garden produce?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What type of compost system do they use?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What kind of irrigation system do they use?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What tips do you have for folks interested in starting to grow their own food?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information for Host</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of people attending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example: 20 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreseen accessibility needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example: 2 people will need wheelchair accessibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey of folks’ experience with urban gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example: Majority of participants have never participated in a community garden.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Depending on the number of people that show up it might be helpful to split the group in two to give people more space to walk around. Make sure to visit the community garden prior to the event. It will give you an idea of what to expect.
Lunch and Reflection

**Objective:**
Community members bond with each other while reflecting on their experience.

**Materials:** Butcher Paper

**Time:** 45 min

**Handouts:** Reflection Questions

**Exercise**

Allow participants to get food and settle into their seated area. During this exercise folks will be having lunch and answering questions to reflect on their experience.

1. What are your immediate reactions?

2. What pending questions do you have for the host?

3. If you were to come back what else would you like to learn about this space?

4. Can you see a community land trust supporting the development of more gardens?
Closing

**Objective:**
Close up workshop and space.

**Materials:** Butcher Paper

**Time:** 15 min

**Exercise**

During this exercise participants will be asked to share one thing they learned or appreciate from the garden tour.
Session 2
Community Garden Convivo

April 6, 2019 | 10am - 1pm (3 hours)
1136 Stone St., Los Angeles CA 90063

Description of the day:
The community residents who participated in the first community garden workshop were reconvened for a convivio hosted again at the home and food forest of Jose Ramirez. Residents were divided into two groups. One group discussed what stewardship and maintenance of land meant to them. This included irrigation systems with sustainable process of grey water irrigation. A second group talked about their knowledge about mainlining land and gardening. This group also made space for participant questions about maintaining their gardens.

Agenda:
Welcome and Introductions (15 min)
Setting Agreements (15 min)
Dialogue (45 min)
Potluck and Plant Exchange (75 min)
Welcome and Introductions

Objective:
Introduce everyone in the space and make sure everyone understands the agenda for the session.

Materials: Butcher Paper
Time: 15 min
Handouts: Agenda

Exercise

Script:
Welcome everyone my name is ___________. You are part of the TCC collaborative to explore community control and land stewardship in East LA. This is an Eastside LEADS, ELACC, Legacy LA, and Department of Regional Planning (LA County) effort to build community and education in the East LA area by creating a space for community residents and organizations to learn and share about urban agriculture. This is the second event we are hosting on urban agriculture.

All facilitators introduce themselves, where they come from, and why they are here. Keep each introduction under 3 minutes.

Script:
Now to begin, we are going to do a name game called the “My neighborhood sounds like this” so that we can start to get to know more about the neighborhood we live in. Let’s all stand up and form a circle where everyone can see each other.

Script:
Everyone is going to have to finish this sentence “My name is _______ and my neighborhood sounds like this __________.” Each person is going to choose a noise or sound you hear in your neighborhood. For example “My name is Roberto and my neighborhood sounds like ‘Tamales! Tamales! Tamales!’.”

Facilitators should be aware that people have different abilities and standing might not be accessible. Make sure to accommodate or adapt activity where everyone can participate and be included.
Setting Agreements

Objective:
Have an understanding of the meaning of community agreements
Collectively agree to use them
Collectively make our agreements

Materials: Markers, Tape, and Easel Board, Butcher Paper
Time: 15 min
Handouts: Possibly Community Agreements

Exercise

Script:
We are going to create some community agreements now. Why do we set community agreements?

Facilitator should take 1-2 responses.

Script:
These agreements will be standards/behaviors that culturally we all agree to uphold collectively, in ourselves and in each other, so that we can have productive time together.

Script:
What are some agreements we should have? Say them out and we will write them up.

Facilitator should record everyone’s ideas.

Script:
Does anyone need any clarifications? Can we all agree to these community agreements? Left fist in the air if you agree! If at any point in the training you would like to add more or modify the agreements please bring it to our attention.
Dialogue

**Objective:**
Create a space where folks with no experience and folks with experience can share best practices and knowledge about community gardens.

**Materials:** Butcher Paper  
**Time:** 45 min  
**Handouts:** Questions for Groups

**Exercise**

Break out into two groups: Have all the participants count from 1 to 2 so that you create two groups (Group 1 and Group 2).

Each group will have a facilitator. Each group will have 20 min with one facilitator. They will rotate to another facilitator when the timer rings. Each group will get a chance to answer these questions and have a dialogue.

Each facilitator will encourage all participants to answer the questions. The facilitator should then encourage folks to support each other in answering questions folks have about gardening and growing food.

