



living streets alliance



2020 Annual Report



VISION

We envision streets as living public spaces that connect people to places and to each other



MISSION

The mission of Living Streets Alliance is to advocate for a thriving Tucson by creating great streets for all of us.

VALUES

Equity, Integrity, Inclusivity, Innovation, Collaboration

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At this time last year, we highlighted a series of benchmarks and accomplishments that had “tipped the scales” in LSA’s journey to reclaim streets as places for people. It seemed at the time like that year would be impossible to top. And then 2020 rolled in.

The past six months have ushered in change more rapidly than we could ever have imagined. With COVID-19, the notion of streets as public space shifted from being held by a passionate few to a powerful many, as people across the world sheltered in place and in doing so, rediscovered their place—their neighborhood, their neighbors, nearby essential businesses and resources—in a much deeper way. Despite being physically separated, streets provided us with social and emotional connections when we needed them most.

Then, on May 25th, George Floyd was killed by a white Minneapolis police officer who knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes. The blatant disregard for his life and the violent nature of his death sent shock waves across the nation and around the world, elevating the message that **Black Lives Matter**. People took to the streets in more places, greater numbers and more often than perhaps ever before, demanding that America value, honor, and recognize Black lives. Seemingly overnight, streets became places of cultural expression, social commentary, resistance, and creation manifested through demonstrations, marches, protests, gatherings, murals, occupations, and more. George Floyd’s death made it overwhelmingly clear that Black and brown bodies are not yet safe in our streets as a direct result of policies and planning rooted in white supremacy.

This dual reality is playing out at this very moment in how Tucson’s streets are planned and designed, what and whose priorities are reflected in those decisions, and where and how they take shape. Living Streets Alliance has always worked to center communities in which we work as the guide for how change is implemented. And, this is also the beginning of a much deeper and broadened approach for thinking about, informing, and shaping our conversations about streets as places for everyone.

As we reflect on the past year and look to the future, we commit anew to our work of creating equity in Tucson’s streets. We will be explicitly adding anti-racism principles and practices as we work towards creating systemic change that centers the power of people and communities who have historically been targets of oppression, marginalization, and underrepresentation.

This is a process and a journey, and we don’t yet know all the ways in which our anti-racism work will manifest. We invite you to continue on this path forward as we learn, together, what we must do to make our streets safe and vibrant places for every one of us. Only then can our streets reach their full potential to ensure we thrive together.

Sincerely,



Emily Yetman  
Executive Director



BACKSTORY

In May of 2019, the Mission View Elementary School community and neighborhood came together with LSA to create the first-ever traffic circle mural in Tucson. During a block-painting party, over 100 kids and families helped transform the intersection with paint, planters, and flex posts, amid a festive atmosphere of food, music, and bicycle fun. Seeing the outcome, Mission View’s neighbors to the north—Ochoa Community School—voiced interest in doing something similar, as did many neighbors along 8th Avenue. Just six months later, another colorful traffic circle mural was co-created by the Ochoa community at the intersection of 8th Avenue and 25th Street, adjacent to the School. Designed by local artist Mel Dominguez and incorporating imagery generated by the youth, the mural has created a safer and much more enjoyable space for kids and families walking and biking to school each day.



# Ochoa Traffic Circle elevates safety & community pride

HIGHLIGHTS

On November 15th, over 200 people came together to create the traffic circle mural during an after school block-painting party. While LSA took on the role of coordinating the event, we were delighted by many surprises throughout the event: older residents (Ochoa alumni!) in the area brought plants to include in the planters; Kat showed up with hula-hoops to add to the fun; neighbors brought out fry bread and drinks to share. These small acts of care signaled that the community felt ownership of the space, and nearly a year later we still see proof of this as the planters are lovingly tended to and the mural remains perfectly intact.



