



living streets alliance



2021 Annual Report

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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VISION

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

A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

September 2021

Transitions. If the past year has taught us anything, it's that the world around us is fluid and rapidly evolving. This year offered perspective; reflection and learning from our first decade of transportation advocacy here in Tucson and recognition of the opportunity and urgency in this moment to adapt, focus, and prepare for the next.

Normally we'd present you with an annual report highlighting key moments and activities from the year. This time around we share the story of South Tucson Shared Streets / Calles Compartidas as a way to illuminate one year of advocacy—shaped by a pandemic and nationwide protests for racial justice—along a continuum of programs, events, and conversations that have been happening there for nearly a decade around a community-centered vision for 8th Avenue.

This steady, intentional practice of copowerment* with people is the future of transportation advocacy and we invite you to join us on this journey to multiply and replicate it across Tucson over the coming decade.

Sincerely,



Emily Yetman
Executive Director

** We use the word "copowerment" as a way to acknowledge that everyone has power, knowledge, and skills contribute to a cause and that it is in the sharing and mutual exchange of these things that movements are built. Our thanks to Tamika Butler for expanding our consciousness and vocabulary!*

South Tucson Shared Streets / Calles Compartidas elevates safety, local ownership, and community pride

JVYC Bike Club

2017 Youth Bike Summit delegation from South Tucson



BACKGROUND

South 8th Avenue connects two South Tucson anchors in the community: Mission View PreK-8 and Ochoa Community School along with the adjacent John Valenzuela Youth Center (JVYC). Many families have lived there for generations, with grandchildren now attending the same elementary schools their grandparents did. Living Streets Alliance's journey with this community began in 2011 when our second-ever Cyclovia Tucson route connected S. 8th Avenue, S. 4th Avenue and neighborhoods just south of downtown Tucson—a route that has been activated four times since—sparking conversations around youth, community access, bicycles, and sense of place.



Ochoa Bike Club participants

Throughout the years, this conversation has been fueled by expeditions of the Ochoa Bike Club in partnership with the JVYC and Bicycle Inter Community Art And Salvage (BICAS); through ongoing Safe Routes to School programming in partnership with the cities of Tucson and South Tucson; in bringing people together to transform intersections using paint, planters, and flexposts in partnership with Mel Dominguez of Galeria Mitotera; by sending cohorts to the Youth Bike Summit in Washington DC and then New York City. In that time we've seen South Tucson youth and community members transition to take the lead in carrying forth their shared vision for their community.

About five years ago it became apparent that S. 8th Avenue would eventually be the site of traffic calming and biking/walking safety enhancements, and this was soon solidified with Proposition 407, which secured funding for 8th Avenue to become a "Bicycle Boulevard." Wanting to ensure that the South Tucson community could lead conversations and visioning for the corridor's transformation, we have utilized our programs, projects, and events along the corridor as opportunities to center community in the decision-making process about what that transformation will look and feel like.

In March 2020, Cyclovia was set to take place along 8th Avenue, but was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the community lost the event, schools and parks were closed, physical distancing ensued, and the project



timeline was extended due to pandemic-related challenges to community engagement. Wanting to again ensure that visioning and conversation could continue even within a physically distanced reality, LSA and our partners pivoted to offer a new way of configuring neighborhood streets: Shared Streets. This concept created temporary traffic calming measures using common barricading materials as a way to experiment with and experience traffic calming options before making permanent changes. It also provided shared places for people to walk, bike, recreate and get around during the peak of the pandemic.



South Tucson Calles Compartidas map shared in mailings to residents

“Children NEED a place to play safely, without open parks where else can kids go?”

“I have partial blindness and walk everywhere, slower traffic would be a tremendous benefit for me.”

“Sounds cool and fun for the kids. It is very important to make the cars slow down.”

-COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS GATHERED DURING PRE-IMPLEMENTATION OUTREACH

Barricades installed to help deter cut-through traffic along 8th Avenue during South Tucson Shared Streets



Signage placed along the route in October 2020 to explain the initiative

HOW IT WORKED

In October 2020, South Tucson Shared Streets rolled out along S. 8th Avenue and 37th Street. Prior to implementation, a bilingual team which included trained volunteers and youth from the area went door-to-door along the corridor to share information about the Shared Streets proposal, hear from neighbors and gauge the level of support for elements of the program, and to learn more about people's current concerns regarding traffic safety on 8th Avenue.