**Facilitator 1 will ask:**
- What techniques do you use when growing food in your backyard?
- If you are interested in starting a community garden or growing food, what immediate questions do you have?

**Facilitator 2 will ask:**
- What techniques do you use when growing food in your backyard?
- What prevents you from having or being part of a community garden?
- How can community land trusts support creating community gardens?

Make sure you scribe all the responses from community residents. At the end of each rotation make sure you repeat to the participants what you heard from them. Also remind everyone that they will have a chance to talk more during the potluck.
Potluck and Plant Exchange

**Objective:**
Create a space where folks with no experience and folks with experience can share best practices and knowledge about community gardens.

**Materials:** Butcher Paper  
**Time:** 45 min  
**Handouts:** Questions for Groups

**Exercise**

Participants that were invited were asked to bring a dish/food sourced from a family or traditional recipe to share during lunch and encouraged to bring plants to exchange or give away. Prior to starting, facilitators will synthesize what they heard in each group and will make space for participants to add or change anything.

The following exercise centers Cultural Convening Methods, which are rituals and/or traditions rooted in the collective wisdom of communities of practice. These methods use convivencia, the deliberate act of being present with and for one another, as a principal driver. The cultural and knowledge sharing happens here in a more organic way. While setting up the space allow folks to use up the space.

**Facilitators ask a series of questions deliberately yielding short (one or two word) answers.**

- What does Convivencia mean to you?
- How does your family and/or community convene around food?
- What cultural significance does the dish you brought have?
- What do you value culturally that without, this community would not be the same?

Facilitators scribe all responses exactly as shared. Once all the information is on the butcher paper, everyone collectively reads the responses to affirm each other’s contributions to the conversation. The facilitator further affirms this by lifting up the information scribed as the collective wisdom of this community.
The following section is meant to move the conversation from words to phrases or longer narratives.

**Facilitators will ask one question multiple times.**
- *What stood out when reading this list of collective wisdom? Why?*

These longer narratives can be arranged and organized to create complete thoughts weaving multiple stories and experiences into one line or stanza.

This is a critical juncture in the process as we are socialized to “produce” something concrete in order for it to make sense. Instead, the facilitator can stop whenever it seems appropriate. This pause can be used to lift up the process-based engagement and the fact that these processes are dynamic and ongoing is essential.
Closing

Objective:
Close up space.

Time: 15 min

Exercise

During this exercise participants will be asked to share one thing they appreciate and admire about someone in the room.
attachment B

Nuestra Tierra, Nuestro Futuro: A Land Use Assessment for the TCC Planning Grant in East Los Angeles

Prepared by the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning
Nuestra Tierra, Nuestro Futuro: A Land Use Assessment for the TCC Planning Grant in East Los Angeles
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Introduction

The County of Los Angeles partnered with East Los Angeles Community Corporation, Legacy LA, and Eastside LEADS on a Transformative Climate Communities Planning Grant. The Planning Grant project ("project"), aimed to address displacement and climate change in the unincorporated community of East Los Angeles (East LA) through establishing a foundation for community ownership and land stewardship. The primary goals were to develop the framework for a community land trust (CLT), and to support sustainable food systems. The project program year ran with the 2018/2019 fiscal year.

The Department of Regional Planning (DRP) was the lead County department on the project. This project is part of the Equitable Development Work Program established by Board motion in 2015, which, among other policy directives, directed DRP to “(r)eview the regulatory barriers to the establishment and expansion of community land trusts and other shared equity models, and potential incentives to provide their greater adoption.” Supporting the creation of a CLT was also one of seven recommendations provided by the County’s Affordable Housing Action Plan (2018).

DRP’s role in the project was primarily the provision of technical assistance and support for the community-based organization partners. In addition, DRP was responsible for the following task:

- Examine the results of the community engagement to assess whether land use tools are needed to enable the CLT, the community-identified food use and opportunities for development and amenities identified in the community visioning.