**“The mural is kick-ass! It’s striking and a break from the monotony. The block party brought out so many families and the traffic circle really has slowed down traffic. The kids really enjoyed playing in the street. Kids don’t play in the street anymore. It’s really good for kids but it’s hard when we’re so auto heavy!”**

LUIS, OCHOA NEIGHBOR AND PARENT

PARTNERS

- City of South Tucson
- Cicli Noe Creatista
- John Valenzuela Youth Center
- Mel Dominguez + Galeria Mitotera
- New Belgium Brewing Co.
- Ochoa Community School
- Vitalyst Health Foundation
- Pima County Health
- Trees for Tucson
- Tucson Osteopathic Medical Foundation
- Tucson Department of Transportation & Mobility





- PARTNERS**
- Arizona Complete Health
  - Arts Foundation for Tucson & Southern Arizona
  - AARP Tucson
  - BK's
  - Cigna
  - La Estrella Bakery
  - Pima County Environmental Quality
  - Planet Bike
  - Rollie's Mexican Patio
  - Tacos Apson
  - Tucson Department of Transportation & Mobility
  - TMC Healthcare

# Cyclovia Tucson returns to La Doce

## BACKSTORY

In 2017, LSA worked with community partners to develop a Cyclovia Tucson route along South 12th Avenue—La Doce—for one of the largest and most diverse events in Cyclovia history. Overwhelmingly positive feedback from both event participants and businesses along the corridor made it clear to LSA that the route was a hit, and in fall of 2019, the event returned to La Doce. Having learned what worked well in the first iteration of the La Doce event, and listening to what the community wanted to see prioritized, LSA worked to showcase local talent and businesses, and placed particular emphasis on ensuring families that live, work, play, worship, and attend school along and adjacent to S. 12th Ave. felt represented, included and valued as part of the event.



## HIGHLIGHTS

Arizona Complete Health hosted the health and wellness hub at the southern endpoint of the route - at Mission Manor Park - and provided flu shots, mammograms, blood pressure checks and more all day long alongside dozens of community partners hosting interactive exhibits and other services, like free bike repair. Rollie's Mexican Patio - a new destination on La Doce since the first event - went all in hosting a classic car show, dance performances from Viva Dance Studio, and DJs. Nearby, the Peraza Family's Superhero Stunt Team defied gravity with a BMX stunt ramp. The Tucson Department

of Transportation and Mobility hosted a pop-up demonstration outlining future road diet changes to La Doce while across the street La Estrella Bakery staff and owners displayed a powerful community altar next to an area where kids of all ages could decorate sugar skulls for el Día de los Muertos. The Arts Foundation for Tucson and Southern Arizona helped underwrite a Mariachi Community Showcase stage outside of Tacos Apson, and BK's Carne Asada hosted the free zipline and live music all day long in the middle of S. 12th Ave. - La Doce.





## PARTNERS

BICAS

City of South Tucson

Environmental Education  
Exchange

John Valenzuela Youth Center

Los Amigos Tech Academy

Mission View Elementary

Ochoa Community School

Pueblo Gardens PreK-8

Tucson Department of  
Transportation & Mobility

326

bicycles repaired over the  
course of 36 Mobile Bike  
Repair clinics throughout the  
community

97

Riders & Walkers presentations  
in 3rd grade classrooms across  
the region, engaging 2,464  
students

9,450

miles biked and walked by  
students participating in safe  
routes programs

## BACKSTORY

Safe Routes to School is a national movement to make it easier for youth and families to walk and bike to and from school. Since 2015, LSA has coordinated Safe Routes to School programs in partnership with both the City of Tucson and City of South Tucson. This includes everything from coordinating interactive educational activities in 3rd grade classrooms to after-school bike clubs to weekly walking/biking groups called Walking School Buses and Bike Trains.