On October 18th, barricades, cones, and signage were set up at intervals along S. 8th Avenue and 37th Street to form bulb-outs and traffic circles. Though originally intended to only stay in place through the end of the year, they ended up being kept in place another three months based on feedback from community members, making the program last a full six months.

Program Highlights

Neighborhood Stewards

In October, LSA recruited eleven South Tucson neighbors living on or near 8th Avenue to help cover the entire Shared Streets corridor. These neighbors committed to overseeing the barricades and signage, and were also key ambassadors for on-the-ground engagement, distributing flyers, talking to neighbors about Shared Streets, collecting feedback, and reporting back these anecdotes and observations. These conversations were documented after visits and phone calls with stewards. All neighbors helped for the entire duration of the program and received a monthly stipend.



South Tucson Neighborhood Steward and long time resident, Francisco Robles, with a sign he painted for the route



Mobile Bike Repair Clinics

Four Mobile Bike Repair Clinics were hosted along South 8th Avenue offering free bike repair to local neighbors and partnering with the Pima County Dept. of Environmental Quality to facilitate fun and educational art activities for kids. The clinics were only advertised to local neighbors and families and attracted a diversity of residents, including families with young kids, older adults who were excited to ride for fun and health, and other adults who relied on their bicycle for transportation. In total, 93 residents attended the clinics and 48 bicycles were repaired.

Lynn, a retired custodian happened to find our bike repair clinic when she rolled by in her truck. She later brought out her bike to get tuned up and was so excited that she was already coordinating to ride bikes with a friend of hers. The following Sunday we were out doing bike repair, and she happened to find us again, this time while riding her bike!

Vanessa Cascio, former LSA Director of Youth & Family Initiatives



(Top, right) A bike getting tuned-up during a Mobile Bike Repair Clinic

(Above) All-ages art activity

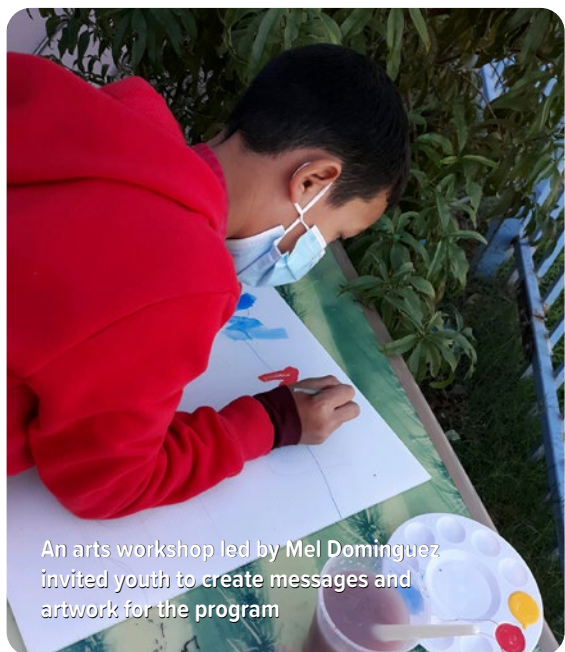
(Top, left) One of many South Tucson youth ready to ride after attending a Mobile bike Repair Clinic

One of many colorful, playful signs created to adorn the Shared Streets/ Calles Compartidas route



Youth Art Workshops @ JVYC

After hosting the Ochoa Bike Club for the past six years and being involved with planning efforts around bikeability in the neighborhood, staff at John Valenzuela Youth Center were eager to get involved with Shared Streets. Mel Dominguez led a workshop with youth to create signage for the route. These hand painted signs, designed and painted by the youth were affixed to the barricades, helping to make the corridor a friendlier space for neighbors.



An arts workshop led by Mel Dominguez invited youth to create messages and artwork for the program

Storytelling

During this program, many of the stewards and other neighbors voiced a desire to get involved in the planning process for the bike boulevard and are excited to see that project come to fruition. Several of them were very eager to talk about the program and their desires for S. 8th Avenue and their community.

To capture some of this excitement we hired documentarian and community activist Gene Martinez who interviewed five South Tucson neighbors and generated digital stories that could be shared broadly. Many neighbors have since used these videos as a way to talk with fellow neighbors about the future bike boulevard project.



“A lot of people have misperceptions about South Tucson, but this has been our home for generations. I grew up playing and walking around all over these streets with my friends until the street lights came on, when it was time to come home. I want my son to have that too, to feel comfortable and safe here.”

Dee Toro, South Tucson neighbor and Shared Streets Neighborhood Steward

What now, what next?