This report/memo summarizes the assessment completed for this task, with potential recommendations. The assessment is based on the findings from the partners’ robust community engagement, and the CLT consultant team (CTY Housing, Burlington Associates and Sandra MacNeill Consulting). For more details on those findings, refer to the reports Nuestra Tierra, Nuestro Futuro: A Sustainable Community Ownership and Land Stewardship Pilot in Unincorporated East Los Angeles, and Fideicomismo Communitario Tierra Libre: Los Angeles County Business Plan.
Land Use and Community Land Trusts

A residential CLT would be reviewed as a residential use, subject to the same review and standards as the same housing type in the same zone. For example, a CLT comprised of new multifamily housing construction proposed for a property zoned C-2 would be reviewed as multifamily housing in C-2. Accordingly, the question of whether there are land use barriers to development of CLT’s in East LA and the County yields the same answer as that for housing generally: the requirement for a Conditional Use Permit for residential in commercial zones presents a barrier to the development of housing. Senate Bill (SB) 35, effective since January 1, 2018, partially addresses that barrier by requiring by right review of projects in commercial zones that meet certain criteria. DRP is working on the By Right Housing Ordinance to further enable by right review of housing in commercial zones where appropriate.

Large, multifamily housing
The CLT consultant team assessed the viability of specific housing types for use as a CLT in East LA. The resultant feasibility study is Appendix A in Fideicomismo Communitario Tierra Libre: Los Angeles County Business Plan. The following summarizes the findings relevant to this report.

East LA’s housing stock is primarily single family detached (62%), followed by small multifamily with 2 – 9 units (32.8%), and a small percentage of multifamily with 10 or more units (5.2%). Median rent in East LA ($1,010) is well below the County’s median rent ($1,433), indicating that there is naturally occurring affordable housing in East LA. One strategy to preserve affordability is acquisition of naturally occurring affordable housing units for a CLT.

Based on that information, the CLT consultant team identified two development scenarios for CLT formation: acquisition/rehabilitation of single family housing, and acquisition/rehabilitation of multifamily rental housing. A third development scenario was identified: new construction of multifamily housing. Contemporary affordable housing resources fund or finance dense developments of 50 units or more, so that size became part of the feasibility study.
The CLT consultant team then ran a market analysis on the three development scenarios and found that although acquisition/rehabilitation of small multifamily buildings has the lowest cost, new construction of multifamily housing with 50 or more units had the smallest financing gap. Furthermore, the business plan asserts that there are two financially feasible paths for the CLT, and both include new construction of large multifamily housing.

There are no identified land use barriers to the acquisition/rehabilitation scenarios. There are potential land use challenges for the new construction multifamily housing scenario. The feasibility study asserts that there is a land use/density mismatch. “East LA also has higher population density and lower density housing stock than the County overall.” (p. 15). Given that mismatch, policy recommendations in the feasibility study include increasing density in East LA to expand opportunities for new construction of large multifamily housing, since that is the most viable, financially feasible housing type for a CLT. The CLT consultant team specifically recommends assessing corridors near transit, as funding such as the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities grant prioritizes projects near transit.

The DRP work program includes efforts to support density. DRP recently updated the County’s density bonus program. It now enables projects that are 100% affordable to request a density bonus over the 35% state established maximum through an incentive. DRP is also working on the next Housing Element Update, which will include efforts to increase densities to meet the County’s Regional Housing Needs Assessment allocation.

However, if the County wanted to specifically support the development of a CLT in East LA, it could consider looking at opportunities for increased density in the community. The appropriate means for that analysis communitywide would be through the establishment of the Metro Area Plan. Additionally, because the land use in the neighborhoods around the Gold Line is regulated through the 3rd St Specific Plan, which is a hybrid, form-based plan, amendments or an update to the specific plan could potentially enable more density near transit. The review of multifamily housing in the Transect Zones could also be analyzed to assess whether review should be streamlined to align with State and local priorities.
In the feasibility study, the CLT consultant team also recommended parallel anti-displacement strategies to mitigate potential impacts of increased density. The County is developing rent stabilization and tenant protections that will provide increased housing security for residents. The County is also developing land use tools for anti-displacement; DRP is working on the Affordable Housing Preservation Ordinance.

**Specific Sites Identified Through Groundtruthing**

Of the 24 sites assessed for viability by the partners and community participants, one site was identified as the best suited for the housing (the CLT). The site is composed of three contiguous parcels owned by the County on 3rd St, across the street from the Civic Center (4842 – 4850 E 3rd St, and 311 S La Verne Ave). These properties are within the 3rd St Specific Plan and fall within the TOD Transect Zone. Apartments are permitted by right on these properties. If the County moved forward with a CLT on these properties, there would be no land use barriers to developing new multifamily housing.