## HIGHLIGHTS

The work of Safe Routes to School Tucson is rooted in building ongoing relationships with teachers, caregivers, neighbors and youth, supporting them as leaders who shape the movement [of biking and walking] in ways that are relevant to their own communities. At Pueblo Gardens PreK-8 School, it has been inspiring to witness the growth of their safe routes program, led by a diverse group of six adults and teens from the school community, many of whom started as novice bike riders and have grown increasingly more comfortable leading rides and doing bike repair maintenance. For the past four years, they have coordinated a weekly after school bike club and because of their mentorship, enthusiasm for biking continues to grow among families. The bike club attracts students of all riding levels, and students express how much they enjoy the non-competitive camaraderie, as well as the opportunity to explore routes in their very own neighborhood. Earlier this year, LSA received a competitive national grant from the Safe Routes Partnership and is excited to use this funding to creatively engage Pueblo Gardens families around future Proposition 407 connections projects.

Safe Routes to School  
takes root



### Talking with folks on the move

We conducted on-street “intercept” surveys to help the City staff hear about the walkability concerns and desired improvements from the perspective of the real experts, i.e. the people out walking in their communities. This approach ensured that people who were already regularly traveling on foot along the corridor could share their insights on what kinds of improvements would be the most helpful and to fine-tune the locations.



### Activating parks

To create an atmosphere that was family-friendly, fun, social, and inviting, we partnered with the City to host **Bike-in Movie + Ice-Cream Socials** at neighborhood parks where neighbors shared their thoughts about the proposed bicycle boulevard projects. Kids could enjoy the playgrounds and grass, while folks could get their bikes fixed, have a treat, and enjoy a free outdoor movie.



### FIELD NOTES

Memorable moments and outcomes from engaging differently:

*Most delicious surprise while doing our work:*

**Sushi Delivery**  
from a nearby business owner (who owns a used car dealership, not a sushi restaurant!)

*Most common request we heard during intercept surveys:*

**Sidewalks**

*Most unexpected participants:*

**Two Javelina**  
casually walking across the park

*Most popular ice-cream flavor:*

**Vanilla**  
(who knew?!?)

*Most exciting shift in participation:*

**25%**  
of intercept survey participants were youth under 18

# Nontraditional Community Engagement bridges the gap

### BACKSTORY

Community engagement, as traditionally practiced by government agencies, tends to work best for people who have the time and resources to attend public meetings, too often resulting in participation that is not representative of our communities. Many people are working multiple jobs while raising children and tackling transportation challenges. Some don't speak English and still others don't feel comfortable attending these types of meetings for a myriad of reasons. As such, communities of color, Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities, and low-income people are disproportionately left out of transportation decision-making processes.

In an effort to address some of these barriers we started exploring, piloting, and demonstrating different ways of doing community engagement during our Complete Streets policy initiative, focused on meeting people where they are. Our hope was to see local agencies embrace and adopt these types of community engagement strategies to reach beyond the usual participants. In 2019, recognizing the potential for more diverse and inclusive community engagement around Prop 407 project implementation, Tucson Department of Transportation and Mobility started partnering with LSA and others to facilitate “non-traditional” engagement activities to supplement their traditional open house style meetings.



# Streets take on a whole new meaning as a pandemic evolves

**BACKSTORY**

In the wake of COVID-19 streets took on a whole new importance throughout the U.S. and across the globe. As traditional social and recreational spaces like parks, restaurants, gyms, movie theaters and churches closed during stay-at-home orders, streets became vital places for exercise, [physically-distanced] human connection, and expression. Following national trends and paying close attention to best practices and lessons learned by other cities, LSA began advocating for streets to be used in entirely new ways during the pandemic.

We have always played soccer on the street in the evening. We would run off the road when we saw cars approaching and the cars used to seem so angry at us for being there. Now they smile and wave. It's like, "oh, we acknowledge that this street belongs to both of us now." It's so much calmer and more pleasant.

FRANCESCA (FELDMAN'S NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENT)



## Slow Streets roll out

Faced with increased demand for enough space to physically distance—coupled with the drop in car traffic while people stayed home—many cities quickly rolled out “slow streets” programs to limit automobile traffic in select neighborhood streets and corridors. After witnessing the need for space for Tucson families to shelter-in-place outside, Living Streets Alliance jumped into action and after advocating and working behind the scenes with Tucson Transportation & Mobility, a pilot program was established. A full-blown Slow Streets program is now rolling out across Tucson, poised to transform up to 18 miles of residential streets into vibrant spaces for people by the end of 2020!