The Shared Streets program came to an end on April 3, 2021, just as formal community engagement activities started for the Proposition 407-funded 8th Avenue Bicycle Boulevard project.

The conversations had with community members throughout the Shared Streets program will help inform the 8th Avenue project. We've shared findings from our community engagement efforts with the City's project team and hope to continue to engage with the area residents as the project moves forward. Through the Shared Streets outreach and engagement efforts, a contact list has been compiled of about 50 residents who live directly on this roughly one-mile corridor and want to be involved in the conversations about future improvements.

The Shared Streets program reaffirmed the importance of on-the-ground, in-person engagement in this area, which takes dedicated time and resources as well as trusted messengers. This type of engagement yielded rich conversations and illuminating feedback from the residents. By contrast, the online survey received only three responses despite being promoted through 1,225 direct mailers. This discrepancy is perhaps best described in the words of a South Tucson resident herself: "We just don't do surveys around here." We believe this anecdote highlights the importance of meeting people where they are to ensure inclusive and meaningful engagement opportunities for the upcoming 8th Avenue Bicycle Boulevard project or, for that matter, any future planning initiative, especially in neighborhoods where "traditional" community engagement activities fall short in amplifying diverse voices and perspectives.

SOUTH TUCSON SHARED STREETS PARTNERS & COLLABORATORS

Cicli Noe

City of South Tucson

City of Tucson Department
of Transportation & Mobility

Community Foundation for
Southern Arizona - We Are
One/Somos Uno Resiliency
CARES Act Fund

Technicians for Sustainability

House of Neighborly Services

John Valenzuela Youth
Center

Mel Dominguez + Galeria
Mitotera

Mission View Elementary

Ochoa Community School

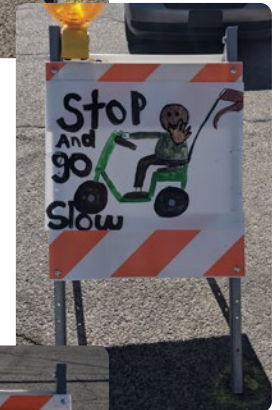
Pima County CDBG

Pima County Environmental
Quality - Clean Air Program

Psomas

South Tucson Neighborhood
Stewards + families

Gene Martinez



Signage that youth created for
the Shared Streets program

Financials

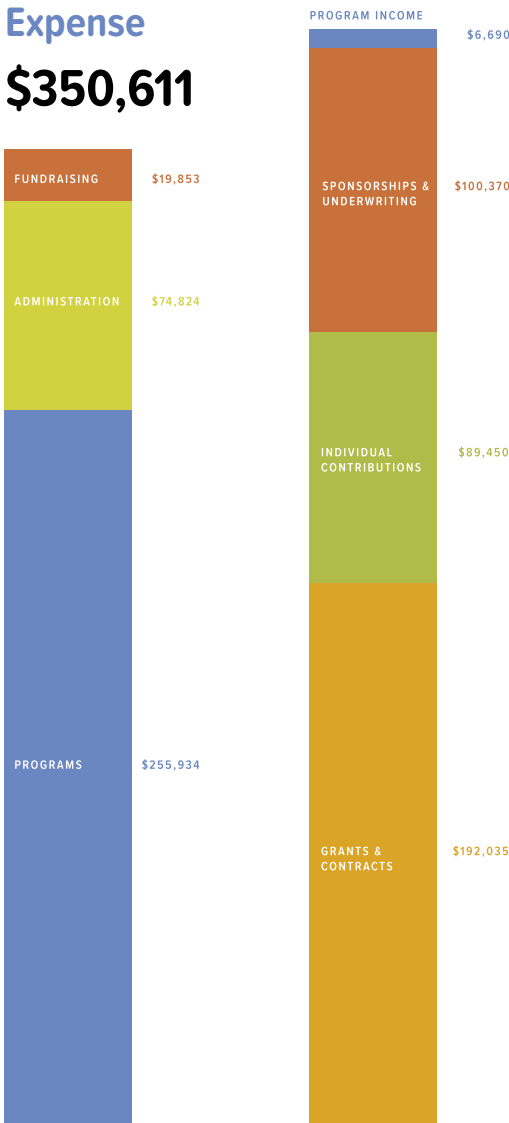
2020 calendar year

Income

\$388,550

Expense

\$350,611



Thank You!

to all of the generous and committed community partners, sponsors, underwriters, businesses, foundations, and individuals who join us in advocating for living public streets and dignified transportation for every single one of us. We appreciate your annual support!



PSOMAS



Native & Nature
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