**The Potential to Connect a CLT to Housing Policy**

Fideicomismo Communitario Tierra Libre: Los Angeles County Business Plan also includes policy recommendations for supporting a CLT Countywide in Appendix B. Policy #5 is a land use strategy:

*Enact inclusionary zoning, award density bonuses, and grant regulatory concessions to steer units into a CLT’s portfolio and to cover a portion of the CLT’s cost of stewardship*

With the current density bonus and the future Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, housing units within projects are set aside as affordable housing, and remain income restricted for 55 years if rental, and upon first resale with equity-sharing if for-sale. The report recommends that the County consider using the Inclusionary Housing and density bonus programs in the future to “support CLTs specifically, or nonprofit housing organizations generally, to become the monitor, steward, or owner of the units, or the beneficiary of any in-lieu fees or land donations generated by the policies.” (p. 119) Giving a CLT the first right to purchase the affordable units provides the benefit of ensuring affordability in perpetuity. The report describes these policy components in detail, as well as how the County could implement those priorities (p. 131 - 134).

Once a CLT is established and operating, the County could consider updating the Inclusionary Housing density bonus programs to support CLT’s. Further analysis would need to be made to discern which policy components to include (for example: CLT monitoring, stewarding and/or ownership; in-lieu fees; land donations; geographic specificity).
Land Use, Community Gardens, and Open/Green/Recreational Use

The community outreach completed by ELACC, Eastside LEADS, and Legacy LA found that residents want to see more community gardens and open/green/recreational spaces in East LA. The conversation around community gardens highlighted a need for access to fresh food, and an interest in the culturally-rooted forms of growing, cooking, and sharing food. The desire for more open/green/recreational space aligns with the County’s finding that East LA is park poor. 44% of residents live further than ½ mile from open space, and East LA has 0.34 acres of parks per 1,000 residents, well below the County General Plan goal of 4 acres per 1,000 residents.

Based on existing zoning in East Los Angeles, sites zoned C-1, C-2, and C-3 have the most potential to support community land trusts that are comprised of housing, local food systems, and parks/open space uses. These zones allow community gardens, crops, greenhouses, farmer’s markets and parks/open space by right. Community centers and community kitchens are also permitted by right, but only in zone C-3. Residential uses in commercial zones, with certain exceptions under the Mixed Use Ordinance or SB 35, are subject to a discretionary review. See the previous section for a more in-depth discussion of residential review in commercial zones.

Sites zoned R-2, R-3, and R-4 also have the potential to support community land trusts that are comprised of housing, local food systems, and parks/open space uses, but with limitations. Apartments are permitted in zone R-2, but are subject to a discretionary review and require a minimum required lot area of 2,500 square feet per unit. Apartments are permitted by right in zones R-3 and R-4. In addition, there are limitations to combining residential uses with local food systems and parks/open space uses in residential zones. Community gardens are permitted by right; however, crops, parks/open space, and farmer’s markets are subject to a discretionary review. In addition, community centers/community kitchens are subject to a discretionary review and are only permitted in zones R-3 and R-4. Furthermore, recreational spaces in residential zones must be an exclusive use of the residents within a housing development.
In the 3rd St Specific Plan, there are barriers to community land trusts that are comprised of housing, local food systems and parks/open space. Farmer’s markets and produce stands are permitted by right in TOD, CC, FS, AB and NC transect zones. However, community gardens, crops, greenhouses and open/recreational space require a Specific Plan Substantial Conformance Review.

If the County prioritized development of local food systems or park/open space, it could consider changing the review of these uses from discretionary to by right. An analysis would need to be completed to discern which zones are most appropriate for by right review of these uses.

**Specific Sites Identified Through Groundtruthing**

Of the 24 sites assessed for viability by the partners and community participants, three sites were identified as best suited for community gardens and/or recreation: 4525-4527 E 3rd St.; 4612 E 3rd St.; and 4315 New York Ave. The first two sites are in the TOD transect zone, and the third is in the CV zone. All three sites are County-owned, so moving forward with any of these uses would present no land use barrier. However, it is helpful to note that if they were privately-owned, they would all require Substantial Conformance Review to move forward with a local food system or park/open space use.
To encourage development of a CLT in the County generally:

- Continue work on the By Right Housing Ordinance
- Consider utilizing the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance to support CLTs

To encourage development of a CLT in East LA:

- Consider opportunities to increase density through a Metro Area Plan update and/or amendments to the 3rd St Specific Plan

To encourage development of local food systems and park/open space in the County generally:

- Consider changing the review of these uses from discretionary to by right where appropriate

To encourage development of local food systems and open/park space in East LA:

- Consider changing the review of these uses in the 3rd St Specific Plan from discretionary to by right where appropriate
- Clarify that these uses are included within relevant use types within transect zones

Additional consideration:

- Ensure that parallel efforts in East LA do not create additional barriers to development of these uses