## Flex Zones + Streateries take shape

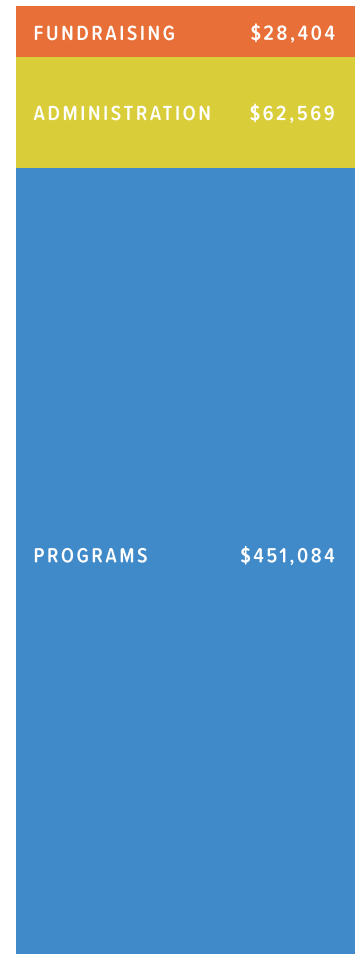
Locally owned businesses are the lifeblood of Tucson. Local businesses know their customers, give back to the community, and employ our friends, neighbors, and family members. As rumors of “opening back up” started to take shape in April and May, it seemed an impossible task for small businesses with a fixed amount of indoor space. Looking to the streets as a resource, LSA advocated for the temporary/flexible establishment of outdoor retail and dining space adjacent to businesses, in the form of Flex Zones—entire commercial corridors closed to cars and turned into ad-hoc pedestrian plazas—and Streateries: on-street parking quickly and affordably turned into alfresco dining space. At the time of this report, a handful of Streateries have been established in Tucson with many more are on the way, thanks to the full support of the City of Tucson, Pima County, Downtown Tucson Partnership, and many business/merchant associations across the city.



# Financials\*

## Expense

**\$542,057**



## Income

**\$472,565**



\*2019 calendar year

# Thank You!

It takes shared vision, dedication, and collaboration to cultivate a city in which everyone can thrive. Thank you to all of the generous and committed community partners, sponsors, underwriters, businesses, foundations, and individuals who join Living Streets Alliance in working to create vibrant streets in Tucson and beyond!



## SPONSORS, UNDERWRITERS, BUSINESS PARTNERS, & FOUNDATIONS



- A23 Studios
- Arizona Physical Activity Policy Research Network
- Arts Foundation for Tucson & Southern Arizona
- Betts Printing
- BK Carne Asada & Hotdogs
- City of South Tucson
- Cox Communications
- Downtown Tucson Partnership
- Dragoon
- Fair Wheel Bikes
- Gadsden Company
- Long Realty Cares Foundation
- Mission Church
- New Belgium Brewing Co., Inc.
- Petroglyphs
- Pima County Health
- Poster Mirto McDonald
- Planet Bike
- Psomas
- Reproductions Inc.
- Rio Nuevo
- State Farm
- Trek Bicycle Corporation
- Tucson Office of Economic Development
- Tucson Old Pueblo Credit Union
- Tucson Osteopathic Medical Foundation
- Why I Love Where I Live
- Zocalo

- Bird Rides Inc.
- Creatista
- Cycling Advocates of Southern Arizona
- EcoGro
- El Rio
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- Gloo Factory
- Goodwill Industries
- Hydrant
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- Superior Water Treatment
- Sun Sprout LLC
- Southern Arizona Roadrunners
- Tanks Green Stuff
- Tacos Apson
- Tap+Bottle
- Tucson Roadrunners
- United Way of Tucson & Southern Arizona
- Visit Tucson
- Westbound





**living streets alliance**

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